

# University Professor helps out with blockbuster film

**A** Chichester academic has turned Hollywood consultant for the latest big-hitting fairy-tale blockbuster.

Bill Gray, *pictured*, professor of Literary History and Hermeneutics at the University of Chichester, was brought in by the production team on *Snow White And The Huntsman* with Chris Hemsworth, Kristen Stewart and Charlize Theron.

Director Rupert Sanders wanted to ensure the film's credibility by checking in with one of our leading authorities on fantasy literature.

The film, which will be released on May 30, offers an action-adventure makeover of the classic fairy tale.

"I got a call from one of the production team," says Bill. "They wanted to meet up with me. The director had read my book *Fantasy, Myth And The Measure Of Truth*, in which I was trying to argue the importance of fantasy in literature."

In the past, it hasn't been taken seriously at times or has been dismissed as a distraction, with many academics openly contemptuous of it. Director Sanders wanted to take a pre-emptive strike against possible critics by bringing in Bill to lend the project his authority.

"They wanted me to give the film symbolic weight, symbolic resonance.

Rupert Sanders is an up-and-coming director. This is his first feature film. He was aware of the potential there was for rubbishing the film.

"So I went up to meet the team at the Soho Hotel. It was like a dream really. It was a big table and all these Hollywood producers eye-balling me in a friendly way. I had the sense there was big money involved here. Rupert showed me some sequences from the film. Some bits had been made by then.

"They gave me the script which I came home with and sat in my garden and read. I had a non-disclosure contract! It was interesting, but I saw some areas for

improvement. If nothing else, it had some terrible names for the dwarfs."

And judging by Wikipedia, some of Bill's names have been accepted, including Gort and Quert.

As for his other suggestions, Bill can't say, not having seen the film, but his recommendations were to bring out the importance of interfamilial conflict in the story.

As part of the process, Bill visited the studios in Pinewood where the film was being made – and where he vowed never again to leave a film before the credits have finished. All those hundreds of names that scroll up, Bill can confirm they do actually exist.

