

The good, the bad, the ugly ... and the resurrected graveyard

Sam Jones Madrid

After more than 50 years, several fistfuls of euros and countless wheelbarrow journeys, one of the most famous graveyards in cinema history has been rescued from oblivion and is to be honoured in a new documentary.

Sad Hill cemetery is the setting for the climax of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, when Clint Eastwood, Lee Van Cleef and Eli Wallach face off against each other to the strains of Ennio Morricone's soundtrack.

Having dispatched the Bad and left the Ugly defenceless and furious, the Good lays out his simple credo: "You see, in this world, there's two kinds of people, my friend. Those with loaded guns and those who dig. You dig."

Inspired by Eastwood's words, a group of film fans have spent two years restoring the cemetery to its former glory. The set, which was built by soldiers in the northern Spanish province of Burgos for Sergio Leone's classic 1966 spaghetti western, had been forgotten and reclaimed by nature until the Sad Hill Cultural Association stepped in.

With the help of crowdfunding and volunteers from France, Germany, Turkey, Italy and the US, its members slowly, and backbreakingly, cleared the site to reveal the famous stone circle and its hidden graves.

Their labours have been recorded in *Sad Hill Unearthed*, a documentary by the Spanish film-maker Guillermo de Oliveira, who was told about restoration by a friend.

Although he hadn't originally planned to shoot a documentary, Oliveira was moved by the volunteers' dedication and perseverance. "I was just struck by the beautiful notion of fans of



Above, Eli Wallach and Clint Eastwood at Sad Hill cemetery in a scene from the film; below, a volunteer at work
Main photograph: Everett/Rex



the film wanting to bring it back to the way it was ... It may have been a beautifully crazy idea, but it was still a crazy one. It was a dream." He was also taken with their ingenious, if morbid, crowd-funding strategy for restoring the graveyard's 5,000 wooden crosses: for €15, anyone can have their name, nickname or initials inscribed on a cross.

He and his team also interviewed Morricone and famous fans of the film, including the director of *Gremlins*, Joe Dante, and James Hetfield, the lead singer of Metallica.

One particular interviewee proved elusive. But after 10 months of phone calls, emails and faxes, the film-makers finally got to Eastwood himself. The actor and director sent a message of thanks to all those who had worked to recover Sad Hill.

Just before the film was screened at the site last year, Oliveira played the audience Eastwood's video. "He suddenly appeared on the screen to say thanks and some people started crying," said Oliveira. "It was a very emotional moment."

David Alba, one of the local volunteers, said that when Eastwood's message was played, "no one was really taking in what he was saying because we were so surprised. I had to watch it afterwards to find out what he actually said."

Today Sad Hill is a popular draw and a boon to the local economy, said Alba, 36, who owns a bar that is named in Leone's honour.

Oliveira has finished his documentary and is trying to raise the money to pay for the rights to the clips and music it uses, so that he can show the film at festivals.

He said the film was both a testament to the enduring appeal of Leone's masterpiece and an attempt to explain the motivations of the many people who laboured to bring a dilapidated film set back from the dead.

"There's something almost religious about all this. Why would someone who's been working all week spend eight hours in a cemetery at the weekend for nothing in return? It's altruism in its purest form."

New Zealand paper shames drink-drivers

Eleanor Ainge Roy Dunedin

A newspaper in New Zealand has printed the names of 100 drink-drivers on its front page in response to what it describes as an epidemic of the crime.

The *Mountain Scene* is a weekly newspaper for the small but booming South Island town of Queenstown, which has about 30,000 permanent residents and up to 2 million tourists every year.

Yesterday it filled its front page with the names of 100 people convicted of drink-driving in the first six months of the year, in the hope that naming and shaming offenders would help to reduce the problem.

"Around New Zealand drink-driving rates have been declining, but in Queenstown they are still going up," said *Mountain Scene's* editor, David Williams. "There are horrendous levels of drink-

'If the front page deters one drunk person from getting in their car then we have had a win'

driving here and it is something that has always been in the background. We need to talk about this problem, so our paper has said 'enough is enough' and decided to take a stand."

Williams plans to publish the names of convicted drunk-drivers on the front page for the rest of the year, even though he has had irate phone calls and there is a mixed response on the paper's Facebook page.

"We have been lambasted as thoughtless and arrogant, that we should be thinking about the children of these people ... on the other side there have been a lot of strong comments in favour," said the editor.

"If it deters one drunk person from getting in their car because they don't want to be on the front page then we have had a win," he said.

Williams said multiple issues fed into Queenstown's high rate of drink-driving but significant factors included the growing population (with a high proportion of young people), expensive taxis - it costs between NZ\$50-100 (£29-£57) for a 15-minute trip - and the perception of Queenstown as a hedonistic party town.

Concern grows over 'toothpick crossbow' toys

Agence France-Presse

Handheld mini-crossbows that can fire needles and nails are the latest must-have toy in China, but anxious parents want them banned before a child gets blinded or worse.

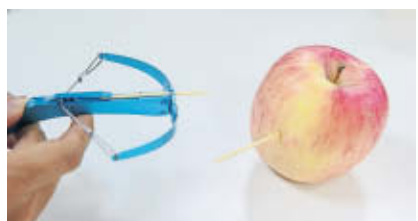
Selling online and in shops for as little as seven yuan (about 80p), so-called toothpick crossbows were originally designed to shoot just that - toothpicks.

But if they are loaded with needles, they are potent enough to crack glass, said the *Shanghai Daily* newspaper, quoting shop owners as saying they were selling out of the gadgets fast. Other Chinese state media said the mini-crossbows could fire projectiles more than 20 metres and shoot iron nails as well as toothpicks.

The *Shanghai Daily* said: "The toothpick crossbow toy has spread across China like wildfire among the nation's primary and middle school children.

"The unusual shooting toy may be very small but it is powerful enough to puncture a balloon and pierce cardboard. And when the toothpick is swapped for a metal needle it becomes a dangerous weapon."

Police in Chengdu, in south-west China, have reportedly stopped sales of the product, and concerned parents across the country want the government to introduce a nationwide ban.



Parents in China are worried that the weapons can be used to shoot needles

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