



GLASGOW HORROR FESTIVAL : BITE SIZE

AWARD WINNERS

At our recent mini-festival **GLASGOW HORROR FESTIVAL : BITE SIZE**, we had the opportunity to share amazing works of independent horror filmmaking with our local horror fans.

We kicked off the evening with **Adventures With The Dead**, a show from the fantastic **Ash Pryce – Psychic Conman**. The show included readings, levitation, and a spooky seance vibe; leaving the audience amazed.

All of the films on the line-up offered something unique and exciting to the horror community.

However, receiving Honourable Mentions were folk-horror documentary **Bella in the Wych Elm** by **Tom Rutter** in the Horror Features Category, **Lunch Ladies** by **Claris-a Jacobson** in the Breakout Shorts, and **Javad Daraei's Limit** in Classic Shorts.

Taking the Award Winners spots

were **Stuart Ashen's Another Game** in Breakout Shorts, **The Corpse Series** by **James Button** in Classic Shorts, and **Cruel Summer** from **Phillip Escott** in the Horror Feature category.

The event was the perfect opportunity to introduce film fans to the wealth of talent working currently within independent horror outside of the Halloween season.



Bella in the Wych Elm is an eerie documentary based on one of the UK's most infamous unsolved crimes; the discovery of a woman's body inside a hollow tree. The story slowly encompassed tales of wartime espionage, mysterious graffiti and possible occultism. On the year of the 75th anniversary of the grim discovery, filmmaker Tom Lee Rutter brought the legend to life in an independent Midlands phantasmagoria lovingly crafted by film-makers with a passion for the bizarre and the macabre romanticism of real-life folklore in the cinema.

"I'm from the Black Country and Black Country folk love grim tales like this", Rutter said "and the anonymous graffiti really brought that eerie sense of folk tradition to it."

The film closely follows the true life events, while giving them a nightmarish visual style and ramping up the creep factor in the narration. On 18 April 1943, four children were poaching in Hagley Wood, part of the Hagley estate belonging to Lord Cobhamnear and they came across a large wych elm. One of the children climbed the tree, and peering into the hollow trunk he discovered a skull. At first he believed it to be that of an animal, but after seeing human hair and teeth, he realized that he had found a human skull. As they were on the land illegally, the children initially said nothing about the grim discovery. However, on returning home, the youngest was haunted by the event and decided to report the find to his parents.

When police checked the trunk of the tree they found an almost complete skeleton, with a shoe, a gold wedding ring, and some clothing. The skull still had some tufts of hair. The victim's hand was found severed from the body and buried nearby, leading to speculation of occult motives. Then came the graffiti in Upper Dean Street, Birmingham, reading **'Who put Bella down the Wych Elm - Hagley Wood'**.

"A friend told me about the graffiti on the obelisk of Wyckbury hill, and how it appeared all over different local towns. Immediately my horror-tinged imagination was pinging. Things like Candyman sprung to mind. Then I dug deeper and deeper and found all these amazing strands surrounding the mystery," the director explained.

Since then, the words have appeared scrawled on many more surfaces – and the writer or writers have never been identified. Even more bizarrely, the skull itself disappeared from police custody, never to be found.

Born and raised in the West Midlands, director Rutter has been passionate about films and film-making from as far back as he can remember and continues to this day in crafting films of a horror, fantastical and bizarre kind. With a very DIY approach to film-making Tom Lee Rutter's aim is to create fantastical worlds with very little money and to attempt to immerse the viewer into an experience that transcends its very limited budget.

As for Bella, what does Tom think really happened to her 75 years ago.

"There are so many fascinating aspects to the story. Espionage, the occult, dark undercurrents in a seemingly innocent parish. I haven't drawn my own conclusions as I promote the unknown - the magic of mysteries. That's what makes it so beautiful to me!"



Cruel Summer is another film based on a true life crime.

Cruel Summer, directed by Phillip Escott is an account of the horrifying true story of Terry Hurst, an autistic teenager who was brutally murdered in 2005. We previously spotlighted the film as part of Disability in Horror Month; and wanted to share it with Glasgow horror fans.

The film is incredibly brutal, depicting the extreme levels of violence involved in the real life crime. In the film, Danny escapes the inner city for the beautiful countryside as part of his Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Little does he know, that bitter Nicholas is hunting him, stemming from a lie created by the enamoured and envious Julia and Calvin. As the three close in on Danny, Nicholas' behaviour becomes increasingly erratic and violent, and Julia and Calvin must decide whether to go through with Nicholas' deadly plan.

Equally haunting, disturbing and touching - the audience experiences an insight into this forgotten, horrific murder in this beautifully shot, intense film.



Lunch Ladies is a short film about two burnt out high school Lunch Ladies who do whatever it bloody takes on their quest to become Johnny Depp's Personal Chefs.

For the past twenty years, obsessed Johnny Depp fans and fraternal twin sisters, Seretta and LouAnne Burr, have shared a miserable existence as high school lunch ladies serving up rubbery chicken parts, ammonia-treated government meat.

This year is going to be different: The twin's Cheesy Burger Bites recipe is the Grand Prize Winner of Johnny Depp's Cook for Kid's Charity Event! Convinced this is their ticket out of high school hell town and that "The Depper" will hire them to be his very own Personal Chefs, their dreams are shattered after a snotty head cheerleader pushes them one step too far.

The hilarious gore-fest involved the use of 10 gallons of blood, 10 gallons of slime/goo, 15 gallons of "food," 40 pounds of potatoes and 13 pounds of ground meat!



Javad Daraei's Limit hails from Iran, and tells the story of a disabled man seeking help from his neighbours in a desperate situation. Some of the local people treat him with contempt, fear, and physical abuse before he is eventually able to reveal the terrible secret hidden away in a dingy basement.

While it sounds like a by-the-numbers short is actually anything but! The film is a quiet study of how a community views it's disabled members - and with Disability in Horror Month approaching - we knew it was a film we had to share with our audience.

Haunting, gritty, and filmed against a background of unrest in the country - Limit is a short that's not easy to forget.



A short mystery thriller with horror overtones from Dancing Yak Productions. From director Riyad Barmania and Stuart Ashen (well known for his YouTube series mocking cheap and ridiculous products) is Another Game.

In the incredibly tense short film, a group have signed up to a mysterious lottery with disturbingly high stakes, where their thirst for dominance blinds them to the risk they take.

Another Game is a conceptual film and features no dialogue and little physical action; yet manages to bring energy and tension to viewers.



James Button first grabbed attention when his series of no-budget comedy films about living with a goat as his flatmate made him an internet sensation.

His film The Corpse Series screened to big laughs at the the BITE SIZE festival! James and Dan are flatmates who share a very dark secret: James tends to get homicidal when things get tense, and Dan is stuck helping him cover his tracks. When James brings a prostitute home under the delusion she wants to be his girlfriend, one thing leads to another and soon body after body is piling up in their house! Can Dan keep a hold of his sanity, his freedom, his girlfriend and even his best friend?

The Welsh horror-comedy is bizarrely hilarious, with plenty of guts and gore thrown in. With mainstream films combining horror and humour become more and formulaic - The Corpse Series is a excellent, refreshing take on the sub-genre.