

# Warp X

## Nurturing British film talent

*Shipshape speaks to Kate Fewins, production co-ordinator at Warp X, about the innovative low-budget film company's success.*



Warp X is a film studio based in Sheffield specialising in cutting edge digital technology and low budget production methods.

Formed as an offshoot to Warp Records and Warp Films in 2005, Warp X was awarded a £3m investment by the UK Film Council and Film4, plus £1.5m from regional funding bodies, to produce a slate of low budget genre feature films over three years. Warp X aims to build on the success of Warp Films, which has won rave reviews and a BAFTA for *This is England* in the past year.

### Talent corridor

"We pride ourselves on being a very British film company and try to stick to our roots," explains Kate. "Although we are high profile, we're not trying to ape Hollywood."

Warp X has an unusual business model for a film company, as once a film enters production profit share is available to members of the cast and crew. "It is added incentive to make each film successful and entices good people to come and work for us. It also provides opportunities for up and coming filmmaking talent."

"Warp X is a one-stop shop. All development and production is in-house and we have Optimum Releasing on board as distributor. Things turn around very quickly and don't linger in development. We have incredibly low budgets and we are achieving a lot on them."

For example, the company's latest film, *Donkey Punch* is being released on July 18 and will be screened in some 200 cinemas – just under half the UK's total. "Starring a young, glamorous, British cast, it's a high octane, nail-biting thriller set on a boat," explains Kate. "And it cost just over £1 million. Today's technology means that you can shoot something this good and still keep to a tight budget."

The company's main office is in Sheffield but it also has offices in London and Nottingham. "We aim to work in Yorkshire and the East Midlands as much as possible, given that EM Media and Screen Yorkshire, two of our backers, are based in these areas."

### Finance matters

Shipleys has been working with Warp Films as auditors since it made the BAFTA-nominated *Dead Man's Shoes* in 2004. "We've always had a great working relationship and it made sense to use Shipleys for Warp X films as well," says Kate.

The Shipleys team, led by Steve Joberns, helps the company to apply for tax credits, which Kate explains is crucial for providing cash flow for the next production.

"They get all our finance finalised and delivered. Our contacts at Shipleys are quick, reliable and helpful trusted allies and are integral to our films in post-production."

As for the future, Kate is confident that Warp X will continue to build its reputation as a pioneering digital film company, with funding currently being finalised for the next few years.

### Film producer training programme

Shipleys is involved with a training scheme that provides up and coming film producers with the business acumen and market understanding to develop, finance and sell successful British films.

The Producer Training Programme (PTP), is run by Skillset, the sector skills council for the audio-visual industries, this year in collaboration with Magic Light Pictures. It is intended to

give a career boost to people who already have a certain amount of knowledge and experience of film production, and to broaden their business perspective.

During their nine-month course trainees spend time at Shipleys learning about the financial aspects of the film industry.