

Peterborough Arts Cinema

Films that make you think

Stop Motion Animation
Peterborough SF Club

Thursday 30th November at 7:30 pm

Kubo and the Two Strings

(2016)

PG | 1h 41min Animation

Director; Travis Knight

Voice Talents; Charlie Theron, Art Parkinson, Matthew McConaughey

Kubo lives a quiet, normal life in a small shoreside village until a spirit from the past turns his life upside down by re-igniting an age-old vendetta. This causes all sorts of havoc as gods and monsters chase Kubo who, in order to survive, must locate a magical suit of armor once worn by his late father, a legendary Samurai warrior.

BAFTA Winner best animated feature film.



Those of us of a certain age, when we hear the words Stop Motion

Animation, will doubtless think of either the **Trumptonshire** series by Gordon Murray (1966 – 1969) or **Morph** (1976 – 1980) by Aardman Animations, but the technique has a long history dating back to the earliest days of cinema. The process of taking a single frame at a time and then moving a model so that when the film was shown it might have a semblance of life can be traced back to **The Humpty Dumpty Circus** (1897) that used various toys.

One of the earliest stars of the process was Willis O'Brien whose first film was **The Dinosaur and the Missing Link** (1915). Later he made **The Lost World** (1925) in which the models included a bladder within them that could be inflated and deflated to give a semblance of breathing. This film led directly to **King Kong** and the rushed sequel **Son of Kong** (both 1933). It was proposed to give O'Brien an Oscar for King Kong, but he wanted each of his crew to receive one of the statues, AMPAS refused and so O'Brien turned down the award. One of the mattes from Son of Kong was re-used on **Citizen Kane** (1941). One of the last films he worked on was **Mighty Joe Young** (1949), another giant gorilla movie. On this he was assisted by Ray Harryhausen.

After Mighty Joe Young Harryhausen worked on such classic action/adventure films as **The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms** (1953), three Sinbad movies (1958, 1973 7 1977), **Jason and the Argonauts** (1963), **One Million Years B.C.** (1966) and the original version of **Clash of the Titans** (1981). As a gauge to how his work is regarded there is currently a retrospective of his art and sculpture at Tate Britain in London.

In Europe one of the leading exponents of the craft is the Czech filmmaker Jan Svankmajer. Amongst his feature-length films are **Alice** (1988), **Faust** (1994), **Little Otik** (2000) and **Lunacy** (2005), the latter based on two tales by Edgar Allan Poe.

In America, despite the rise of computer animation, stop motion found new fans following the release of Tim Burton's **The Nightmare Before Christmas** (1993). This led on to **James and the Giant Peach** (1996), Tim Burton's **Corpse Bride** (2005) **Coraline** (2009) and **Anomalisa** (2015). Coraline was the first feature film by Laika Entertainment who went on to make **ParaNorman** (2012) and **Kubo and the Two Strings** (2016) – notable for using the largest stop motion character ever, the 16 foot, 400 pound Skeleton monster puppet. In Britain Aardman Animations made **Chicken Run** (2000), the highest grossing stop motion film ever, and **Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit** (2005), winner of an Academy Award for Best Animated Feature.

So powerful has stop motion become, some computer animated films, **The**

Book of Life (2014) for instance, deliberately copy the style.

*Peterborough SF Club was founded in 1976 to promote Science Fiction,
Fantasy and Horror in the city.*

