



ISLAND OF TERROR (1966)

Blu-ray. Out Now. Odeon Entertainment. Certificate: PG.

One of a trio of sci-fi chillers made in the 60s by Hammer veteran Terence Fisher (the others were *The Earth Dies Screaming* and *Night Of The Big Heat*), this enjoyably hokey production has scientists Peter Cushing and Edward Judd travelling to a remote Scottish island to investigate mysterious deaths where the victims have had all the bones sucked out of their bodies.

It turns out that doctors working on a cancer cure have created silicone-based life forms that feed on calcium, and now the island is overrun with the pesky things, called silicates, (which can self-replicate, so there's no point in telling them to "Go f••k yourselves!").

The professionalism of Cushing's performance and Fisher's no-nonsense direction help to compensate for the laughable appearance of the creatures themselves, which look like Heath Robinson vacuum cleaners and trundle around so slowly that it's very hard to see why anybody should be scared of them. How they get up trees so they can drop on people's heads is another mystery that's never explained. It's a lot of fun to witness though.

This is actually like a colour version of *Fiend Without A Face*, with the same lovely slurping effects, and it even has an identical scene where the most cowardly guy in a room full of people is the first to fall victim to a sudden invasion of the monsters - which obviously serves him right for being so bloody yellow.

Even the big stars are not safe here though, and the best scene is the one where Peter Cushing has his arm chopped off with an axe to save him from being slurped. Pete's such a badass that he's laughing and joking five minutes later as if nothing happened.

Carole Grey is the heroine who doesn't get to do much apart from scream and look pretty, and look on admiringly as square-jawed Judd and the resolutely cheerful Cushing search for a scientific way to stop the silicates. Despite some obvious padding - notably a scene where Judd and Cushing



take about five minutes laboriously donning radiation suits - *Island of Terror* is great fun for fans of dodgy 60s sci-fi. The film has always been a favourite guilty pleasure of mine and it's great to see it getting a high def makeover here. Previous DVD versions have looked a bit pale, but Odeon have delivered a splendidly rich and colourful transfer and they've even managed to source an uncut print where we get to see a glimpse of the stump of Peter Cushing's severed arm. The film still gets a PG, probably because stoic Pete shrugs it off as a mere flesh wound.

Extras: None on our preview disc. **AB.**

TIMESLIP (1955) DVD.

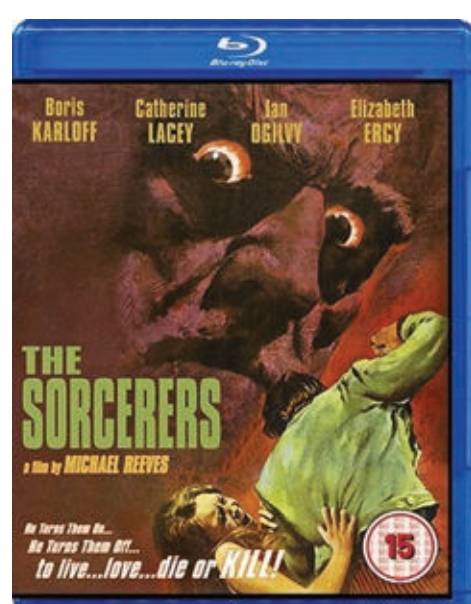
Out Now. Network. Certificate: 12.

Released Stateside as *The Atomic Man*, this routine thriller from a novel by Charles Eric Maine (*Spaceways*, *The Mind of Mr. Soames*) doesn't make the most of its intriguing sci-fi twist. Peter Arne is an atomic scientist found floating in the Thames with a bullet in his back. He dies on the operating table but comes back to life after seven and a half seconds, which puts his brain exactly the same amount of time ahead so he can predict the momentary future.

Rather than exploit the possibilities of this, the pedestrian script has the character confined to a hospital bed throughout, answering questions before they are asked in a way that brings to mind the classic *Two Ronnies* "Answering The Question Before Last" sketch.

Arne actually gets to play two roles, his plastic surgery double is now in charge of a local nuclear plant, with bandages all over his face, and it's up to imported American stars, former dancer Gene Nelson and *This Island Earth*'s Faith Domergue to uncover a sinister plot by B-movie villains to control the world's tungsten supply - the swines would then have the darts industry at their mercy!

You don't have to be shot in the back and dumped in the drink to be more than seven and a half seconds ahead of the predictable plot, but it's still a worthwhile watch for fans of vintage British crime thrillers, with a decent final reel shootout and the odd bit of amusing



dialogue. Asked "Have you been playing policeman?" by a concerned cop, cheery hero Nelson snaps back, "Have you been playing Scrabble?"

Extras: Trailer, promotional material and stills gallery. **AB.**

THE SORCERERS (1967) Blu-ray and DVD. Out: November 3rd. Odeon Entertainment. Certificate: 15.

One of the too-few movies made by talented British director Michael (*Witchfinder General*) Reeves, this interesting little swinging London chiller is one of Boris Karloff's best latter-day efforts. He plays an aged former hypnotist who has developed a device that can control the minds of others, and finds a willing guinea pig to test it on when he picks up bored youth Ian Ogilvy in a Wimpy Bar.

Once Ogilvy is given a psychedelic brainwashing in one of the shabbiest mad labs ever seen on screen, Karloff and his creepy old wife (Catherine Lacey) can make him do anything they want, and they can also experience his feelings and emotions - a seductive thrill that encourages the evil Lacey to push their remote control puppet to commit criminal acts and finally murder. But their bad deeds come back to bite them in a grisly manner in a *Tales From The Crypt*-style final twist.

Neatly done on a low (£50,000) budget, the film invites interesting parallels between what Karloff and Lacey are doing with the vicarious thrills offered by the cinematic experience itself. Lacey is one scary old lady, making Karloff look like a kindly old grandad by comparison. Look for a brief appearance by Susan George as a murder victim, and Billy Bunter as the effeminate owner of an antique shop.

Another great choice for Blu-ray treatment, *The Sorcerers* looks really splendid here, with a strong HD transfer that brings out the eye-searing glory of the film's fashion-challenged 60s mise-en-scène. No extras on our review disc but I believe some are planned, including interviews with star Ian Ogilvy and writer Tom Baker (not the one who sometimes wears a scarf). **AB.**