

IUN

International Upire News

Vol. 3, Jul. 2008

Edited by Josep Fígols



www.cercle-v.org

contacte@cercle-v.org

Catalunya (Catalonia)

Països Catalans (Catalan Nations)

Castle the latest to lay a claim to Dracula tale

The ruins of Slains Castle in Aberdeenshire – an inspiration for Bram Stoker?

Whitby residents are spitting blood after owners of a Scottish castle staked a claim to be the inspiration for Bram Stoker's Dracula.

For more than a century Whitby has loomed large in the vampire cult where the fictional count is as real to many visitors – including the thousands of goths who descend twice a year – as the port's links with real life figures such as Captain Cook and Lewis Carroll.

Now Slains Castle in Aberdeenshire – a ruined fortress which developers want to turn into £6m holiday apartments – is also claiming a Dracula connection.

It is claimed by some north of the border that Stoker wrote at least part of his horror classic in 1895 while staying at Crookit Lum Cottage, near Aberdeenshire's Cruden Bay, and may have used Slains Castle as the model for Dracula's Castle in Transylvania.

However Whitby residents insist there is not a shred of evidence to support the theory.

Whitby councillor Dorothy Clegg said: "I am sick to death of this. It is just not true.

"It is nonsense to suggest it is anything to do with Scotland. I think he did pay a holiday visit there but that's about it.

"I mean the Dracula Society in London even came up here and dedicated a seat in the town and the BBC filmed its version here in 1976."

Leslie Brown, manager of the Dracula Experience museum in Marine Parade, Whitby, open for more than 25 years, said it was only recently that the Scottish angle seemed to have gained some currency.

He said: "I just laughed it off at first.

"History and everything else shows Bram Stoker stayed in Whitby and was a frequent visitor.

"It is not our busiest time of the year but we are attracting 100 visitors a day with our exhibitions showing the connection to Whitby – not Scotland."

Former curate of Whitby Graham Taylor, now a best-selling author, said there was no evidence Stoker ever went to Scotland at all, adding: "It is a complete fiction and just ridiculous. Whitby is the rightful place and Whitby is where the connection will stay."

It has long been thought that aside from setting much of his novel in Whitby, Stoker took his cue for the scenes in Transylvania from Bran Castle, a medieval fortress in the Romanian mountains where Vlad the Impaler actually stayed in the 1400s and which has featured in many vampire films.

Critics have also pointed out that the paint on Slains Castle would barely have been dry when Dracula was published in 1897.

Although the first castle was built in 1597 by the ninth earl, the present ruin is mainly of a much later folly built in 1837.

Whitby Gazette, 11 Jul.

Depp lights up 'Dark Shadows'

Graham King to produce Warner feature

Warner Bros. is teaming with Depp's Infinitum-Nihil and Graham King's GK Films to develop a feature based on the '60s daytime supernatural sudser "Dark Shadows."

Depp has said in interviews that he has always been obsessed with "Dark Shadows" and had, as a child, wanted to be Barnabas Collins, the vampire patriarch of the series. The role was originated by Jonathan Frid.

A rights deal just closed with the estate of Dan Curtis, the producer/director who created the soap that aired weekdays on ABC, from 1966 to 1971. Depp and King will produce with David Kennedy, who ran Dan Curtis Prods. until Curtis died last year of a brain tumor. Infinitum-Nihil's Christi Dembrowski served as the point person on the deal.

Over 1,225 episodes, "Dark Shadows" was a highly atmospheric, spooky soap that featured gothic horror staples like vampires, monsters, witches, werewolves, ghosts and zombies. The show has a continuing rabid fan base that populates Dark Shadows Festival conventions. Numerous TV revivals of the series and pic adaptations have been attempted over the years but none with as high-wattage a star as Depp.

Depp, who is coming off "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End" and who just wrapped the Tim Burton-directed "Sweeney Todd," is next expected to star in "Shantaram," a Mira Nair-directed adaptation of the Gregory David Roberts novel that Depp, King and Plan B are producing for Warner Bros. Depp, King and WB are also mobilizing to make a film about the life of Alexander Litvinenko, with Depp poised to play the former KGB agent, who was fatally poisoned.

Michael Fleming

<http://www.variety.com>, 26 Jul
