

ZOO

Press Kit

Biographies

Colin Mclvor – Writer/Director

A graduate University of Ulster in Belfast with a BA (hons) in Visual Communications, Colin Mclvor's debut feature Cup Cake (2010) won numerous international awards including First in The Best Feature Category at Rhode Island International Film Festival 2010 and The Audience Award at Belfast Film Festival 2010 amongst others. He's also written and directed a number of shorts to date including multi-award winning short Charlotte's Red (2005), 'Black Taxi', Stainless Steel (2000) and 'No Cigar'. His day job is as a TV commercials director in Ireland and U.K. and abroad working with clients such as Lucozade, Kelloggs, Danske Bank and Konzum.

He's developing a number of feature film and television projects.

Katy Jackson – Producer

After leaving University, Katy worked for a number of years in theatre before diversifying into television and film production.

Katy set up Wee Buns Films with John Leslie in 2009 to produce their first feature film, **Cup Cake**, the film had a very successful run on the festival circuit.

Since then Katy has line produced, co-produced or produced a number of very successful productions, X-Moor, The Survivalist, A Patch of Fog, The Truth Commissioner, The Devil's Doorway, Bad Day for the Cut, Viking Destiny and Zoo.

Kevin Jackson – Executive Producer

Biography

Kevin Jackson is an Independent Film and TV Producer with over 30 years experience of Broadcast Television and Feature Film Production and 10 years experience of Theatre Production, including writing and directing.

Kevin joined the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1986 as an Assistant Floor Manager, joining the Drama team within the first few months, rising to become the Production Executive in 1990 and then in 1999, Assistant Head of Drama, BBC Northern Ireland. He worked with Danny Boyle on his first 8 TV films, one of which was "Elephant" by Alan Clarke. He has made over 80 titles for BBC. Kevin was Head of Production for many TV series/miniseries including "Ballykissangel", "Falling For A Dancer", "Amongst Women" and "Occupation".

He left the BBC in 2010, produced John McIluff's Award winning debut feature "Behold The Lamb" (2011) and then set up Big Fish Films NI Ltd in 2012 with Eoin O'Callaghan, to develop and produce TV Drama and Feature Films as well as Radio Dramas, of which there have been a dozen commissioned Series, Serials and Singles produced for Radio 3 and Radio 4.

In 2015 he produced the feature film "The Truth Commissioner" and in 2017 the Short Film, "The Music Room".

Kevin is also Associate Producer for Thomas Riley Ltd "The Devil's Doorway", (2016) and Executive Producer for Zoo Films Ltd on their feature "Zoo" which premiered at Chicago International Film Festival in September 2017.

Damien Elliott – Director of Photography

Damien Elliott is an Irish cinematographer based in Belfast, Northern Ireland. In recent years he has worked primarily in drama production, as both Director Of Photography and Camera Operator, and has a background in commercials and short films. He started out working with

artists in a mixed media environment of photography, design, printmaking and publishing, then a period creating visuals on 16mm for dance clubs in the 90's began a transition from working in still imagery to motion picture.

John Leslie – Production Designer/Producer

John Leslie has designed many festival selected short films and feature films including multi award winning feature film *Cup Cake* (Colin McIvor), *Behold The Lamb* (John McIllduff) and *X-MOOR* (Luke Hyams). He art directed the feature film *The Survivalist* (Stephen Fingleton) and designed *The Cranberries* comeback *Video Tomorrow* and numerous TV commercials while working as Producer with Wee Buns (Films) Ltd. He is a producer on *ZOO*, the amazing true story of a woman who kept an elephant from Belfast Zoo in her back yard during the Blitz in 1941, and also Production designer. Most recently he designed *Bad Day For The Cut* (Chris Baugh) , screened at Sundance film festival and distributed by Netflix among others and *Never Grow Old* (Ivan Kavanagh) a Western feature film starring John Cusack, Emile Hirst and Deborah Francoise.

Brian Philip Davis - Editor

Brian was the editor of '*Bad Day for the Cut*' a revenge thriller directed by Chris Baugh. Starring Nigel O'Neill and Susan Lynch the film was selected for the Midnight section of the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.

His other credits include '*The Cured*' a post-zombie thriller starring Ellen Page premiering at Toronto International Film Festival, the romantic comedy '*Made in Belfast*' and found footage horror '*The Devil's Doorway*'.

Other than feature films Brian has cut over 20 short films in a wide variety of genres as well as TV drama, documentaries and music videos.

Chris Gill – Editor

Chris Gill first came to prominence cutting *28 Days Later* for Danny Boyle and collaborated on further films including *Millions* and *Sunshine*. Chris edited Ricky Gervais's first feature, *The Invention of Lying*, then the hugely loved and critical hit *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* with John Madden. Recently Chris has cut all 3 John McDonagh films including *The Guard* and *Calvary*. Most recently he worked on *Churchill* with Brian Cox in the lead and *The Journey* with Timothy Spall playing Sir Ian Paisley. He is presently working on *Mrs Lowry and Son* with Timothy Spall and Vanessa Redgrave in the leads.

Mark Thomas – Composer

Mark has composed music for well over 100 broadcast productions, including numerous feature film scores and music for many television series. Currently, Mark's music is featured in Aardman's globally successful phenomenon, the animated children's series "Shaun The Sheep".

He also composes the music for numerous television series such as the recently acclaimed ITV / CPL Productions series "Brief Encounters", the long running "Benidorm" for ITV / Tiger Aspect and "Episodes" for BBC2 / Hat Trick and various other feature films. television dramas and comedy series.

In 2011, Mark was nominated for an Emmy award in Hollywood for his work on the Anglo / American television production "Episodes" and he was awarded the BAFTA Wales award for best original composition for his work on the feature film "Twin Town".

In 2015, mark was nominated for a BAFTA Wales award for his score to Kevin Allen's feature film adaptation of Dylan Thomas' "Under Milk Wood". In addition, Mark has been nominated a dozen times for a BAFTA Wales award.

In 2009, Mark was honored by the Welsh Music Guild who presented him with the John Edward's Memorial award for his services to Welsh music.

Mark has composed music for the celebrated theatre and film director Sir Peter Hall and has composed music for the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford – Upon – Avon.

Mark has recently completed work on a trilogy of works inspired by Dylan Thomas' broadcasts and short stories, setting Dylan's wonderful words to music. *What Has Become Of Him Now ?* (Inspired by Dylan Thomas' "Return Journey") received a standing ovation when it was performed live by Griff Rhys Jones and Camerata Wales in the Queen Elizabeth Hall as part of the Fitzrovia Festival.

Mark has recently scored the new animation series "Harry and Bip" for the Irish / Finnish 'Ink and Light' animation studio and his latest film score is for the feature film "Zoo".

Susan Scott – Costume Designer

Susan is an Internationally re-knowned Costume Designer, from Northern Ireland, who has dressed many famous actors such as Charles Dance, Brad Pitt, Helen Mirren and Daniel Day-Lewis.

Period costume projects such as *The Frankenstein Chronicles* starring Sean Bean or BBC's *The Woman in White* with Jessie Buckley and Dougray Scott showcase the creative edge to Susan's work.

From a young age Susan has been sewing, illustrating and styling clothes for photo-shoots through to dressing presenters for TV series. Having started the film business with the Emmy winning designer Joan Bergin, Susan not only trained with the best, but works along side some of the best, top directors in the industry such as Terry George, Jim Sheridan and Sir Richard Eyre.

Clare Ramsey – Make-Up Designer

Clare Ramsey is a professional international Make-up and Prosthetic Artist/Designer with over 15 years experience working in the motion picture and television industry. Clare works in all aspects of Make-up from Fashion & Beauty to Creature FX & Prosthetics. She has worked for various productions all over the world. Some of her credits include *Quantum of Solace*, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, *Game of Thrones* and *the Hobbit*.

ACTORS

Penelope Wilton – Mrs Denise Austin

Theatre: *Taken at Midnight* (West End/Chichester- Olivier Award for Best Actress); *Hamlet*, *Delicate Balance*, *Betrayal* (National Theatre), *Afterplay* (West End), *Heartbreak House*, *The Deep Blue Sea* (Almeida); *The Chalk Garden* (Donmar - London Evening Standard Award for Best Actress); *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Tess*, *Piano*, *The Secret Rapture*, *Major Barbara*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Man and Superman*, *Sisterly Feelings* (National Theatre), *Women Beware Women* (RSC).
Television: *Brief Encounters*, *Downton Abbey*, *Miss Marple*, *Doctor Who*. Film: *Guernsey*, *Zoo*, *The BFG*, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, *The History Boys*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Shaun of the Dead*.

Toby Jones – Security Guard Charlie

British Actor Toby Jones is known for his roles both in the theatre and on screen. This year Toby starred in the 60th anniversary revival of *The Birthday Party* at the Harold Pinter Theatre, directed by Ian Rickson. As well as on screen, in French comedy film *Naked Normandy* for Philippe le Gay, *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* and *Lionsgate's World War One drama Journey's End*. Towards the end of last year Toby starred in a further three films including - Universal Pictures' crime drama *The Snowman*, psychological indie thriller, *Kaleidoscope* and Michael Haneke's Palme d'Or nominated film, *Happy End*. Toby also reprised his BAFTA-nominated role in the third and final season of the award-winning

comedy series *Detectorists*, written by and co-starring Mackenzie Crook. Toby's other works include *Infamous*, where Toby played 'Truman Capote' for which he won *Best British Actor* at the London Film Critics Circle Awards. In 2011, Toby starred in the Oscar-nominated adaptation of John le Carre's classic crime novel *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and the year after, Toby garnered huge critical acclaim for his performance as Alfred Hitchcock in the HBO/BBC television movie *The Girl*, for which he received a BAFTA, Golden Globe and Emmy nomination. That year also saw Toby play the lead in Peter Strickland's multi award-winning film *Berberian Sound Studio*. In 2014, Toby starred as the lead in the BBC Two BAFTA winning drama *Marvellous*, and the following year in Matteo Garrone's fantasy horror, *Tale Of Tales*.

Art Parkinson – Tom Hall

Art Parkinson has been acting for many years and is best known for his role as Rickon Stark in the HBO series *Game of Thrones*.

His recent films include *Dracula Untold*, *San Andreas*, *Belly of the Whale*, *I Kill Giants* and *Shooting for Socrates*. He was the voice of Kubo in *Kubo And The Two Strings* for which he was nominated for an Annie Award for Outstanding Achievement in Voice Acting in a Feature Film 2016.

Emily Flain – Jane Berry

Emily will be 15 in February 2018 and is from Lisburn N.Ireland. She has previously played a small part in *Game of Thrones* and was in TG4 Children's programme *Na DÚradóirí*. She also played Bielke in *Fiddler on the Roof* with New Lyric at The Opera House.

Ian O'Reilly – Pete

Ian O'Reilly's first taste of the acting world came at the age of 11, in a production of "The Wizard of Oz" in which he played the Wizard. Ian is most known for his role as the quirky and upbeat Padraic O'Dwyer in the hit Sky1 sitcom, "Moone Boy" directed by Declan Lowney, Ian Fitzgibbon and Chris O Dowd. The show has won multiple awards, including an International Emmy for "Best International Comedy" and a British Comedy Award.

James Stockdale – Mickey

James Stockdale is from the small village of Moy and is in fifth year at the Royal School Dungannon. He is 16 years old and is studying for his GCSEs, to be sat in May and June.

James has been attending Speech and Drama lessons since he was four years old and is currently working towards the completion of his grade eight exam. James has also completed his grade six acting exam and his singing exams to grade five in both classical and music theatre, all passed with distinctions. James is a highly motivated young man, who is determined to reach his full potential and fulfil his goals.

James loves to act and it all began at the Bardic Theatre in Donaghmore. His first performance on stage was playing Benjamin in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*. It was a big commitment and he did about fifteen shows over a period of two weeks. James fell in love with the stage and since then he has played a variety of roles e.g. the Tinman in *Wicked*, Teen Angel in *Grease*, Corny Collins in *Hairspray* and Mowgli in the *Jungle Book*.

Although James started out in theatre, he then very quickly progressed to the film industry. To date, James has been cast in two feature films and two shorts:

- in November/December 2014, after five auditions, he was chosen for the role of Spud-Bob in *A Christmas Star*. The premiere was held in November 2015.
- in January 2016, he was chosen for the role of Mikey in a short movie called *Delicate Things*.
- in September/October 2016, he was chosen for the role of Mickey in *ZOO*, with filming

taking place in both Belfast and Canada.

- in July 2017, he was chosen for the role of Hubert in a short movie called Here's Looking At You Kid. It is due for release in Spring 2018.

James is very keen to pursue his passion for acting and is on the hunt for the next big thing!

Glen Nee – Vernon

Glen has been attending Brennan Performing Arts since he was 8 years old. Having been cast in numerous short films & tv dramas over the years, Glen got a real love for acting and was thrilled to have secured the role of 'Vernon' in 'Zoo'. Glen also enjoys all sports and plays GAA.

Stephen Hagan – Jake McClune, Vet

Theatre credits include: DESSERT (Southwark Playhouse) THE COMEDY OF ERRORS (RSC) TWELFTH NIGHT (RSC) THE TEMPEST (RSC) END OF THE RAINBOW (West End) CYRANO DE BERGERAC (Chichester Festival Theatre) TROILUS AND CRESSIDA (RSC/EIF) THE GIANT (Hampstead Theatre) THE YORK RELIST (Riverside Studios) THE REAL THING (Salisbury Playhouse)

Screen credits include: LUCKY MAN (Sky 1) THE TRUTH COMMISSIONER (BBC NI) RISEN (Columbia Pictures) MIDSOMER MURDERS (ITV) A ROYAL CHRISTMAS (Hallmark Movies) INJUSTICE (ITV) AGAINST THE DARK (Sony Films) THE CUT (BBC) IDENTITY (CBS)

Amy Huberman – Emily Hall

Amy is currently appearing as series lead Tara in her second season of the RTE drama STRIKING OUT (Blinder Films) for which she has been nominated for a 2018 IFTA for Best Actress, Drama. She recently appeared in her second season of COLD FEET (ITV) in the recurring role of Sarah and featured as a guest star RTE comedy CAN'T COPE WON'T COPE (RTE/Grand Pictures) which is now available on Netflix. She is currently filming a recurring role in BUTTERFLY with Anna Friel for ITV/Red Productions directed by Anthony Byrne.

Amy Huberman appeared on the big screen in the role of Ruth in **The Stag** (aka The Bachelor Weekend) for Treasure Entertainment. Other TV appearances include Miss Tivnan in Chris O'Dowd's **Moone Boy** for Sky One, Mrs Batch in **Houdini and Doyle** (ITV) and Carol Mansfield in **Silent Witness** (BBC). On film she recently appeared in the female lead in **Kill Ratio** opposite Tom Hopper and in **Handsome Devil** directed by John Butler for Treasure Films, both due for release in 2016. She will soon appear in **ZOO** directed by Colm McLvor for Wee Buns/Metro International.

Amy played the female lead, Alice, in two series of Comedy Central (UK)'s comedy drama **THREESOME** which attracted rave reviews and record viewing figures and for which she was nominated for a Glamour Award (2012) for Best Comedy Actress. Other television credits include comedy sketch show **Your Bad Self** directed by John Butler for Treasure Films/RTE, Channel 4's Comedy Lab, Animal Practice for NBC and **Heading Out** for BBC.

Damian O'Hare – George Hall

Damian was born and raised in Belfast is probably best known for playing Lt Gillette in the Pirates of the Caribbean movies. He was Kevin Costners brother Ellison Hatfield in the multi award Winning television mini series Hatfield's and McCoys. Has worked extensively in Theatre, TV and Film in Ireland and the UK as well as the United States where he now resides so it was an absolute joy to get back home whilst filming ZOO.

Ian McElhinney – Mr Shawcross

Television credits include: KRYPTON, DERRY GIRLS, FRANKENSTEIN CHRONICLES,

LANDGERICHT, GAME OF THRONES, REDWATER, BARBARIAN'S RISING, REBELLION, BABYLON, QUIRKE, THE FALL, TITANIC – BLOOD AND STEEL, RIPPER STREET, PLAY NEXT DOOR, AN INNOCENT ABROAD, MISSION TITANIC, THE FALL, AN OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS, IF THOSE LIPS, RAW, MAISIE RAINE, QUEER AS FOLK, TOUCH AND GO, HORNBLOWER, WOKENWELL, LIFE AFTER LIFE, CHILDREN OF THE NORTH, HEARTS AND MINDS, BETWEEN THE LINES 2, A WOMEN'S GUIDE TO ADULTERY and MOONFLEET.

Film work includes: GUARD, CELLAR DOOR, ZOO, BAD DAY FOR THE CUT, THE JOURNEY, THE TRUTH COMMISSIONER, PATCH OF FOG, DIVORCING JACK, A LOVE DIVIDED, THE BOXER, HAMLET, MICHAEL COLLINS, SMALL FACES, PLAYBOYS, THIS IS THE SEA, BLIND JUSTICE, THE GRASSCUTTER, HIDDEN AGENDA, FOOLS OF FORTUNE, LAMB, ANNE DEVLIN & ANGEL.

Pauline Hutton – Miss Rainey

Pauline has worked extensively in theatre in London, Dublin and Belfast. Recent theatre includes After Miss Julie at The Mac. Brendan at the Chelsea which travelled to Theatre Row in New York (off Broadway). A Dolls House with Pan Pan Theatre Company, Dublin Carol for The Donmar Warehouse, Macbeth and The Penelopiad at the RSC. Tv and film includes The Fall , Five Minutes of Heaven and Omagh.

Daisy the elephant

Arrival in Belfast

The zoo's first elephant, Daisy travelled to Belfast on the Heysham steamer on 27 March 1934, the day before the site was due to open to the public. When she arrived off the boat, zoo worker Manus Kane did not know how to handle Daisy. Luckily, a hooked stick with a message attached was hanging from her ear. The message read "lead me with this". Manus offered Daisy the stick, which she accepted by wrapping her trunk around it, and she walked from the docks to Antrim Road, a distance of between five and six miles.

Journey to the zoo

During her journey, Daisy caused some mischief by scaring a baker's carthorse, causing it to bolt down York Street, and scattering loaves all over the road. Daisy then ate the bread, making it her first meal in Belfast. When she got to Duncairn Gardens, the elephant decided she needed dessert. She broke into a trot and then a run when she spied a fruit and vegetable display in a greengrocer's shop. Daisy plundered into the display and emerged with a large turnip! Manus Kane had to deal with another incident en route to the zoo, this time at the Shaftesbury Inn on Antrim Road. Daisy discovered a cast-iron trough, used for watering carthorses, and, when she smelled the water, she decided to take a deep drink. She also wanted to cool off her feet so she put her front feet in the trough, before squashing her back feet in as well! Daisy sat in the trough for a while, washing herself and anyone who came close to her, before completing her walk to the zoo.

Acting and circus career

Before moving to the zoo, Daisy starred on the silver screen in a feature film called Red Wagon, which was released in 1933. A former circus elephant, Daisy had a wide variety of tricks, including reaching over the low barrier in her elephant house to shake the pockets and handbags of her audience for money. If visitors took the hint and placed an old penny on the tip of her trunk, Daisy then dropped it into a box nailed to the wall of her enclosure. The cash was then used to buy her favourite treat - sugar lumps! On one occasion, Daisy walked with Billy Edwards, assistant head zookeeper, and Billy Mannion,

her own keeper, to Glengormley village. The group stopped in St Quentin Park, where Billy Mannion lived, and, while the men drank tea, Daisy was tethered to the gatepost where she happily reached into the garden with her truck to pick out the plants!

Sheila's arrival

When Sheila the elephant arrived at the zoo in late 1935, the zoo decided to move Daisy to Whipsnade Zoo in London. After calmly walking back to the docks where she first arrived in Belfast, the elephant began to get agitated, before eventually breaking free to start the long walk back to Bellevue. The keepers had no option but to follow Daisy, but they had a difficult time keeping pace with her (elephants can run up to 25 miles per hour). One theory is that Daisy suffered a very rough crossing from Heysham in 1934 and, as the old saying goes, "elephants never forget", so perhaps she didn't want to repeat the experience! Daisy returned to the zoo, where she lived out her days with Sheila. She died a few years later, some time between late 1935 and early 1936.

Belfast Zoo Notes

Our elephant angel

We have many unusual stories from our 80 year history, but this is one of the most curious. In the zoo archives, our team found a photograph of a woman with a baby elephant in a back yard. To mark our 75th birthday in 2009, we looked for our 'elephant angel', a mystery woman who looked after a baby elephant during World War II.

In 1941, many of the animals in the zoo were killed because of public safety fears during the Belfast Blitz. The Ministry of Public Security ordered that 33 zoo animals were to be killed in case they escaped from the zoo during the air raids. This included a hyena, six wolves, a puma, a tiger, a black bear, two polar bears and a lynx.

Sheila, a baby elephant, was protected and taken to the home of the unknown 'elephant angel' who looked after Sheila in her back garden. It was believed that she was local to north Belfast, but her identity remained a mystery.

Elephant angel found

With the support of our visitors and the local media, we identified the mystery woman. A surviving relative gave us more information about her. The 'elephant angel' was Denise Weston Austin, pictured along with her mother Irene Beatrice Mary Austin.

Denise was one of the first female zoo keepers in Belfast Zoo, earning £15 per week. She was employed at a time when many men were called to war. Her father, Jack Austin, is believed to have been an officer in the cavalry and may have served for a time in India.

According to her cousin, David Ramsey of Belfast, Denise was eccentric and lived in a rather exotic home in north Belfast called Loughview House. Mr Ramsey also pointed out that Sheila the elephant only lived with Ms Austin in the evenings. When the head zookeeper, Dick Foster, left work, Denise took Sheila from her enclosure, walked her a short distance to her house at [278](#) Whitewell Road and walked her back up to the zoo in the morning, sometimes stopping at a shop, the Thrones Stores, on Whitewell Road for stale bread. It was also known in the area that she took Sheila for evening walks. During the night, Sheila slept in the Austins' garage.

Mr Ramsey remembers how the elephant was fondly treated by the Austin family. Sheila was given hay from the family farm, which was of a much better quality than the zoo could provide during an era of rationing.

It seemed zoo staff did not know about Sheila's second home until she chased after a dog into a neighbour's garden, breaking the fence. Many of the neighbours were dismayed at

this event and brought it to the attention of head zookeeper, Dick Foster. Sheila remained in the zoo after her evening activity was discovered. Denise's fondness for Sheila continued however as she visited her in the zoo, particularly at night during the air raids, rubbing her ears to keep her calm.