

## Filming The Hound Of The Baskervilles



*The Hound Of The Baskervilles* was shot over six weeks between 8 April and 20 May 2002. The story was set at Christmas and mostly at night so the onset of spring and increasing daylight hours became a real problem. Luckily most exteriors and night scenes were located in the north of England and on the Isle of Man, so a few more precious weeks of winter were eked out.

The shoot started at the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway and this location provided both Exeter and Grimpen Stations. There was not enough time to shoot the interior carriage scenes, so these were filmed on a set in a barn near Henley on Thames with a green screen placed outside the train window. The backgrounds were shot on a DVD camera somewhere near London Bridge Station and outside Basingstoke, and were then matted in.

Levens Hall in Cumbria was Baskerville Hall. Its grey crenellated aspect and magnificent topiary hedges gave exactly the right sense of

the sinister Baskerville Hall with its “dark walk”. Ironically, the interior of the Hall was made up of four different locations. Dorney Court, Losely House, Harpesden House in the south of England, and Ballamoar House in the Isle of Man, all had a part to play in the make up of Baskerville Hall.

From Levens we set sail for the Isle of Man. The Isle of Man Film Commission was a major investor in the film and one of the conditions of the use of their funds was that one half of the schedule had to be shot on the island. Consequently, the Isle of Man became Dartmoor with the Stapleton’s spooky Merripit House stuck out in the middle of the moor. There is magnificent moorland on the Isle of Man and there was even a good approximation for Dartmoor’s Tors in areas of rocky coastland. The island is a wild place and one night’s shooting was lost due to 70 mile an hour winds which made it impossible to mount filming lights on cranes. This was ironic as all the technology needed to make huge storms and gales (including



a water tanker and enormous wind, rain and smoke machines) had been shipped over to the Isle of Man to provide the correct atmosphere for *The Hound Of The Baskervilles*. A rapid rethink meant that a large part of Holmes and Watson's final confrontation with the hound was shot at Bray studios.

Liverpool was the next port of call and Canning Street in Liverpool 8 became the famous Baker Street. Miraculously there was a vacant house on the street itself, so for the first time in film history the interior of 221B Baker Street was actually shot at the same place as the exterior. The co-operation from the people of Liverpool was fantastic as cars were moved, the road was covered in dirt and horses, carriages and people raced up and down. It's hard to believe that anything like the same effect could have been achieved in London.

Finally the unit returned to London to shoot the majority of the interior scenes. By now, the trees were in full leaf and hours of darkness were few. Filming indoors was not a problem, but it did necessitate huge black drapes and scaffolding being erected on the outside of many windows.

The shoot was rounded off at Bray studios where Grimpen mire and a small expanse of moor were constructed. As Watson pulled Holmes out of the bubbling mire, using his coat as a rope with the words "Now to put my tailor to the test", there was a loud rip and the sleeve of the coat fell away. Luckily Richard Roxburgh was standing in only four foot of manufactured sludge otherwise the end of *The Hound Of The Baskervilles* could have been very different.

## Animatronics by Crawley Creatures

“Our key conceptual artist Colin Shulver produced around 20 drawings,” explains Jez Harris of Crawley Creatures. “When the final creature was agreed upon it was a mix of Doberman, Rhodesian Ridgeback and hyena and created the look of the monstrous canine whose body was covered in wounds and sores incurred from years of neglect and abuse.

“A clay sculpt was produced in two weeks by Colin Shulver, Reza Karim and Josh Weston and moulded by Tristan Schoonraad and Laurence Simmons.



“From the mould a hard glass re-enforced plastic cast was made and sent to FrameStore CFC for computer scanning and a soft flexible foam-skinned cast was made for the animatronic creature. Taking casts from the same mould enabled teams from both companies to make models that would match perfectly.

“Animatronic designer Carl Wilson created the animatronics for the head. The head had movements that included the jaw, eyes and eyelids, brows, ears, lips, tongue and saliva tubes. Air bladders were used to enhance the jaw muscles and give the beast the appearance of a powerful bite.

“The hound body was used for the dead hound sequences or where interaction with the actors was required. The body contained a weighted, jointed armature that would move with the correct weight and bend in an anatomically correct manner.



“Jeni Walker and her three-person team painstakingly applied the hair. The base layer of hair being electrostatically flocked and then all the longer hairs being inserted one at a time, it proved a very labour-intensive task that took three weeks to complete, with the complete build from start to finish being six weeks.”

## Computer Generated Imagery by Framestore

This version of *The Hound Of The Baskervilles* contained a total of 45 visual effects shots; 19 of these were to create the computer generated hound sequences and the remainder were 2D shots recreating London and Baskerville Hall on the moor. This was done over a 12-week schedule.

### Imagery

“Computer generated fur is always tricky,” says Scott Griffin of FrameStore.

An extra challenge for the fur team working on the hound was that the fur needed to be patchy, dirty, wet and matted with rain and blood.

“The lighting was also a key issue, as the scenes were shot at night. The CG lighting people needed to come up with convincing methods of creating rim light from the moon whilst also keeping the lighting on the rest of the creature as real as possible.”



### Compositing

“In one sequence, Sir Henry is attacked and dragged up the gully by the hound. On location, Matt Day, who played Sir Henry, was attached to a wire and forcibly pulled along by the crew. In post production, we needed to remove the crew and wires and make sure that the computer generated hound looked like it was biting Sir Henry’s head. Any live action/computer generated interaction is always a challenge, and in this case, not only was the hound attacking Sir Henry, but Sir Henry was also hitting out at the hound.”



“Nearly all the shots required many layers of moving and swirling fog in order to make the hound look like it was actually running through it. This also helped to create the ideal eerie atmosphere that David Attwood, the director, required.”

THIS INFORMATION IS EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BBC'S CHRISTMAS SEASON LINE-UP ON NOVEMBER 24