

## FILM REVIEW

by Noel Tanti

# Cockneys vs Zombies

Film: *Cockneys vs Zombies* (2012)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Director: Matthias Hoene

Certification: PG-13

Gore rating: ●●●●●

**AT A SITE** in East London, two construction workers inadvertently unearth the tomb belonging to the late King Charles II. Upon entering the crypt, they are assaulted, bitten and unkilld by former plague victims. Meanwhile, brothers Terry (Rasmus Hardiker) and Andy (Harry Treadaway), with their cousin Katy (Michelle Ryan), are planning a bank heist. The trio concoct this heinousness with a noble intent: saving their grandad's (Alan Ford) retirement home from being demolished by heartless property developers. But of course, everything goes pear-shaped when the entire neighbourhood is invaded by hordes of the undead.

*Cockneys* and zombies: that's what the title promises and that's exactly what it delivers. Given the self-conscious schlocky title, you would expect a crudely-made, amateurish production,

the likes of which litter the internet. The truth is, thankfully, very different. *Cockneys* has quite a high production value. It's not *World War Z* but footage of London enfolded in chaos and mayhem is rendered in good quality CG, as are the close-up shots of carnage.

Still, one problem with comedy zombie flicks is that they will forever be in the shadow of Edgar Wright's masterful *Shaun of the Dead* (2004). *Shaun* was a perfect storm of comedy, horror, excellent production, inspired casting, and fortuitous timing. Just as everybody was trying to get his/her head around the seemingly dubious merits and immense popularity of torture porn horror films (*Saw* and *The Passion of the Christ* were both released in 2004), in waltzed Messrs. Wright, (Simon) Pegg and (Nick) Frost who made everybody's sides split with laughter.

Luckily, even though *Cockneys vs Zombies* is nowhere near as brilliant as *Shaun*, it still can hold its head high. Director Matthias Hoene and writers James Moran (*Severance*, 2005) and Lucas Roche touch upon, but don't expand much, on the zombie-as-metaphor angle. They just want to play it for laughs and get more hits than misses. The scene in which poor old Hamish (Richard Briers) is being chased by the notoriously slow-moving zombies is pure gold and West Ham United supporters can put their mind at rest that, even after death, the feud with Millwall still rages on. In an inspired scene, we are at last shown that even infants are not immune to a zombie infestation.

*Cockneys* is no (early) George A. Romero and does not aspire to be. It just wants you to relax, pop some corn, sip on soda, and enjoy a zombie-tour around the streets of East London. ●