

Other films soon expected

The Lives of Others

A neatly crafted thriller with first rate acting, directing and writing combined with spy paraphernalia and political intrigue. Beyond that, though, the film challenges our need for good and bad stereotypes. It's this which makes this film so captivating and, with the twists in the end, highly rewarding.

Red Road

Distinctive and disturbing thriller set on the sketchier side of Glasgow, where a security employee tracks a man from her past - first on CCTV, then in real life. Red Road won a BAFTA for best film debut.

The Fountain

Spanning over one thousand years, and three parallel stories, The Fountain is a story of love, death, spirituality, and the fragility of our existence in this world. So, pretty ambitious! Visually sumptuous, it covers all genres - Action / Drama / Romance / Sci-Fi, and stars Hugh Jackman, Rachel Weisz, and many others. What if you *could* live forever?

Watch out for the dates of these films

Editorial - How was it for you?

How our audience reacts to violence, language, sex, politics...

Like most film societies, we ask our audience to complete a short form that summarises how they felt about each film we show. At Pontardawe, we also invite comments. You can view all these for the past couple of years on our website. What they tell us is that our members don't like films with physical violence (*The Emperor and the Assassin*, or *Asoka*), but it's OK if it's very stylised violence (Hero). They do like to have a laugh (*Amarcord*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, or *Borat*) even if it isn't very deep. They don't like bad language (*Aristocrats*), or if the sex is too explicit (*Bad Education*), and they don't like it when the action is too slow (*Tony Takitani*). They like films with an explicit political message (provided it's a message they're sympathetic too - vaguely left of centre), and they're not too keen on sci-fi, wartime dramas, or thrillers. Foreign language (subtitles) are a problem for some of our members, but so too are films that are too long or films in English where the diction isn't clear enough (Glaswegian and American accents have both been remarked upon).

We do try to pay attention to these views although, obviously, tastes do vary. Moreover, we cannot exclude films just because some viewers may be upset. Also, of course, our purpose is to present films that may challenge the audience and we want to experiment. We want to show the films in Pontardawe that people elsewhere are stimulated by and that is just bound to include categories of film, or episodes within films, that are sometimes difficult to watch. So, our audience must accept that some films are selected even if they contain things which some viewers will find upsetting. We all get upset by different things in film and our selection process cannot anticipate every reaction, especially if we haven't all seen the film.

I'm writing this because a number of us were surprised by our audience's reaction to *Pan's Labyrinth*. Now many people consider this to be one of the best of recent films, something of a classic. It's won all sorts of awards - it's nominated for 6 Oscars. Nobody doubts it's the sort of film we should show. But, our audience ranked it at 74%, well below *Borat* or *Little Miss Sunshine*. One viewer complained saying they should have been warned they might be upset by some scenes in the film - we don't know if they were a film club member. Aside from the fact that this was actually billed as a horror movie and rated accordingly, the selectors cannot be certain what will be upsetting for someone else - even if they had all seen it beforehand. Some of us actually had seen it beforehand but, for me, there were more disturbing things in it than the crude fascist violence.

Obviously, this is just your editor's opinion, but it's inevitable that many good films will prove upsetting. They can't all be *It's a wonderful life!*

BFFS Welsh Group Spring Viewing Pontardawe, 21st April

Once again, we are hosting the BFFS's annual spring viewing day. These events, like the national viewing events (see below) are designed to enable film clubs to view pre-released films and select their programme. For the past two years, we have used the ICO to select our films and there has been a marked improvement as a result. Films have still to be selected, but if you attend you can expect to see four good films and have lunch for around £20. Alternatively, you'll be able to come and see one or more films individually for £5 each. The Welsh Group of the BFFS now includes 13 film societies, and members from all over Wales (and even England) may be attending.

BFFS - UK Spring Viewing weekend

As usual, the BFFS is holding its Spring Viewing weekend in London, at the National Film Theatre (which has now been renamed as the BFI-Southbank). This year it's on 3rd-4th March. This event draws people from over 200 film societies across the UK, all in 2 or 3 cinemas. Films are still to be confirmed but possibles are:

After the Wedding
Amazing Grace
Away From Her
Black Gold
Jindabyne
Lights in the Dusk
Los Olvidados
Paris je t'aime
Rescue Dawn
Sketches of Frank Gehry
Tell No One
Ten Canoes
The Painted Veil
This is England
Tough Enough