

Hooray! Postman Pat: The Movie is here!



By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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The world's favourite Postman and his tuxedo feline sidekick Jess make their glorious big screen debut in *Postman Pat: The Movie*, a hilarious fun-filled animated adventure for the whole family. We need some fun in our lives and this vibrant and colourful animated film will definitely put a smile on your face.

This adorable 30-year-old heritage character, famous across the world for being a cornerstone of every child's TV viewing habits for 30 years, is now a feature film star and celebrity, while retaining all of the integrity of his world, his cat and his friends, all icons of a the BBC's brilliant television reign that have become etched into the childhood memory of every man, woman, and child who has grown up watching him year after year.



What happens when kindness meets selfishness? When local fame meets global notoriety? A nice cup of tea is kicked aside by a frappacappuccino? These questions confront Postman Pat when he comes face to face with the dark side of the fame dream when he enters a national TV talent show and the demons of money, status and a new shiny suit conspire to tear Pat away from the small home town that loves him.

Charming countryside village

In the film, Postman Pat (the voice of Stephen Mangan), a humble and beloved postman, lives an idyllic life in the charming countryside village of Greendale with his wife Sara (Susan Duerdenf) and his loyal and best friend Jess, the famous black-and-white cat (voice of director Mike Disa, who was born and raised on the rough-and-tumble South Side of Chicago where he developed of a lifelong passion for escapist entertainment, such as animation, classic films, literature, and English television).

After viewing an episode of *You're The One*, a TV talent contest, Pat throws his hat in the ring and competes for the grand prize, which includes a recording contract and, as fate would have it, a trip to Italy. Pat is a sensation, singing beautifully (singing voiced by Ronan Keating) and set for fame.



Along the way, Pat falls prey to the trappings of fame and fortune, and his sudden thrust into the spotlight threatens to cost him the very things that he holds dearest: his family, his friends and his job.

For producer David J Corbett, the main production issue was that the beloved postman had never been seen in any form other than stop motion animation.

"We were going to bring him to life in CG for the first time. On top of that, Pat Clifton had never graced the big screen in his long and glorious life, and as with any TV star the big question is always: Can he do it? Transitioning from 15-minute TV episodes to an 85-minute theatrical feature film requires a star of immeasurable ability and was a real and important question. With our firm belief that story is everything, we spent long hours, days, and weeks perfecting the screenplay and over the process we became convinced that Pat could indeed be a movie star."



Super-spectacular opening sequence

From the super-spectacular opening sequence, which shows a wide tracking shot of the Greendale Express as it chugs its way through rural Britain, flying over green fields of grazing sheep and cattle, swooping down over placid streams and windmills, and soaring above the landscape of animated pastoral life that makes up the fabric of the countryside surrounding Greendale, the audience immediately feels comfortably at home entering Pat's world.

"It is, though, an environment on the verge of encroachment via commerce, fame, and finance. This whirlwind, so at odds with the folk of Greendale, shuttles Pat from the familiar to the unknown. It is a journey that - with great music, a lively sense of humour, and some fun Pat-bots all mixed together - rewards the audience with a universally themed, family-friendly, wild-and-exciting cinematic thrill ride! We did our job."

If one watches the end credit roll on any animated feature film, one notices the 5 to 10 minute duration.

Says Corbett: "Animation requires an army, from writers, to sketch artists, set designers, character designers, directors, producers, technical directors, CG supervisors, managers, model builders, riggers, animators, colour stylists, composers, songwriters, sound designers, mixers, accountants, lawyers, and production assistants who contribute their expertise in turning a concept into a silver-screen reality. Taking 100 pages of script to an 85-minute adventure on film requires hundreds of people, over two years and thousands of drawings, before the film is ready for the theatres."

A global business

Animation has become a global business requiring the efforts of teams toiling simultaneously in various countries around the world. Pat was produced with crews from Los Angeles to the UK, from Amman, Jordan to Mumbai, India, on aeroplanes, in hotel rooms and recording studios in Soho, Stratford-upon-Avon, Woodland Hills, Burbank, and Santa Monica. The whole process was digital, speeding around the world through a pipeline of highly organised and specialised software programs, delivering assets from one artist to the desktop of another artist on the other end of the world where he could complete a piece of the virtual assembly line.

In Corbett's words: "In animated features, creativity meets technology meets commerce all in a day's work."

With regard to computer animation (CGI), the slightest variation in constructing the mesh underpinnings of a character model causes it to 'break' under the strains of a rig, the infrastructure that makes the character animate. To prevent this, top IT personnel on Pat tested and inspected every aspect of modelling, thereby confirming that the results supported the directorial vision.

Like nothing else in filmmaking, CG production requires the greatest technical scrutiny to enable artistic freedom and realism in character performance.

The model and set builders in Los Angeles and Amman went to great pains to reproduce the details of Pat, Sara, Jess the Cat, and all of the very identifiable characters of Greendale.

As a fan of the original TV show, director Mike Disa jumped at the chance to helm the Postman Pat movie and spend time working with some of the many English actors and artists he has long admired.

For him, being chosen to be the voice of Jess the Cat is the greatest thrill of his career so far and directing Postman Pat the project he is proudest of.

Postman Pat: The Movie is indeed a work of passion. If you are looking for wholesome family entertainment, it won't disappoint with its hilarious antics and biting satire.

For more on Postman Pat: The Movie and other films opening this week, go to www.writingstudio.co.za.

ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

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