

# A MODEL DOCTOR!



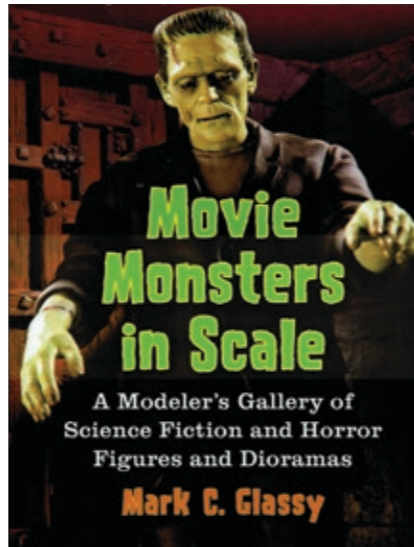
Our resident model expert Andy Pearson is very much in the Pink this issue - as he recalls the ground-breaking CineMagic efforts of his old mate Sid...

time to write books on that and related subject at the same time as hosting [www.thedoctorsmodelmansion.com](http://www.thedoctorsmodelmansion.com) which is well worth a visit.

Having broached the subject of including some of his model-related work in one of my articles (or ramblings as a friend and ex-colleague recently termed them) Dr Glassy furnished me with a wealth of images and several of these immediately caught my eye as I was, at the time, conducting some research into one of the lesser-known heroes of the science fiction film, Sidney W. Pink.

Mr Pink was a producer, writer and occasional director of such classics (tongue only slightly in cheek here) as *Reptilicus* and *The Angry Red Planet*, which titular planet may have been enraged due to its association with the earlier film. The latter epic is represented here by the good doctor's renderings of three of the memorable - as in once seen never forgotten - beasties from said film, which presents several points of interest for the film obscurest.

Amongst the memorable aspects of this particular space opera was the use of CineMagic to achieve the special effects. One aspect of this technique entailed tinting



the scenes on the angry planet in question red, lest the viewer forget that it was very cross indeed.

Now the details of the creation of the effects work are subject to some contradictions by folk who profess to know about this stuff but it was certainly a combination of live action and animation but whether the latter was drawn or model work or a combination of the two is a matter of conjecture. To my aged eye it looks like such a blending of the two with, perhaps, some puppetry involved rather than the stop-frame animation techniques made famous by Willis O'Brien, Ray Harryhausen et al. What is undeniable is that it was weird and, in an endearing way, wonderful. Lest that observation come across as sarcasm let me add that I have the greatest admiration for special effect people in general and animators in particular. It is something I've only attempted twice myself, the first time writing-off a camera whilst producing footage of a plasticine dragon jumping up and down on the spot and, on the second occasion, managing about five seconds of an animated clay figure that took bloody ages to shoot.

## POLARISED OPINIONS

Mr Pink, or Sid as I now like to think of him, had quite an interesting career in the movies and is often credited with helping the development of 3D in commercial cinema as the producer of *Bwana Devil*. That was perhaps the first full length film to be shown in that format using polarised glasses rather than those with the red and green lenses that made driving home after the movie such an interesting experience.

Sid also produced some early westerns which were, apparently, ground-breakers in the pasta-based cowboy film field. In the early '60s he wrote the original treatment for *Reptilicus*, which he also co-produced and co-directed. This masterpiece was filmed



The astronauts encounter what seems to be a grove of trees and, purely in the interests of science, decide to hack a chunk off one of the trunks. This incurs the displeasure of the RBST as the chunkless trunk in question is actually one of its legs. Long ago I had a cinema-going companion who would have spent the rest of the performance speculating aloud as to why nobody among the group of space travellers would have looked up nor, indeed, any further ahead than the end of their nose whilst exploring an otherworldly landscape. It was this sort of whinging that inspired me to always carry a sock containing damp sand (stunning with minimal bruising) on our visits to the local fleapit.

Dr Glassy's models have, as mentioned earlier, been rendered in full colour which both emphasises their other-worldly strangeness and his skill with painting techniques. I imagine that a certain amount of imagination has been exercised in the colour choices although it's possible he has access to more detailed information than I've been able to put my hands on as his extensive knowledge of fantasy films has been demonstrated in his books on the subject and regular columns in *Scary Monsters* magazine. One of my mottos has long been 'only borrow from the best'.

in Denmark and may be one of the reasons that the country is now more famous for its bacon and dairy products. The beast which gives the film its title falls (no pun intended) into the general category of giant creature on the loose movies and so is in the august company of Godzilla, the UK's very own *Gorgo* and, dare I say it, *King Kong*. That's because it features a largish beast and the expected general knocking about of landmarks but from there the comparisons are a little harder to draw.

Now I'm not here to bury Sid or to praise him (if I may clumsily paraphrase Marc Antony) but such was the impression he made on the Danish film industry that, according to anecdote, if his name is mentioned at any gathering of Danish film makers, the culprit has to buy everyone within earshot a beer. In fact, one version of the story has it that the forfeit is one case of beer per person present.

As ever I note that, not for the first time, I'm straying from the main subject which is *Angry Red Planet* and the vexed crimson creatures with which it is seemingly infested. Dr Glassy's renderings of this menagerie present them in full colour as, whilst the non-Martian sections of the film were rendered in colour, the planetary sequences were tinted. This meant that the bulk of the action could be shot in black and white and although it might be unfair to suggest that this was a cost-saving exercise as opposed to an artistic decision, such a suggestion has been made in certain quarters.

## KEEPING AN EYE OUT

But what of the creatures themselves? Well, there is a three-eyed Martian whose role is to glare at the intrusive astronauts as only a three-eyed creature can. Rather more optically challenged is a

sea-going amoeba thing which has but a single orb but which gives new meaning to the phrase rolling one's eye. For 'B' film monster aficionados the star of the piece has to be the rat bat spider thing, hereafter referred to as the RBST. This is a wonder to behold and certainly a creation well beyond an imagination as pedestrian as mine, other than on those odd occasions when I forget the medication.

Its introduction to the fun and games is equally odd.



Above left: The Angry Red Planet blob creature attacks a rocket

Left: An Angry Red Planet Martian

Above: The rat bat spider thing from *The Angry Red Planet*