

A Cannes-do kind of place

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by Claire Hill, Western Mail

It's the world's most famous film festival and this year Cannes is celebrating its 60th birthday. As a number of Welsh film-makers head out to the French Riviera, we ask them why the event is so important...

Pauline Burt, chief executive of the Film Agency for Wales

"I will be in Cannes for eight days this year to meet with financiers and distributors and try to drum up interest in future projects. As the Film Agency for Wales is new, it's clearly important to raise awareness about it. Our events include a breakfast briefing on May 18, a networking reception on May 19 and a luncheon for producers interested in working in Wales and Canada on May 21.

"It's really important for anyone involved in film to have a presence at Cannes. As well as the festival itself, there's the film market, which is the most efficient way to meet with international film financiers, sales agents, distributors or potential co-producers. Cannes is such an important film festival as it has had 60 years to evolve and the fact it has a film market makes it so successful. It's also held in a central location in Europe so people from all over the world can attend. It means that it's attended by the most significant players from the film industry.

Peter Phillips, a producer from Llangynwyd

"We have a script in development called Lives with my company Seanchai Films. It's a romantic comedy set at an Elvis festival, or set between two of them. Think Love, Actually set in the world of Elvis. We have the script and we are in the process of casting at the moment and there is already quite a bit of hype about the film. Myself and Helen Grace, who will direct Lives, are just going to generate some interest.

"I haven't been to Cannes for about five years now. Last time I took a couple of documentaries out there, this time we will be talking about Lives and another film, The Surveyor. I also have a documentary about Elvis' manager, Colonel Parker. The festival is important because you get to see an awful lot of people in an awfully short time. But I'm really going for the Irish Film Board's party as it is supposed to be the best in Cannes."

Dewi Griffiths, a producer from St Davids, Pembrokeshire

"I have been out to Cannes a few times in the past to check it out but this is the first time that I will be taking a film, High Stakes, out there. Pre-Cannes I have been preparing and setting up meetings – I have got about 20 sorted already. What we are really looking for is a distribution deal so I will be talking to sales agents. There are two sides to Cannes. There is the film festival with all the red carpet and then there is the Cannes Film Market.

"That's the side that I find most interesting. Cannes and the American Film Market, which takes place in October, are the two massive chances of the year to sell your film. I am looking to sell High Stakes to rather niche distributors, those who are looking for low budget horror. There are an awful lot of people looking to buy that kind of movie. The first thing to do is to try and sell High Stakes and then we might try to raise the final production money for our next film, Isca. We have got the cast in place for that and we will hopefully be shooting it soon."

Florence Ayisi, a director originally from Cameroon but based in Newport

"I was invited in May 2005 to take part in the Directors' Fortnight with my film which I co-directed, Sisters In Law. It was well received and a lot of people were talking about it. Some of my students (from the International Film School Wales, University of Wales, Newport) were out there and said that everywhere they went people were talking about the film. It was supposed to have three screenings, but it had two extra. One was a press screening but it was packed with 750 people.

"The judge and state prosecutor (the Cameroon females who were the subjects of Florence's film) were there that night and people were asking them for their autograph. It gave a different dimension to the women's work. Before Cannes it was screened at the Bird's Eye View Festival but I think Cannes did a lot for the film. When it won the award I was surprised, I didn't even know that there was a competition in that section so standing in front of 1,000 people in the hall felt like a dream, but I enjoyed it. It was amazing that people recognised what I wanted to do which was make films that gave a different perspective on Africa.

"It gave me a boost of confidence that it is not only stories about misery that are important. Winning the award boosted the film. I am not going this year as my film Zanzibar Soccer Queens has already been shown in another festival, but I think Cannes is an important festival to wait for."

Andrew Jones, a director/writer from Swansea

"This is my first time going out to Cannes and I will be going out there with my debut feature film the Feral Generation. It stars former EastEnders actor Ray Panthaki and Brooke Kinsella. We have got screening planned for May 18 and will have sales agents and distributors coming. I would have liked to make it more of a public screening but it has to be by invite only.

"I think Cannes is an important place to go to as it is the biggest film market there is and there is so much business that gets done over the week. It's a great shop window for films and getting future projects off the ground. For people like myself, it is also a great networking opportunity. I didn't go to film school and I basically self financed a short film which won an award and got me the money to make the Feral Generation.

"So going to Cannes is a great opportunity to meet people and there is certainly a prestige and cache to say that you were there. In addition to the Feral Generation we are also in talks to produce a remake of the '70s cult horror movie Driller Killer. We are in talks with the American company to co-produce it so we will probably tell people about that."

Box Office, with Karen Price

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by Karen Price, Western Mail

NEXT week more than 4,000 journalists representing 1,600 media companies will descend on Cannes for the annual film festival.

Unfortunately I won't be one of them. But who wants to be stuck in the French Riviera rubbing shoulders with Hollywood stars anyway? I mean Wales seems to be a mecca for celebrities at the moment. Last week I spent the afternoon on the set of new feature film Gullible's Travels in Tredegar and this week Sienna Miller, Keira Knightley and Matthew Rhys are in New Quay shooting the new Dylan Thomas film.

But I digress. Back to the Cannes Film Festival, which celebrates its 60th birthday when it opens on May 16.

While there may now be film festivals staged at locations around the world, Cannes is the daddy of them all. Anyone who's anyone in the film world will be there to promote their projects, network and generally get themselves known.

Many producers, directors, scriptwriters and actors from Wales will be heading across the channel for the occasion and among them will be Pauline Burt, chief executive of the new Film Agency for Wales. She will be promoting the work of the agency and discovering what's on offer from the rest of the world.

On the subject of films, Robert Carlyle returns to the big screen today with his latest offering, 28 Weeks Later. It is the sequel to the 2002 action thriller 28 Days Later.

Rob Driscoll met up with the actor to find out what's in store for audiences this time round. Read his interview with Carlyle [here](#).

When it comes to music, who can believe that Welsh band Funeral For A Friend are already releasing their third album?

Claire Hill met singer Matt Davies who talked her through the whole process in '[We think every song can be a single](#)'