



# FAMILIES

Family friendly film screenings,  
activities and workshops



## WALLACE & GROMIT: THE CURSE OF THE WERE-RABBIT

### What's it about?

+ intro by **Nick Park and Steve Box**

Wallace and Gromit, who run a humane pest control business, are called to Tottington Hall to address an abundance of rabbits. Attempts to use the latest in mind-control technology to brainwash the bunnies into disliking carrots initially seem to work. Soon after, a terrifying creature is sighted and the town's prize vegetables are destroyed. Described by its makers as the 'world's first vegetarian horror film', this hugely creative and entertaining picture stars the popular animated duo in their first feature-length adventure.

## The making of Wallace & Gromit The Curse of the Were-Rabbit

Producer Peter Lord says, 'so many people know and love Wallace & Gromit and, of course, there are also people out there in the world who have never seen them before. We knew we needed to tell a story for those people as well as for our loyal fans.' Nick Park recalls, 'it took a while to come up with an idea we felt was expansive enough to suggest a full-length movie. Steve Box and I sat for hours on end with the other writers and we suddenly hit on this idea about a were-rabbit. The Wallace & Gromit movies have always referenced other film genres, and we thought a great genre to borrow from would be the classic Universal horror movies. But instead of devouring flesh and blood, we made it vegetables. It's a vegetable-eating monster so, in effect, this is the world's first vegetarian horror movie.'

In any animated film, the characters' performances belong as much to the animators as to the actors providing the voices. That is especially true in the world of stop-motion animation, where the animators spend countless hours bringing inanimate puppets to life. Each of the puppets has essentially the same construction, beginning with a metal armature, which acts as the character's skeleton. Obviously, there are variables based on size and whether the character stands on two legs, four legs or, as in the case of Gromit, whichever suits him in the moment. The model department then moulds each puppet using a special blend of Plasticine, nicknamed 'Aard-mix,' which is slightly more durable than ordinary Plasticine.

It is almost impossible to fathom the countless hours of meticulous work and the level of concentration required to make a film in the Aardman style of animation. There are 24 frames per second of film time, so depending on the action in a sequence, it is possible to have 24 separate poses to shoot per character for every second in a scene, each pose involving the tiniest increment of movement for body, head, arms, legs, hands, fingers, eyes, ears, mouth, and so on. In addition, the Plasticine used is malleable, so there is constant resculpting involved. Multiply all of that by every character in every scene, factoring in the movements of any props that are on camera... perhaps the greatest testament to the patience and tenacity of the animation team is that on days when as many as 30 sets were in simultaneous operation, the optimum goal was to accomplish a mere ten seconds of completed film. Producer David Sproxton says, 'it is very, very slow motion. The animators have to know every step of the action before they start. They may even act it out themselves first... whatever it takes to get it into their brains.' Steve Box says, 'making a 30-minute Wallace & Gromit movie is time-consuming and requires a lot of patience and care. Making an 85-minute feature is like making the Great Wall of China with matchsticks. It's a monumental feat, actually. It was five years of solid work, because every tiny, little thing matters so much.'

### Production notes

#### Wallace & Gromit

##### The Curse of the Were-Rabbit

*Directors:* Nick Park, Steve Box

*Production Companies:* Aardman Features, DreamWorks SKG

*Executive Producers:* Peter Lord, David Sproxton, Michael Rose, Jeffrey Katzenberg

*Producers:* Carla Shelley, Claire Jennings, Nick Park

*Screenplay:* Nick Park, Steve Box, Bob Baker, Mark Burton

*Directors of Photography:* Tristan Oliver, Dave Alex Riddett

*Editors:* David McCormick, Gregory Perler

*Production Designer:* Phil Lewis

*Music:* Julian Nott

*Sound Design:* Danny Hambrook

#### Voice Cast:

Peter Sallis (*Wallace*)

Ralph Fiennes (*Victor Quartermaine*)

Helena Bonham Carter

(*Lady Campanula Tottington*)

Peter Kay (*PC Mackintosh*)

Nicholas Smith (*Reverend Clement Hedges*)

Liz Smith (*Mrs Mulch*)

John Thomson (*Mr Windfall*)

Mark Gatiss (*Miss Blight*)

Vincent Ebrahim (*Mr Caliche*)

Geraldine McEwan (*Miss Thrupp*)

Edward Kelsey (*Mr Growbag*)

Dicken Ashworth (*Mr Mulch*)

Pete Atkin (*Mr Crock*)

Noni Lewis (*Mrs Girdling*)

*Additional Voices:* Christopher Fairbank,

James Mather, William Vanderpuye

UK/USA 2005

84 mins

Digital

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