



PULLING UP STUMPS

PRESS KIT



PRESS CONTACT

Elinor Teele (Writer/Director)

Phone: +64 21 170 4788

Email: teele.writer@gmail.com

LINKS

Website: pullingupstumps.com

Instagram: [pullingupstumps](https://www.instagram.com/pullingupstumps)

Press Kit: pullingupstumps.com/press-kit





PULLING UP STUMPS

FORMAT	Short Film (13 Minutes)
GENRE	Comic Drama
LANGUAGE	English
LOCATION	Arrowtown (Aotearoa New Zealand)
COMPLETION DATE	June 1, 2023
CAST	Ian Mune, Mark Mitchinson & Giovanni
WRITER/DIRECTOR	Elinor Teele
CINEMATOGRAPHER	Alun Bollinger NZCS (AlBol)
CO-PRODUCERS	Emma Martini of FrameUpMedia Phillida Perry of Perrys Road
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS	Brett Mills, Elinor Teele
SPONSORS	AVIS, Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel Queenstown Camera Company
SUPPORTERS	Film Queenstown Lakes



WORLD PREMIERE

In Progress

FESTIVAL SELECTIONS

In Progress

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

In Progress

TECHNICAL SPECS

Digital; 1.85:1; 5.1 Theatrical; Arri Alexa Mini

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Pulling Up Stumps Ltd.
95 Devonport Road
Tauranga 3116
New Zealand

LOGLINE

Amidst the dust & shadows of a Central Otago woolshed, a grumpy old man is obliged to listen to a humorous tale from a meddlesome stranger.

SYNOPSIS

On a dusty day in Central Otago, a man in his 80s enters his workshop. His mission? To fix a broken kitchen appliance.

His task is interrupted by the arrival of a chatty stranger and an irksome rooster. After several attempts to get rid of distractions, the old man is forced to listen to the tales of his visitor, including the saga of an obstinate stump.

Gradually, it becomes clear that the stranger may not be so strange. And the story may have more meaning than first meets the ear.





INSPIRATION FOR THE FILM

Old Stories Never Die

PULLING UP STUMPS is a memory piece.

The setting of an Otago woolshed is inspired by my father's workshop in Arrowtown. The tale of the stump is based on a true event that happened to my grandfather. And the film itself is an echo of times gone by.

In 2021, I moved back to Otago after a long stint in the States. It was a wonderful choice, but it was bittersweet to see how much the Lakes District and Central areas had changed.

Sheep stations had vanished. Adventure tourism, golf courses, and sprawling housing developments were now the order of the day.

You can't stop progress, but you can honour the past. So I decided to write a story about people I knew. Through my parents, I have been privileged to meet men & women who remember Central as it was—a place of hard farming, stalwart neighbours, and dry as dust humour.

PULLING UP STUMPS is a tribute to these Southerners. Through this short film, I hope to preserve a family story and the character of a world that's fading fast.

Elinor Teele (Writer/Director)

IAN MUNE | OLDER BLOKE

On stage and in the wings, in front of and behind the camera, **Ian Mune** has been a constant presence in Aotearoa New Zealand's performing landscape for more than four decades.

As his credits demonstrate, Ian is identified with many of the milestones of Kiwi cinema and television as a performer, producer, director and writer. His screen debut was in the pioneering drama series **PUKEMANU** (1971), which was also an opportunity to start developing his writing skills.

Ian's longtime collaboration with Roger Donaldson included **SLEEPING DOGS**, regarded as one of the pivotal moments in New Zealand's cinematic renaissance.

Ian co-wrote **GOODBYE PORK PIE**, and his feature film directorial debut was another homegrown classic, 1985's **CAME A HOT FRIDAY**. Bringing **THE END OF THE GOLDEN WEATHER** to the big screen in 1991 was a major personal and public highlight.

After **ONCE WERE WARRIORS**, Ian stepped in at short notice to direct the sequel, **WHAT BECOMES OF THE BROKEN HEARTED?** which won nine New Zealand Film Awards in 1999 and remains his biggest commercial success.

Having made an early decision to set aside the opportunity of joining the Royal Shakespeare Company and return from the UK to "talk my own language," it is not surprising that Ian has long been a passionate promoter of the telling of Kiwi stories, and of an untrammelled creative environment.

A raft of awards, including an OBE in 1991 for services to Film and Theatre, underline the remarkable impact he has had in Kiwi culture.



MARK MITCHINSON | YOUNGER BLOKE

Mark Mitchinson is an English-born New Zealand actor who trained at the Guildhall School of Speech and Drama in London.

One of Mark's first major roles on-screen was in the 2010 telemovie **BLOODLINES**; Mark was named Best Actor at the 2011 Aotearoa Film and TV Awards for his performance.

A year later, Mark was named Best Lead Actor at the NZ Television Awards for his portrayal of gunman Jan Molenaar in **SIEGE**.

In the intervening years, Mark has amassed a long list of industry credits, including roles in major New Zealand TV series like **THE LUMINARIES** and films like **THE HOBBIT**.

Mark is also a regular voice-over artist for the **POWER RANGERS** and won the Best Voice-Over Performance for Sky Television in the **PROMAX ANZ 2021 Awards**.

From **THE AMAZING EXTRAORDINARY FRIENDS** to **MORTAL ENGINES**, from **SPARTACUS** to **THE SHANNARA CHRONICLES**, and from series like **THE GULF** to **THE PANTHERS**, Mark's characters have run the gamut of emotions.

In 2017, he co-starred in the psychological thriller **HUMAN TRACES**, as a scientist on a remote island with his wife and a mysterious new arrival. In **WELLINGTON PARANORMAL**, he played the Ghost Cop Miller.

Mark will next be seen in two independent films, **FROZEN MOMENTS** and **THE TANK**, and the TV series, **SAFE HOME**.





GIOVANNI as THE ROOSTER

Giovanni is a seasoned veteran of the Silver Screen. He previously acted in the short film, *MAUNGA CASSINO*, which was shot in the Queenstown Basin area.

Giovanni's theatrical specialty is ornery poultry with little regard for human frailties. He also likes dog fights.





INTERVIEW Q&A

WOMEN IN FILM

Q&A: ELINOR TEELE (WRITER/DIRECTOR)

Why This Particular Story? Why Now?

Because the world of PULLING UP STUMPS is vanishing. In a few more years, it will be hard to find men like the one Ian Mune portrays in the film. These are Otago sheep farmers with 60+ years of rural stories running through their veins. Their kind will not come again.

Why Did You Shoot in an Otago Woolshed?

Verisimilitude! Although a real woolshed presented us with some logistical challenges—including the threat of thunderous rain—it was key to the reality of the story. It was covered in bird droppings and cobwebs. It smelled like sheep, dust, and wood shavings. And it gave the actors a sense of reality we never would have achieved in a studio.

What Was It Like Working with AlBol & Local Crew?

Heaven. AlBol has such a gracious presence on set that it alters the feel in the air. After a few hours on the first day, I could sense the entire crew working in concert with him. I remember one moment where we needed to move quickly through shots and it was like watching a dance.

You can't go past Queenstown & Wānaka-based crew members. Many of them have worked on prestigious international productions, including THE HOBBIT and AVATAR, but they're still willing to pitch in on a local project.





Q&A: ELINOR TEELE (CONT'D)

What Challenges Did You Face as a First-Time Film Director?

Initially, it was building up the team. Because I had been living abroad, I didn't know many film creatives in the area. Fortunately, I met my wonderful co-producers, Phillida Perry and Emma Martini, through WIFT NZ. Phillida plucked the story out of a giant pile of scripts.

I also had a rollicking lunch with our executive producer, Brett Mills. Since he's the director of the Queenstown Camera Company, he knows everyone. Brett introduced me to Ian Mune. Ian introduced me to AlBol & Mark Mitchinson. And then we were golden. Everyone wanted to work with Kiwi legends.

Who Are Your Directing Influences?

I'm a bit of an omnivore when it comes to film. I grew up watching old-school directors like George Stevens, Carol Reed, and Billy Wilder on TCM, but I love filmmakers such as Youssef Chahine (*ALEXANDRIA...WHY?*), Gabriel Axel (*BABETTE'S FEAST*), and Bille August (*A FORTUNATE MAN*).

It's not only about the directors. I adore cinematographers such as Roger Deakins and James Wong Howe and editors like Walter Murch and Thelma Schoonmaker. Anyone who believes in craft.

What's Next in Your Filmmaking Journey?

I'm currently in development with international producers on a couple of female-led, high-end period projects—a UK TV series and a US feature set in Massachusetts. I also have a few lower budget features and TV concepts designed for the South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand.



Q&A: PHILLIDA PERRY (CO-PRODUCER)

Why Produce This Story?

The “old-timer” story really spoke to me.

I’m a farmer’s daughter and I know these men – understated, yet emotional and deeply connected to place. They hone stories, retelling the best ones over time adding detail & embellishment as years go by.

Each story is a conduit for connection and a well-told story is a mark of identity and character.

How Integral Was the Acting in Telling This Story?

When Elinor attached Ian Mune to play the Older Bloke, I knew we had a unique opportunity to capture that rare bird – the older Kiwi male.

The subtle play between the characters meant the film would stand or fall on the acting, so we were doubly excited when Mark Mitchinson agreed to play the Younger Bloke. Ian and Mark brilliantly embody these old-boy characters and their warmth and chemistry on screen is endearing.

Giovanni the Rooster adds a wonderful comic note subtly reminding us that our time is limited.



Q&A: PHILLIDA PERRY (CONT'D)

How Important is the Shed in the Story?

The corrugated iron shed is part of New Zealand's landscape – it's like another character in the film. Walk into any working shed and you'll find memory and history in the experiences and tools collected there. The machinery and equipment, half-finished projects and discarded artefacts are evidence of our no-8 wire philosophy and Kiwi attitude.

We had a blast touring Central Otago in search of the perfect "man shed." The set has a specific Central Otago flavour that is perfectly framed in AlBol's gorgeous cinematography.

What's Next for You as a Producer?

My first feature documentary, *MS INFORMATION*, is releasing mid-year 2023. It's about Dr. Siouxsie Wiles and the misinformation and misogyny that was so prevalent during the pandemic. I'm in post-production on my short film, *GOOD KUNST*, about an all-women art buying group and I have a documentary series, *COLLECTOR COLLECTOR*, in development.

I'm supporting writers Tracey Slaughter and Liam Hinton on their adaptation, *THE LONGEST DRINK IN TOWN*, for the screen. I'm also developing a drama series, *WHERE TO FIND ME*, which is sourced in my family's six-generation farming history in Wairarapa, New Zealand, and our recent legal battle to protect a gift of land made to the Crown.



Q&A: EMMA MARTINI (CO-PRODUCER)

What Inspired You to Join the Producing Team on PULLING UP STUMPS?

I found out about the project after completing Film Art Media's Emerging Producers' Intensive, which is run by Charlotte Seymour of Screen Australia and Sue Maslin, producer of *THE DRESSMAKER*. That's where I met Phillida.

I love a good story that resonates. Elinor's script brought back memories of my Grandfather, his shed, and life on the farm as a kid visiting in the school holidays. If I interrupted him watching *One News*, I was given a big growl!

The rooster for humour and the talented actors attached meant Elinor's short film was in for success before the camera started rolling.

What's Next in Your Producing Journey?

I've spent the last 25 years working and producing content for tamariki (children) and whānau (family) through WhitebaitMedia. With my own children now consuming endless drama and animation on global platforms, I want to create more New Zealand-made dramas for Kiwis and kids worldwide to enjoy.

As an independent producer, I'm currently working on an 8-part children's drama series called *MĀUI AND ELVIS* that is in the final development stages. I'm also producing a Young Adult (YA) feature film by author Jack Hartley called *BENEATH OUR FEET* and an animated preschool series. Since I live in Christchurch, I'm keen to help grow and nurture HODs and local crew throughout the South Island.



TEAM STUMPS

KEY CREATIVES

WRITER/DIRECTOR: ELINOR TEELE

Elinor Teele is a screenwriter, theatre actor & director, and HarperCollins author with family ties to Arrowtown.

PULLING UP STUMPS is her debut as a film director.

1/2 Brit and 1/2 Yankee, Elinor has led a peripatetic life. Born & raised near Boston, Elinor immigrated with her family to Aotearoa New Zealand in her early teens.

She earned her undergraduate degree at the University of Otago before traveling to the UK for postgraduate work. She holds a Ph.D. in Old English Literature from the University of Cambridge.

Her first middle grade book, THE MECHANICAL MIND OF JOHN COGGIN (Walden Pond Press/HarperCollins), received a Kirkus Star.

Her second novel, THE TREASURE OF MAD DOC MAGEE (Walden Pond Press/HarperCollins), was based on Arrowtown in the aftermath of the Otago Gold Rush and was a Junior Library Guild Pick.

As a director, she created STUDS TERKEL'S AMERICAN CENTURY, an interactive theatre production that dramatized verbatim interviews of 20th century Americans.

A few years ago, Elinor turned to filmmaking. Her screenwriting portfolio features diverse, character-driven dramas with a unique sense of place.

Elinor currently has two optioned works in development:

DILL is a US period feature with producer Nerissa Williams Scott of TCGT Entertainment. DILL was chosen as a Daily Reads selection for the Roxbury International Film Festival. Nerissa was also selected for the PGA Create Lab/Fellowship from 2022-2023 with this project.

LONDON SPARROW is a UK TV Series with producer Daniel Kenney of New Colony Film. LONDON SPARROW was selected for the Filmarket Hub UK Online Pitchbox.

To learn more about her work, visit her website, elinorteele.com.



CINEMATOGRAPHER: ALUN BOLLINGER

Alun Bollinger NZCS, widely known as **AlBol**, began his extensive career at the age of 17. As a cinecamera trainee with the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation, he shot news, current affairs, and documentaries for television.

After leaving the Corporation, aged 20, AlBol became a freelancer and was involved with feature work from the beginning of the new wave of New Zealand cinema.

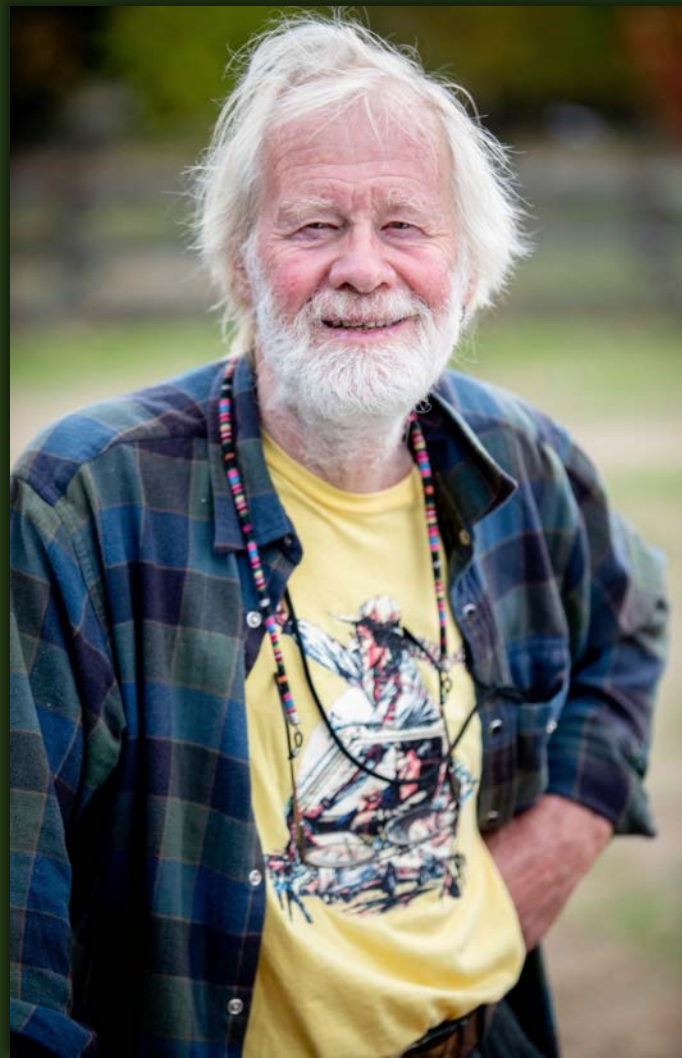
AlBol's work features in numerous high-profile New Zealand projects such as the quintessential **GOODBYE PORK PIE** (DP; Director: Geoff Murphy); and **MR WRONG**, **BREAD AND ROSES**, **WAR STORIES**, **PERFECT STRANGERS** and **LOVELY RITA** (Camera Operator & DP; Director: Gaylene Preston).

He has been the eye behind **HEAVENLY CREATURES**, **FORGOTTEN SILVER**, **THE FRIGHTENERS** (DP), and **LORD OF THE RINGS** (Second Unit; Director: Peter Jackson); **WHAT BECOMES OF THE BROKEN HEARTED**, **END OF THE GOLDEN WEATHER**, and **CAME A HOT FRIDAY** (DP & Camera Operator; Director: Ian Mune); and **VIGIL** and **RIVER QUEEN** (DP; Director: Vincent Ward).

AlBol became a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) for services to cinematography in 2005 and received an Arts Foundation Laureate Award in 2006.

AlBol is a member of the New Zealand Film and Television School Trust and offers occasional master-classes and lectures at film schools.

Much sought-after for his skills as a Director of Photography, AlBol prefers to spend at least half the year away from the film business, working on other projects back at his home in Blacks Point, near Reefton on the West Coast of the South Island, where he and his wife Helen live among their extended family.





CO-PRODUCER: EMMA MARTINI

Based in Ōtautahi/Christchurch, **Emma Martini** is a South Island producer with 25 years of experience in the film & TV industry.

Over the course of 20 years with WhitebaitMedia, Emma has produced works like the iconic WHAT NOW, THE ERIN SIMPSON SHOW, and TAKE THE MIC. Her most recent role at Whitebait was as the co-creator and producer of the animated co-production series DARWIN AND NEWTS, which is now in 8 languages across 50 countries.

In her role as an independent producer with FrameUpMedia, Emma has two projects currently in development: MĀUI AND ELVIS and BENEATH OUR FEET. Her love for scripted story, strong characters, and local narratives has also seen her support some exciting short film projects being made in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Emma is a board member for her local school and a community representative on the Selwyn District Council Creative Communities Committee.

CO-PRODUCER: PHILLIDA PERRY

Phillida Perry is a writer, producer, and philanthropist with a successful legal and business background. She has a long history in the arts, starting George Perry Gallery in early 2000s. She is chairperson of The Tauranga Art Gallery Foundation.

In 2021, Phillida started Daughter, a production company dedicated to female empowerment stories with director, Gwen Isaac. In 2020, she produced the award-winning short documentary SIOUXSIE & THE VIRUS, with mentorship from Loading Docs via their 'Revolution' series. It was awarded best film in the Long Story Shorts competition and has been viewed over 358,000 times online.

Daughter is developing MS. INFORMATION into a feature documentary with Alex Reed, Bloom Pictures Limited, lead producer.

Phillida is also in post-production on GOOD KUNST, a film that celebrates 13-years of shared art experiences by an all-women art buying collective.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: BRETT MILLS

Brett Mills is the owner & director of the Queenstown Camera Company (qcam.co.nz), an independent and boutique camera house in Queenstown.

Born & bred in Queenstown, Brett has impeccable local roots. He's the great-grandson of the first provedore on Queenstown's steamship, the T.S.S. Earnslaw, which launched in 1912. He's also the son of well-known skier, Johnny Mills.

Brett worked as an electrical apprentice with the local power board before he heard the siren call of film.

In 1980, he was asked to look after a generator for *A WOMAN OF GOOD CHARACTER*, produced by Grahame McLean and set in the Moke Valley.

Taking care of the generator led to an ad hoc lighting technician role on the film. And that led to work on *UTU* as a generator operator.

For the next five years, Brett worked his way up through the lighting department, graduating to gaffer on Bruno Lawrence's *THE QUIET EARTH*. He has also worked as a gaffer on *ILLUSTRIOUS ENERGY*, *HEAVENLY CREATURES*, and *10,000 BC*.

In 1987, Brett decided to move back to Queenstown and make it a film hub.

He started by purchasing a 6K light for \$27,000—the biggest light he could buy. Over subsequent years, he gradually began to build up his arsenal of lighting cranes, cameras & lenses.

Today, QCam is known for its top-of-the-line gear, including an impressive array of Arri Alexas. Countless producers of commercials, TV dramas, and feature films now shoot in the Otago area.

In addition to providing gear for high-flying productions, Brett also makes a point of fostering local talent. He has been an Executive Producer (EP) on scores of independent short films shot in Otago, including *MILK*, *BLOOD AND GOLD*, and *WAY SOUTH*, as well as Kiwi features such as *THE INLAND ROAD*, *STRAY*, and *IN PASSING*. This kind of invaluable grassroots support has led to jobs for local crew and training for student volunteers.





TEAM STUMPS

South Island Crew

FIRST ASSISTANT CAMERA: Bradley Willemse

FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: George Cassells

GAFFER: Jo Bollinger

GRIP: Nick Flyvbjerg

SOUND RECORDIST: Joseph Veale

LIGHTING ASSISTANTS: Ella Dickson & Dave Mark

MAKE-UP ARTISTS: Laura King & Charlie Oswin

ROOSTER WRANGLERS: Anouk den Boer & Ella Mills

DIGITAL IMAGING TECHNICIAN: James Farrow

CLAPPER LOADER: Rudi Beavan

PRODUCTION RUNNERS: Jack Smillie & Jack Trounce

EDITOR: Shane Loader

COMPOSER: Hamish Oliver

CELLIST: Amy McMurdo

UNIT PHOTOGRAPHER: Jackie Gay

CONCEPT ARTIST: Spike Wademan

GRAPHIC DESIGN: Jen McBride

TEAM STUMPS

North Island Crew

POST-PRODUCTION FACILITY: Department of Post

COLOURIST: Julian Dyson

SOUND DESIGNER: Bruce Langley

ONLINE EDITOR: Joss Hardman

SCRIPT CONSULTANT: Kathryn Burnett





CREW HIGHLIGHTS

PRODUCTION

George Cassells (First Assistant Director) has served as a Production Assistant, Third AD, and Second AD on major productions such as TOP OF THE LAKE and X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE.

George worked closely with our writer/director, Elinor Teele; co-producers, Emma Martini and Phillida Perry; and two student volunteers from Wakatipu High School – Jack Smillie and Jack Trounce, also known as “The Jack’s”.

CAMERA TEAM

Bradley Willemse (First Assistant Camera) has been a 1st AC or A Camera on scores of high-profile NZ TV series, including ALIBI, POWER RANGERS, and BROKENWOOD MYSTERIES.

Nick Flyvbjerg (Grip) has recently worked as a Grip on iconic productions such as POWER OF THE DOG, ONE LANE BRIDGE, and THE HOBBIT SERIES.

Bradley & Nick collaborated closely with our esteemed Cinematographer, Alun Bollinger NZCS, Rudi Beavan (Clapper Loader), and one of our key sponsors, the Queenstown Camera Company.

LIGHTING DEPARTMENT

Jo Bollinger (Gaffer) has been a Gaffer on prestigious independent films, including COUSINS, DON'T MAKE ME GO, JUNIPER, and BABY DONE, as well as Second Unit Gaffer on AVATAR: WAY OF WATER.

JoBol was supported by two experienced Lighting Assistants: Ella Dickson and Dave Mark.





CREW HIGHLIGHTS

SOUND DEPARTMENT

Joseph Veale (Sound Recordist) has been working in the South Island for 20+ years. He has been a Soundie for TV series such as GORDON RAMSAY: UNCHARTED, HEARTBREAK ISLAND, and THE EXPLORER CLUB, as well as Boom Operator for DON'T MAKE ME GO.

HAIR & MAKE-UP

Laura King (Make-Up) and Charlie Oswin (Make-Up) collaborated on hair & make-up for our two Otago gentlemen. Laura has been an Additional Make-Up Artist on POWER OF THE DOG and ONE LANE BRIDGE.

EDITING & POST PRODUCTION

Shane Loader (Editor) is a multi-talented filmmaker. He has been an editor on projects such as ROOTS/RAIZES, SOMEONE ELSE'S COUNTRY, and TAKING THE WAEWAE EXPRESS, as well as a director on his own films such as KOBI, THE GREAT MAIDEN'S BLUSH, and HOOK, LINE AND SINKER.

Hamish Oliver (Composer) is a seasoned composer, sound designer, and university professor. He has scored dozens of works for TV, film, and video games. He has also been composing music and creating sound designs for plays at Christchurch's The Court Theatre since 1997.

Shane and Hamish worked closely with our post-production facility, Department of Post, and James Farrow, our tech-savvy Digital Imaging Technician.

PRESS COVERAGE

VIEW THE ONLINE PRESS KIT: pullingupstumps.com/press-kit

Locals and veteran stars shine in 'sensitive, emotional, and nuanced' Arrowtown movie

"Both the director and lead actor note how much the region has changed in a short time. This rapid change is why Elinor wanted to create the story and why she believes it's gained so much support from locals.

'It is poignant for me having come here, and then been abroad, and then come back to see how quickly it's changed and to see some of what I call the old guards – the farming families – and the locals moving out, often, or just passing away.

'I wanted to capture it just before it completely vanished.'"

[Crux](#) – March 24, 2023

Ian Mune starring in local short film

"'I'm hoping the film will become a love letter to Central...' says Teele, who admits she was 'gobsmacked' when Mune accepted her invitation to play the lead role.

Not only will the film preserve a family story, but it will also pay homage to a time that's fading fast, she adds.

[Mountain Scene](#) – November 10, 2022





CONTACT

Elinor Teele (Writer/Director)

teele.writer@gmail.com

+64 21 170 4788

pullingupstumps.com