

BALMEDIE BEACH IS MOVIE PLANET

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PALS Mark Stirton and Michael Clark have just finished the first feature length Scottish sci-fi film ... for just £8,000.

Most of it was filmed at Balmedie BEACH just up the coast from Aberdeen – which they turned into a scene from outer space.

The special effects were filmed in Mark's living room, the costumes are Russian cast-offs and half the budget came from donations by locals.

The pair released *The Planet* on DVD but now Sky TV are interested in buying it and the friends are in talks with film distributors.

Director Mark Stirton, 36, said: "Balmedie was actually the inspiration for our film.

"There's no signs of civilisation and with the rolling dunes it looks like Mars.

"Some of the cast and crew did get badly sunburnt one day, but that just added to the effect and made the actors actually look like they were stranded on some alien planet."

The Planet is the story of a spaceship crew facing a

By SARAH TOLAN

terrifying enemy. Director Mark and producer Michael put in £4,000 of their own money and raised the other half from donations.

Producer Michael, 41, said: "We had to beg, borrow and steal to get everything but we had really good support from local companies.

"And we got all the costumes on the web from Russia. They're ex-Russian military uniforms so they already looked battered and worn."

The film features some top Hollywood-style special effects – all put together in Mark's living room.

Mark laughed: "After we shot the film in May 2004, we spent two years teaching ourselves how to do computer effects.

"There are over 400 visual effect shots – and I'm really chuffed with the end result."

The Planet was shot with a total of five crew and ten actors – and the main star is Mr Universe 2005

Mike Mitchell, 52, from Aberdeen, left.

Mark said: "We put ads in local press for the cast. Mike was just perfect for the part."

