

# An Interview with *Winston Ellis*

Known for his roles in *The Dark Knight* and *Pirates of the Caribbean 2 & 3*, three time world Kickboxing Champion, martial artist and actor Winston Ellis chatted with **Only's Kim Hughes** about his plans to return to Peterborough, his friendships with A-listers and his latest project *Penny Dreadful* where he is working alongside Josh Hartnett and Billie Piper.

**Only:** So tell us more about your previous work, how did you get into the business?

**Winston:** "I was abroad in Greece in the early 80s and had just gained another title of kickboxing champion. I was practising on a beach and I kept asking myself 'what do I want to do with my life.'

"I got a call from Jackie Chan's production manager and I was offered the chance to make a movie with him in Hong Kong, this was the basis of the beginning of my career - martial arts films. (He later worked alongside Jet Li and Jean Claude Van Damme.)

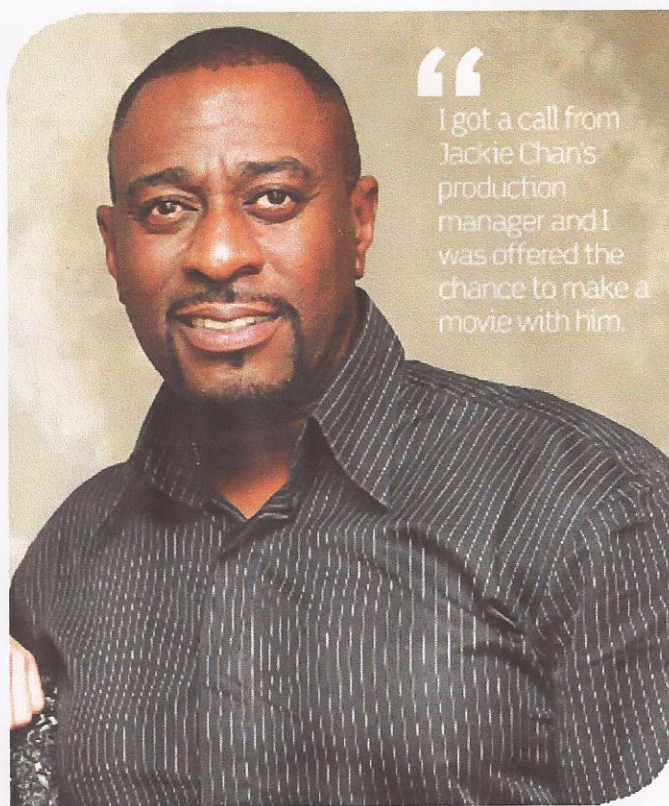
"Soon I returned to the UK to find an agent and to start taking my acting seriously, after that the calls started coming in.

"Quite a while later I was filming an ad in South Africa and my agent called me about a part in *Pirates of the Caribbean 2*, at this point the first movie was very new and in all honesty I hadn't seen it or really heard of it.

"Initially I turned it down - I didn't want to get killed. When I returned home my daughter quickly made me realise the mistake I'd made by showing me the first film.

"The second I saw Johnny sailing into the harbour on a sinking ship, I knew the movie would be great and I called my agent back.

"Initially I was told that the



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couldn't believe it when I found out. Such a tragic loss."

**Only:** Tell us about your upcoming return to Peterborough, what do you have planned on your visit?

**Winston:** "Well I'm attending a celebrity football match set to happen in May this year, I really want to support Sports Connections Foundation (SCF) and all the good work they do, in all honesty due to my scheduling this year I haven't been as involved with them as I should have been. As an ambassador, I do really want to support their work as much as possible."

**Only:** Will you be playing and bringing any big names with you?

**Winston:** (laughs) "Actually I'm a terrible football player, so I'll just be watching. I'm hoping to bring Josh (Hartnett) with me and Andy Beckwith, but who knows who will come along."

**Only:** So what's next in the pipeline for you?

**Winston:** "I'm actually working on a really big project alongside Josh Hartnett and Billie Piper at the moment. *Penny Dreadful* will air in the UK on 11th May, obviously I'm not allowed to give loads of details away, but it is a horror/thriller TV series.

"I can also tell you for the first time since 1997 I will be doing my own stunts - I'm starting to feel my age." (He laughs)

part had gone and I was too late, two days later I got the call and I was to play Palaifico, one of Davy Jones's (Bill Nighy's) henchmen.

"I was given the line 'the captain always goes down with the ship'."

"After that I was called back for the third film and I was also given a part on *The Dark Knight* (The 'why so serious' scene), it all began to kick off after that."

**Only:** What was it like working with Heath Ledger, as a method actor was he in his part between takes?

**Winston:** "No, but when he walked into a room, he had this incredible presence, he was friendly with all the cast. I met him whilst comparing coin tricks, which he was known for. But as soon as the cameras rolled, he fell into character, totally engrossed.

"Heath was a huge loss to me, it was devastating, he was such a huge personality and kind person.

"It was very much like when I was recently told about Phillip Seymour Hoffman, what a diverse actor and great man, I