

# MOVIE REVIEWS

**Declan Burke**

## **The Girl in the Spider's Web**

★★☆☆☆

**Robin Hood** ★★☆☆☆

## **The Camino Voyage** ★★★★★

**O**H what a tangled web, etc. The girl with the dragon tattoo, aka the Swedish computer hacker Lisbeth Salander (Claire Foy), returns in **The Girl in the Spider's Web** (15A), which opens in Stockholm with Lisbeth meting out some appropriately harsh justice to a man who abuses women. Soon, however, Lisbeth is caught up in an international spy intrigue when Frans Balder (Stephen Merchant) commissions her to hack into America's National Security Agency and steal the computer programme he has devised, which gives its user control of the world's nuclear arsenal. Pursued by the NSA's Special Agent Needham (Lakeith Stanfield) and a gang of Russian criminals known as 'the Spiders', Lisbeth finds herself on the run and protecting Balder's young son August (Christopher Convery), who possesses the computer program's password. Adapted from the fourth novel in the 'Millennium' series of novels, albeit one written by David Lagercrantz in the wake of Stieg Larsson's death, *The Girl in the Spider's Web* is a dour rehash of spy movie clichés enlivened only by a couple of set-pieces in which Lisbeth Salander displays her uncanny ability to rescue desperate situations by employing

state-of-the-art technology, although even there the scenarios are so preposterous as to verge on self-parody. Claire Foy, so brilliantly expressive in *First Man*, is given little to work with here: Lisbeth Salander is so sullen she resembles an ingenious experiment in onomatopoeic performance art, in which the central character so embodies the bleak landscape she moves through that she threatens to blend into the background.

**Robin Hood** (12A) opens with Robin of

Loxley (Taron Egerton) romping around his plush manor with his socially conscious beloved Marian (Eve Hewson) before being drafted into the Crusades and dispatched to Arabia by the fiendish Sheriff of Nottingham (Ben Mendelsohn), whereupon Robin, sickened by war, returns home to discover that his lands have been confiscated and Marian is married to local rabble-rouser Will Scarlett (Jamie Dornan). When Little John (Jamie Foxx) — a Moorish warrior who has followed Robin home to Nottingham — exhorts him to steal from the rich in order to sabotage the Crusades, Robin sets out to plunder the Sheriff's war chest. Written by Ben Chandler and David James Kelly, and directed by Otto Bathurst, this outing of Robin Hood is at pains to stress its

contemporary relevance: Robin, a war veteran returning from a conflict in the Middle East, shoots arrows as if his bow were set to semi-automatic; Nottingham's poor are the dupes of a devious ruling class manipulating them with fear-mongering speeches about an imminent Moorish invasion. It proceeds with a wilful disregard for both plausibility and the Robin Hood legend. There's hardly a leaf of Sherwood Forest to be glimpsed, the heroes and heroines all appear to be students of Marxism 101, characters such as Guy of Gisborne and Will Scarlett are ascribed motivations entirely at odds with their mythical origins, and Nottingham is, apparently, the politico-religious heart of Olde England. It might all have been terrific fun, in fact, if the makers had simply abandoned the Robin Hood brand and opted for an original tale, but Taron Egerton, although proficient in the action hero stakes, is woefully lacking in the charisma that might persuade us he could inspire a downtrodden people to rise in revolt.

Filmed over three years, **The Camino Voyage** (PG) is a documentary by Donal O Ceilleachair which follows a group of Irish artists who sail from Ireland to Galicia to make the Camino pilgrimage. Led by the



writer and poet Danny Sheehy, the quartet — completed by Liam Holden, Breannán Ó Beaglaoich, and Breannán Pháid Ó Muircheartaigh — don't make things easy for themselves. The craft they choose to sail in — or row, rather — is a neamhóg, a kind of large currach, which is rendered a very frail craft indeed during the long crossings of the Irish Sea and the English Channel. "It's an endurance test," Danny tells us, both physically and psychologically, although the strength-sapping battles against the relentless waves are frequently interspersed by uplifting sojourns ashore, the foursome having packed the essentials on leaving home — accordion, bodhran, poitín. Like the rowers themselves, the film takes a little while to settle into its rhythm, but as the neamhóg progresses from Cornwall to Brittany, and further south to the Basque Country, the group begin to reveal their true personalities and the secret motivations that led them to pay homage to such voyagers as St Brendan and Tim Severin. Joined by Glen Hansard for the final leg, and with plenty of ceol agus craic to leaven the arduous journey, the film is a unique account of a singular pilgrimage, and a fascinating tale of faith and brotherhood.

