

a day in the life of... a film director

Howard Webster is a local writer, director and photographer. He's just finished directing his first feature film, shot almost entirely in Kew, called *Meet Pursuit Delange: The Movie*

Life changes when you have two-year-old twins pulling your eyelids open at 5am, shouting, 'daddy, wake up!'. So, a couple of years ago, after years as a writer and photographer, I knew I wanted to produce a semi-autobiographical film, based on my columns - what defines your life when your dreams haven't come true?

'It took a long time to get the funding together - there's a lot of lunatics out there, people who pretend to be wealthy and say they want to back you, just to get in on the film scene. I shouldn't have been so trusting!

'But once we got the money, we could put the cast together and, because they loved the script, we got some great names: Jason Flemyng of *Lock, Stock* fame, Peter Bowles, Colin Salmon (a regular in the James Bond films and *Strictly 2012* contestant, who's now shooting with Bradley Cooper in New York), Stephanie Leonidas (*Defiance*) and the main character of *Pursuit Delange*, played by upcoming actor, Ben Starr. I thought it was going to be a bit of a dude's movie, a male Bridget Jones, but at the screenings the women love all the good-looking men!

'The film tells the story of a 32-year-old struggling writer who lives at Kew Cricket Club and earns a living doing odd jobs. He takes in two old school friends and somehow adopts a male Bullmastiff, called Audrey. When things go from bad to worse, the three friends find out what is really important to them.

'We shot almost the whole film in Kew and at the cricket club, which we also used as the studio and production base. All the local shops, like Mark Westbrook's, were great in helping us film and Kew Gardens generously let us shoot some scenes. Every so often the film breaks out into a song and dance routine and when we had the iconic British pop band of *I'm Too Sexy* fame, Right Said Fred and 30 extras playing the ghosts of cricketers past, dancing on Kew Green, the locals hadn't seen anything quite like it before!

'During shooting, my day always ended very unglamorously. When everyone had gone, I'd walk home with the day's rushes in one hand and two bags of rubbish in the other. Once one exploded and I was on the ground, picking up banana skins and thinking, 'Spielberg doesn't have to do this...'



'The locals hadn't seen anything quite like it before...'

Ben Starr, as Pursuit Delange and, breaking into dance, Stephanie Leonidas

