The Silent Years: Behind the Scenes Gallery

A selection of photographs covering the making of the animated film...

The Silent Years began life in 1993 at Leeds Metropolitan University. It took eighteen months to finish the project, which was a collaboration between students Simon Webster & Richard Sargent.

The sets were made from sections of hardboard for the walls, with cardboard for the roof sections and exterior details such as chimneys and towers.

Inside the buildings were furnishings and props, all made from scratch based on research by Simon & Richard. The windows were clear acetate, with ironwork photocopied on.

Caught red-handed! Photocopies of the rooftile design were glued onto the cardboard roof sections then painted terracotta.

Richard at work animating the Novice in the church stalls.

A single blue blanket was used for sky in the background of shots. Squares of carpet, painted in shades of green, were used whenever grass was needed. A brown sheet was the cliffside (with some detailing from a black marker pen).

The sets had to be a certain minimum size in order to incorporate the monk figures. Even though only the main cloister

buildings were built the assembled sets took up an impressive amount of room.

During the time-consuming process of animation all sets and props have to be fixed firmly in place with tape and blu-tak, and sometimes stools!

The 2006 Special Edition...

For the new version of the film the sets and props were brought out of storage and dusted down ready to be filmed at Hopewell Studios.

The gatehouse to the abbey, one of the new shots added for the Special Edition. The trees are real conifer branches, with those on the left painted orange to match the existing wide-shot from 1995.

Richard puts the finishing touches to a small model of part of the abbey. This shot of the fields in the monastery grounds was only used twice in the film, and the buildings here were improvised out of coloured card on the day, to add some background detail.

Novice is ready for his close-up!

The refectory. For ease of camera access all the sets were designed with removable walls, and for this new refectory sequence only two sides of the set were necessary.

This is just a small selection of the hundreds of behind the scenes photographs that can be found in the Galleries section of The Silent Years: Special Edition DVD.