

# Drakkon

20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

## *A Journal Of The Making Of The Film*

It is July and everything is buzzing in the Joslin household. Chris has recently moved into the spare room of Mike's house. Derek, whose room is across the landing, now has the privilege of seeing Chris's beautiful face every morning until the film is finished! While Chris works in the garage finishing off the big dragon 'Mayke', Del works on the storyboard and organisation side of the film, running up a steep phone bill in the process. Time is flying by and there is still a great deal to do. The Princes Trust has shown a big interest in the production and the representative is confident that Del will receive a contribution in the not to distant future. On the evenings that Del doesn't work at the cinema, he sits down at the kitchen table with Chris and they cross off items from the big list of things to do. While Chris's list slowly get shorter, Del's strangely becomes longer! It's not that he isn't doing anything (Ritchie Wilkinson takes care of that), it's just that he has got a lot on.

With one week to go the Dragon is almost finished, Ritchie has finished making all the sword handle wrappings and Del is spending more of other people's money. The fighting scenes choreographed by Ritchie are almost running smoothly, however Del is having a headache with numerous lead actors who can't get the time off work or in the case of Mike Joslin, the immanent arrival of a baby is proving to disrupt the whole shooting schedule.

Chris and Del picked up the Dolly and Crane from Lindsey (a metal worker come cameraman) who kindly lent it to them for free. They set it up in Mike's living room overnight, which proved to be a bad idea as Mike then nearly knocked himself out in the dark! The rest of the camera equipment was picked up on Wednesday 14th July from Hall Place Studio's in Leeds. Chris hates driving in Leeds and took extra care on the road. However it didn't seem to help as he was cut-up by a Double Decker bus at 40 mph and had his right wing mirror ripped from it's mount - No laughing matter! After Chris finally stopped shaking, the car was filled with expensive equipment. There was no turning back now. The costumes were picked up from 'The Fancy Dress Agency' in Harrogate (they were specially made by Jeanne Eddington), finally the boots were collected from 'Homburgs' in Leeds and additional costumes were lent by 'Way of the Warrior' in Harrogate.

With three days to go everything was nearly ready, except one major special effect that was the dragon flame. Chris tried to come up with various methods, from burning balloons full of gas to filling plastic bottles with butane and exploding them. However he wasn't having much luck until Del explained he had once thrown a camping gas bottle into a fire and waited for it to explode. When the bottle finally did burst, a large ball of flame was produced. Chris liked the idea but thought it much too dangerous to use on location with people standing so close. After buying all the gas lighter fuel from the local shop and being asked if it was to be sniffed, a gang of blokes consisting of Chris, Del, Ritchie, and Jim Loomis all went down to Bilton Viaduct with pockets full of gas cans, an Air Rifle, bundle of rags and jar of paint thinners. It is no wonder they all got funny looks by innocent people walking their dogs! After several attempts of shooting a can of gas sitting on top of a fire with little success, the only thing left for the can to do was to explode violently. This occurred three times, until Jim finally got a shot on target. The gas ensued with great forced so extinguishing the fire! We all left the field disheartened, but the problem still faced Chris, he only had one day to figure it out. Fortunately he dreamt about it that night and awoke with a loud Eureka! He placed the mussel of the gun right next to the gas can and using a cable release

mechanism on the trigger, with the fire above the can on a gauze, pulled the trigger. To Chris's relief, the effect worked first time every time!

It is one day before we all leave and Nicola Goss is arriving in Harrogate at 10.20 pm, Del has gone off to the Blue's Bar with Shirley and Chris is at home getting his room ready for Nicola to sleep in – it is quite a job! Del figures out that Nicola will bound to have a lot of luggage, so as usual Chris comes to the rescue with his car ready to pick her up at the train station. While Chris is waiting patiently Del staggers up and threatens to get his private parts out! Shirley punches him in the arm and we all burst out laughing. 10.20 pm comes and goes, Nicola obviously missed the train, so we all decide to wait round the corner at Thomas's Bar. Del leaves on his own as he feels somewhat responsible for his leading lady. Ten minutes later he comes back with a walking rucksack! Underneath all the gear is a totally knackered Nicola. We all introduce each other and after one swift drink Chris offers to take Nicola home as she looked somewhat uncomfortable being jostled about by a massive crowd of people. Del agrees and takes Nicola outside, however he forgot just one thing - her luggage. Chris goes back in to get it. After a 10 minute nightmare he comes out and falls to the ground with exhaustion, the bar that night gave a new meaning to the game sardines! Nicola settles in very quickly and her initial nerves disappear. After several cups of tea and a long chat, everyone is ready to get some sleep before the big day tomorrow.

**Sunday 18th July** - the big day! Del is frantically trying to get everything ready, going over the list of things to take over and over again. Nicola looks very tired as she tucks into her healthy muesli breakfast. Chris is getting everything out of the garage and filling up the yard with swords, boxes, dolly boards and fire effect equipment - much to Mike's dismay! The crew start arriving with Vicky and Katherine first, then Jim Loomis, Ritchie, Ollie, James, Isobel, Laura and then finally a well looked after Gareth! Everything seems okay except for one thing - where's Phil? Del tries ringing his house but he's not there, so he asks if anyone saw him last night. "No" is the overall reply. We couldn't all wait for him so as he knew where the location was and as he had a car, he'd have to make it there alone. After waiting a couple of hours past the scheduled departure time, the equipment was loaded up into the cars. Mike took most of the bulky things, while Chris's took all the effects. Any stuff left over was crammed in to any little space that could be found in the other three cars. The decision was made to leave, however there were 13 people and only 12 places in the cars so one person had to stay. Gareth drew the short straw and had to wait until Shirley finished work to catch a lift to West Burton. So with Gareth patiently waiting, the convoy set off - Project DRAKKON was underway!

After an hour and a half on the road everyone began turning up at West Burton, it was found out the assumed quick route via the A1 turned out to be the slower of the two, so it was some time before Laura caught up. Everyone had to wait in their cars as the village hall was catering for a birthday party. It was quite funny looking at the villagers lack of fashion sense. It was a hand-me-down extravaganza of the greatest order! When the party was over Del retrieved the hall key and we all started unloading the gear. He then suddenly realised that he had forgotten quite an important item required for the shoot - namely the FILM STOCK! He phoned Gareth and told him to get it out of the fridge and bring it along when he comes. It was some hours later before everyone had settled in. Del took those new to the area down to see the waterfall. Those of the crew who were left stayed and either played cards or got something to eat. Isobel was going to load a camera magazine but she found, to her disbelief, that all the magazines and camera were extremely dirty and as no one could get any cleaning equipment until the morning, there wasn't much she could do except of course worry! In the mean time Katherine, the sound operator, was being told the basic operation of the Nagra recorder. James Gibson and Isobel, who were quite competent with the Nagra, found that the recording levels were extremely low and there wasn't a great deal they could do to correct it. The only explanation seemed to be faulty leads. So with all the equipment in pretty bad shape Laura phoned Raza Mallal (the Director at Hall Place Studios) to see if he could come up early the next morning with some new leads and also some camera cleaning equipment. The night was drawing in and then the rain started to fall. Everybody went to sleep eventually, after a lot of laughing and

general larking about to the sound of running water!

**Monday 19th July** came with a very stiff back, due to lying on a hard wooden floor! Gareth had got up near to the proposed time of 5 am and gone for a walk in the village. He came back drenched (as it was still raining) with news that the waterfall was pretty rough. So Chris, Ritchie, Ollie and Jim all walked down to the falls straight away with a video camera to make a record of the conditions. Even before they got to the car park leading up to the falls the sound of rushing water was very defined. To their horror and somewhat amazement the steady flow of the river had turned into a sepia coloured torrent. It had never been seen flowing so fast by any of the crew before. You had a job to hear yourself speak over the immense roar of the cascading water. Obviously no filming could start until the falls had calmed down and with a forecast of more rain, it seemed very unlikely that the camera would be out in the open air today.

Back at the hall all the equipment was being checked over by Raza. He explained that the camera was very temperamental but always gave good results, so Del felt a little better. The Nagra however just didn't want to give good sound levels and Raza, after trying all the leads, couldn't find anything wrong. Chris then had a look, took a few things apart and then put them back together. The Nagra worked perfectly after that?! Isobel cleaned the camera with the equipment Raza brought and loaded up a magazine. It was a very tense moment, as she had never loaded that type of magazine before. She was very relieved when it was all over.

Phil had still not turned up so Del decided to sack him and appoint a new Guthrie. James Gibson just thought he came to the shoot to give helpful advice, he never imagined he would have to play an important role in the film and perform some quite dangerous stunts! While James was being taught the sword fighting routines, the rest of the crew sat and talked or played badminton. The weather was clearing up by early evening - shooting seemed to be on for tomorrow. After a visit to the local pub across the village green, everyone came back and finally got to sleep knowing that they had to get up at 5.30am - It wasn't a pleasant thought! Just as everyone was settling down Phil turned up, he explained his situation to Del and as James didn't really want to act, the part of Guthrie was given back to Phil - who knew all the fighting sequences very well anyway due to the weeks of training he'd been given by Richard.

**Tuesday 20th July** - everyone awoke to the sound of Del's impersonation of a locomotive building up steam! Everyone groaned and looked at each other through sleep filled eyes. A mumbled "Morning" was just about audible from people as they made their way to the bathroom. Little did they know freezing cold water was hiding in the hot taps! In the kitchen everyone was wondering who was making weird moaning noises in the night, an accusing finger was pointed at Oliver. The only (and come to that usual) reply he could make was "F\*\*K Off." A short while later everyone was ready to go down to the falls. The actors didn't change into costume as there was a massive amount of equipment lugging to be done and this may have caused unnecessary wear. Phil and Chris set up a rope to help lift the equipment up the cliff. After a little teamwork a human chain was established consisting of almost everyone in the crew. Finally, after a lot of swearing, brute force and rope burns, all the equipment was at the filming location.

The initial filming started relatively slowly, as obviously it would, as everybody was new to their roles. The upper falls shots were filmed first and they ended up with Ritchie being kneed in the family jewels by an over excited Emmaline, played by Nicola Goss. Mike returned from Harrogate Hospital with good news - Georgia had been born! Did the naming of the baby have anything to do with the story of George and the Dragon? Mike explained he had to return to the Hospital to stay with Gaynor and the baby - Del said it was okay as all of Mike's scenes could be shot on Wednesday.

Chris and Jim were preparing the stunt mattress for Phil's jump. It consisted of three very large popcorn boxes filled with inflated dustbin bags, these were then placed on top of an airbed. The

whole contraption was floated over to its location and held in position by Ritchie, Jim and Chris. Everyone was feeling slightly tense as this was the first major stunt to be performed on the shoot. Chris was quite confident that it would work, even though he may not have looked like it! "Action!" was shouted and after a loud thud, then splash, it was all over. Phil was fine and we all cheered and gave a big sigh of relief.

Jim and Chris went back to the village to buy everyone some food. As they were getting their money from the hall, Phil walked in and went to the kitchen to get a sandwich. He then turned to Chris and said "Can you take me to the hospital?" Chris, with a surprised look on his face said "What?" "Oh, I've cut my head open" was Phil's reply. It turned out that when Chris and Jim were away, Phil had just finished the follow-on shot of the jump, where he had to do a head-over-heels in the water. His head made contact with a sharp rock and lots of blood decided to make an appearance. Ritchie automatically turned into a Doctor and with the aid of Laura, managed to stop the flow of blood. Del and Ollie just stood there depicting that the blood didn't look real! Chris drove Phil to the doctor's surgery in Leyburn, where he had the wound cleaned up. By the time all this palaver had ended it was late afternoon.

Chris was feeling very tired and his feet were hurting. Del came up to him and said that the dolly shot would be required in about an hour. Now dolly shots aren't all that difficult to set up, but when you have to build a rock bank in a foot of water nearly eighteen feet long by five feet wide, that is level, you can get slightly hot under the collar. Chris and Jim spent the best part of an hour throwing rocks into the water. It wasn't Del's fault at all, but if he said "watch what your doing" one more time he would find himself tide to a rock and thrown off the waterfall. In the end it came over very dark and started to rain. The decision was made to pack up filming and start again in the morning. As the crew was packing up, an argument flared up between Ollie, Ritchie and Del over the fact that not all the crew were pulling their weight. Back at the hall there was a great deal of tension in the hall, particularly between Ollie and Isobel. The crew almost split in half and Del had the problem of bridging the gap. In effect it was boys against girls. The boys said the girls weren't helping enough and the girls said they shouldn't be expected to lift heavy equipment - a good nights sleep sorted it out!

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July** began as normal, i.e very early! While the equipment was taken back up the cliff the girls stayed behind and made loads of sandwiches. Chris also stayed behind and helped as his feet were so swollen up he could hardly walk. Vicky kept on threatening that she was going to take him to the doctors. This resulted in Chris saying "Oh my feet are absolutely fine... Honest!"

Mike arrived very early so all his major scenes could be filmed today. Everything was speeding up now as the crew got used to their roles. The first shot of the day required the dolly and crane. The track was soon level and just as the extra counter balancing weight was being lowered onto the crane, the bar supporting the camera mount began to slowly bend! There was a look of panic in Del and Chris's eyes, as Lindsey (the guy who lent them this piece of equipment for free) specifically requested them to look after it with their lives! Chris reassured Del that he could straighten the bar back at the hall, but Del not wanting to waste time, decided just to use the dolly and forget the crane altogether. During the odd moments when Ritchie wasn't acting he started carving a lump of wood into an ashtray. In the end most of the crew had a go at shaping it. Chris carved in the finishing touches of DRACKON July 93. Jim thought of opening a souvenir shop in the village but after he stabbed himself in the finger he soon changed his mind.

When Mike had done all his posing scenes, sitting on a rock on the other side of the river, it was time for Del and Oliver's sword fight. I think that fight was probably the most fluid and spontaneous out of the whole film. The last scenes of the day were with Del and Nicola. Chris went slightly overboard with blood on Emmaline's stab wound, but Isobel said it looked good through the camera. As all the equipment was being packed away, Mike had a great idea of camping out for the

night, so all the equipment, except the camera, could be left behind, saving a lot of time the next day. When Mike's bivouac had been built, all the gear was put inside it. The crew said goodbye and left him to cook his tea.

Back at the hall Chris decided to drive to Leyburn to get some money. Ritchie, Ollie, Jim and Gareth all went with him to get some supplies - mainly Beer! At about 11 pm, those who were at the local pub came back to the hall and either played cards or sat in the kitchen drinking tea while trying to load the spare camera magazines. Laura didn't have much luck and she gave up and went to bed. Del, James and Isobel soon followed. Ritchie stayed up with Chris a little longer as he was determined to load a magazine the proper way, inside the loading bag. When Ritchie had completed the task it was about 1 am, or should I say the giggling hour! It was impossible for Chris and Ritchie to leave the kitchen without bursting out into hysterics. As Chris rolled around on the floor, Ritchie tried to light another candle. A quick dash to the gents through the hall resulted in yet more fits of giggles due to the very flatulent pair both passing wind at high velocity. Soon everyone who was still awake was wetting themselves in their sleeping bags! In all it will be a night many of us will remember.

**Thursday 22nd July** began very quickly, as all the equipment was already at the location. As the crew made their way up to Mike, Laura fainted. She was all right just extremely tired and a lack of decent food probably didn't help. Shooting was soon underway and by late morning all the upper falls scenes had been completed. The crew took a break for lunch at about 1pm after bringing all the equipment back down. Unfortunately a dog had taken a fancy to the box of sandwiches and so we didn't have as much as we should have had.

It was soon time to set up the stunt mattress again for Del's massive jump off the falls. The height of the ledge was about 14 feet from the water - nearly double the height of Phil's jump. Everyone was extremely unsure if Del would ever be able to play the piano again after this jump! Jim, Ollie, Phil and Ritchie floated the mattress and boxes into position. During this time a crowd of people had gathered on the pebble bank of the falls all wondering what was going on. The stunt was all ready to go when Chris, who was recording the behind the scenes footage, had a problem with the video camera being full of moisture. It was soon sorted out and after "Action" was shouted, a few seconds later, Del hit the boxes and made contact with the water. Thankfully he was okay! The crowd cheered and clapped and Del's head grew about a foot wider.

Del's follow on shot required to jump off a large set of stepladders positioned just in front of the falls. Jim, Ollie, Ritchie and Phil all stood in the water for quite a while holding the ladders in position waiting for the camera to be set up. When the stunt was over Ritchie collapsed and went into a kind of mini-coma. He was taken back to the village hall and put to bed under a massive heap of sleeping bags. Ritchie has quite a bad reaction to lack of sleep, something which Del and Chris found out on their spoof of Star Wars - but that's another story!

The afternoon was taken up by filming a major scene with Eldwin and the King. Del found the location where he wanted Eldwin to hide in - it was a small cold and wet crag and everywhere Eldwin went Chris and Jim had to unfortunately follow. After spending nearly two hours operating Eldwin in this extremely uncomfortable location, Chris and Jim emerged with every part of their bodies numb with cold. After all of the baby dragons scenes were over it was nearing 7 pm. Unfortunately Eldwin's neck had spilt due to wear and tear, but this could soon be fixed back at the village hall.

A short while later an old woman saying she was a representative from the Parish Council came with a complaint with about how we had turned their beautiful waterfall into a dump. We couldn't quite see what she was talking about, as we took particular care of the location. She also said we had made tourists turn away. If anything, the crowds of people who did watch us filming were very impressed. By this time Del was becoming quite annoyed but calmly said we would be leaving

tomorrow afternoon. It's a shame that someone like that had to spoil the atmosphere of the shoot, but you get it everywhere you go – you just have to grit your teeth and bear it.

As we packed up for the evening it was very strange. It may just have been paranoia brought on by a severe lack of sleep, but it seemed the whole village had turned against us – you could sense eyes peering at you from upstairs windows, even the local shopkeeper dropped subtle hints about when we were leaving. We didn't mind as the filming had nearly finished. Back at the hall Ritchie was still asleep, Vicky had bought loads of pizzas so we all had a decent meal that evening. After we all got back from the pub, everyone soon went to sleep except Isobel, who had a major problem loading a camera magazine, or should I say "Mare!" After a nice cup of tea it was all sorted out!

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> July** – The last day of filming at West Burton. With a large amount of scenes to be shot, today was going to be a long one. Ritchie had awoken from his nineteen hour sleep feeling much better! The morning was taken up filming the sword bending fight between Del and Ritchie. During this, the rest of the crew went crayfish hunting. By late morning there was a problem with the sennheiser microphone, so James, Mike and Chris had to mend the broken cable, which strangely caused everyone to break out into a broad Irish accent!

After Ritchie's impersonation of the 'Lady of the lake' from Excalibur it was time for some lunch. The rain began to fall quite heavily now but everyone didn't care about the wet anymore! After a quick sandwich Riche and Del were preparing for their fist fighting scenes. Chris got his jam jar full of fake blood out again and told Ritchie to take a good swig. Ritchie filled his mouth with the glycerin-based blood with Chris saying "the taste isn't all that bad", though of course he was lying through his teeth! Ritchie's face showed a somewhat pained expression and he made some loud moaning noises trying to get everyone to hurry up. The scene worked very well and Ritchie ended up with a very realistic blooded face, although he did nearly throw up towards the end of the take.

The rain was still falling and Mike told everyone about his dream the night before, concerning the river suddenly rising and washing everyone down stream. It didn't exactly make anyone feel any easier! It was now time for the big dragon flame simulation. Chris set up the effect but as he was required to act as a stand-in guard, he couldn't fire the air rifle - that would be Ritchie's job. This scene contained the most actors with Mike, Phil, Chris, Nicola, Oliver and both James's. Chris was feeling quite tense as he had only brought one gas can, so the effect had to work first time - there could be no retakes! The actors were made to feel complete idiots by wobbling in time with Del banging a rock on the ground. This was to give the effect on camera of a big dragon stomping towards them. After this the fire effect was set off - a massive ball of flame rose out of the tiny wooden box holding the gas canister. The sheer size of the flame and heat wave produced meant the actors didn't have to act at all! When the shot was viewed on video it looked very convincing indeed!

The next scene to be filmed was in a small cave further down stream. Nicola had to run through the cave with Eldwin and bump into the King. All of the control cables had to be hidden in Nicola's skirt. It was quite a job as there were a lot of cables! At the end of the take both of Eldwin's feet had broken - this film was proving to be very hazardous for the baby dragon's health. It was time for James, Chris and Jim Loomis to act again. All they had to do was to wade through some water towards Nicola. The first attempt James nearly fell over and the second time around Jim forgot to take his glasses off, pointed out by an observant Laura.

The last shots of the day concerned another flame effect and an underwater shot. The small flame effect caused more problems than the big fireball. With a hover pipe full of gas Chris and Ritchie stood just out of shot in front of Del. When Ritchie lit the end of the pipe Chris blew very hard but so did the wind. A large lick of flame blew into Ritchie's face, singeing his eyebrows!

The underwater shot required the camera to be positioned in a fish tank that would be submerged

in the water. Isobel, James and Chris had the job of holding and operating the camera. Issy was panicking as she thought the water might get into the camera - but it didn't and the effect worked very well. With that shot "In the Can" Everyone let out a big cheer. Filming at West Burton had officially finished! We all now had a big clearing up job to do. Mike had left sometime ago with his car full of equipment, so there wasn't all that much left to pack. By 9pm the hall was locked up and everyone had left except Chris and Ritchie. They had a short panic, as Chris couldn't find his car keys anywhere. Fortunately they had fallen into the boot. It wasn't a nasty trick after all.

On the way home Ritchie couldn't quite manage to stick his naked bum out of the window. He was attempting to give Isobel and Laura, in the car behind, a shock, so instead he stood out of the sunroof and preached to innocent passers by. Back in Harrogate all the equipment was dumped off at Mike's house, everyone soon went home to get some decent food and sleep! Del said filming would be starting again early in the morning, so he wasn't exactly in everyone's favor!

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> July.** When all the equipment was packed Chris and Del left to go to the location. All the crew had been told to meet at the far end car park next to Hornbeam woods. It was getting quite late and Isobel, Laura and James had still not arrived, so Del had to go and phone them, as we were sure they would be still asleep - to our surprise they were! Isobel kept apologising profusely. While the rest of the crew were waiting, Vicky was playing with a water pistol, pretending to shoot Chris. When everyone did eventually arrive we had some surprise visitors, namely a large transit van with POLICE written on it! Some nosy parker had called the police and told them that a gang of criminals was staking out the office blocks across the road. After all the cars were checked out for anything suspicious, the police were very understanding and asked if we were filming anywhere else, just in case they were called out again.

After this dramatic start to the day filming began in the woods. Eldwin and Del's scenes took up the major part of the morning. During shooting there were more problems with the microphone. It kept on making funny wheezing noises. Chris suspected the battery pack was full of moisture, so a quick visit to Jim's house and a couple of minutes under the heater rectified the problem.

All the crew then moved down to the next location where Mike would have to ride Melody, Susan Hopkinson's horse. As the horse wasn't familiar with equipment or crew, it was very jumpy. Mike looked particularly concerned for his safety because he couldn't obviously wear a riding hat. He confessed that he had a bad fall once from a horse and didn't really want to relive the experience. Sure enough the horse took off and jostled Mike all the way back up the hill. He managed to stay on though, which was a shame, as we could have won £250 from Jeremy Beadle.

Nicola had to go, otherwise she would miss the train back to Tamworth. Everyone said their goodbyes before she was taken to the station. It was a shame to see her go as everyone got to know her extremely well over the past hectic week. When Del had finished being filmed running through the stream it was time to pack up. Again all the equipment was taken back to Mike's and everyone went their separate ways. Filming would be starting again in the morning at a location still to be determined. Most of the crew for some reason or another couldn't make it, but as there wasn't all that much more needed to do, Del said it was all right - not that he had any choice in the matter!

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July.** Chris woke Del about 7 am and they both went off to Bilton viaduct, just down the road, to see if the location was suitable for filming. After walking a few miles along the river, it was decided that we would have to go to the location Laura had suggested the day before.

When Isobel, Laura and James arrived, Chris pointed out that three people would be needed to operate the big Dragon's head. That left one person to film and record sound. Issy decided to ring her boyfriend Neil to see if he could come and help. Chris went off and dragged Oliver out of bed and Del phoned Jim and asked him to come along. With an extra three people in the crew, we left

Harrogate about 9.30 am.

Laura was navigating. Issy, Chris and Jim were in hot pursuit. About an hour and a half later, Del Jim and Chris thought either Laura couldn't remember where the location was or she was just going via the scenic route! When we finally did arrive, the location was visually okay, however there was a small but important fact Laura forgot to mention - the water had large concentrations of toxic blue/green algae and as a result of dying animals no one was allowed in the water. At this point everyone was fuming.

All the equipment had to be packed back into the cars. By this time Jim and Ollie had to go back to Harrogate as they had other arrangements. Del decided to drive to Malham and shoot there. Now Malham wasn't all that far, if you were a crow, but by road it was miles away. We eventually arrived at about 2:30pm. All the equipment was set up by three o'clock. We were just about ready to roll when a hefty cloud decided to let go of all its water, along with numerous flashes of lightning. We all just stood there looking at each other laughing!

All the equipment was put back into the cars and with everyone looking like drowned rats we drove back to Harrogate. The light levels were now far too low and it just wasn't worth filming today. Back home the decision was made to film the dragon scenes at the viaduct on Monday morning. It was going to be tight, as all the equipment had to be back by the afternoon, but we were sure we could do it - after all "Hey, it's Del!"

**Monday 26<sup>th</sup> July** - Del rang up Hall Place Studio's to explain the situation to them. They were more than happy to let the equipment stay out a little while longer - to Del's relief! Laura couldn't come, so there were just James, Isobel, Del, Ritchie and Ollie on the crew. When the equipment was set up after a long walk to the location, Del was complaining of some weird skin disease he'd acquired. All down his legs he had big spots! James suggested he had a highly infectious disorder commonly found in the trenches of the Second World War. Everyone curled their noses up in horror. Del didn't know what to believe - in the end they turned out to be a varied collection of boils - a common yet gross ailment that Del now suffers from.

The big dragon was all ready to be filmed. It's saliva tubes were dripping nicely. It was very difficult to operate the head, mainly because of its weight, but after a-few attempts, the shots were achieved. When the dragon wasn't being filmed, Chris and Ritchie blew the theme tune to Jurassic Park down its nostrils - something that got on Del's nerves quite a bit! After Oliver interviewed the Dragon on video, DRAKKON was finally over! All those weeks of preparation and days of shooting had finally come to an end and Drakkon was now on 16mm film. Although there is still a long way to go the hardest part was over ...or so we thought!

Later that day the equipment and part of the costumes were taken back to Leeds. Back home Chris and Del were getting ready to celebrate the end of the shoot, by meeting everyone at 'The Blues Bar' in Harrogate, then moving on to Josephine's nightclub. Being 'ten pence a pint' night everyone got pretty legless. Jim Loomis wasn't allowed in though, on account of his DM's being in such a poor state! By about 1.30 am we all staggered back to Mike's house. Del was hoping Mike wasn't in because he didn't know what his reaction would be! After sitting round the kitchen table inventing new phrases such as 'Fizzy Bum Sweets' and "Chocolate Balloon Knots" everyone crashed out on every conceivable space available. In the morning, with spinning heads all round, everyone said their heartfelt farewells and left Mike's house. Chris left Harrogate on Wednesday morning, after clearing up a little argument he had with Del. He took the cans of film with him as it would work out cheaper to post it from Wellingbrough. Chris just had to wait now for the cheque from Del for the films development. The film was sent off on Friday 3rd September, Del received the processed film 5 days later.



**Thursday 9th September** - Chris got a phone call from Del. He had some good news and some bad news. The good news was that the Princes Trust made a contribution of £500, but the bad news was that one of the 400 foot rolls of film had come out all fogged and out of focus. Chris just stood at the other end of the phone dumbfounded. It just so happened the roll that was useless contained major scenes - such as with the horse and big Dragon. There was no alternative but to re-shoot those scenes again. It was going to be tough as most of the crew were either back home or waiting to move into their new college term addresses. With a lot of ringing round and pleading with people, the reshoot date was fixed for the 18th and 19th of September 1993.

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September** - Chris left Wellingborough at 4.15pm and drove to Tamworth (at somewhat short notice, thanks to Del) to pick up Nicola from her boyfriends house. They eventually arrived in Harrogate at about 7.45 pm. They then met Del at the Odeon cinema, where he worked, to find out the arrangements for sleeping, so it was back to Mikes house! Later that evening Ritchie dropped off some costumes and Issy came to load the camera magazine, ready for the morning.

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> September** - Chris got up at 6 am feeling pretty ill, suffering from a flu bug his sister had kindly gave him. He woke Del up at 6.30. Everyone - that is Issy, Ritchie, Laura, Jim, Katherine and Miles Watts met at Mikes by around 7:30 am. With some initial dashing about getting correct costumes, the cars were ready to be packed. Unfortunately the Nagra sound recorder hadn't charged during the night, so instead of wasting time trying to mend it, it was decided to use Del's professional Sony cassette tape recorder. By 8.30 all the cars were ready to leave for Hornbeam woods. The equipment was quickly set up at the location. However Laura and Issy felt that the light meter wasn't working properly and suggested they should drive to Paul Franklin's house, the technician at Harrogate college, and pick up a better one. While they were gone Chris and Del practiced Eldwin's scene in front of the camera - it was a slight variation to the storyboard. Issy and Laura finally came back at 11.30, as Paul wasn't in, Issy had to ask his brother (someone she had never met before) to lend her Paul's 35mm camera and £5 for batteries! The camera's built in light meter typically didn't work anyway, so the original light meter was finally used!

When the first couple of shots were done, James Gibson arrived looking worn out. The lift from the train station never materialized, mainly because Del gave him the wrong telephone number to Shirley's house, so he had to walk! The next shot was just about ready to roll when a large group of young inquisitive lads arrived on their bikes. It was utter chaos. Ritchie eventually threw his weight around a bit and managed to keep them quiet, mainly by threatening them at first and then telling them a massive pack of lies. It worked wonders!

After we finished the food that Jim and Nicola went to get, it was time to set up at the next location. Unfortunately a tree had fallen down right where we were going to film, so Del turned into a lumberjack and cleared the way. As this was going on, all the boys came down and started swinging on the branches. Issy said she wouldn't be responsible for her actions if they didn't go away soon! Ritchie came to the rescue again with a cunning plan. He asked where one of the boys lived and said when the film comes out at the cinema, he would send them all complimentary tickets. All the lads being so gullible all shouted "Great!" and rode off.

Mike arrived at 2pm looking quite unwell, it seemed he also had a pretty bad dose of man flu. Shirley and her sister Susan, arrived with the horse about 3pm. Filming finally stopped at 5:30pm. Everything had gone well and to schedule, very unlike a DELFILM shoot! The crew all piled back to Mike's and each in turn talked to his mother (who likes a good chat). Mike just sat in the kitchen looking somewhat bewildered at the amount of people in his house. At 6:30pm everyone went to Tappers Bar and got wrecked on Scrumpy cider, which appeared more like dirty bath water than the fermented juice of apples!

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September.** Chris didn't sleep again all night as he was feeling extremely sick as well as having a massive headache - the cider didn't help! Everyone else got up by about 8.30am. It was decided that the crew should meet at 9am at Mike's. 9 am came and went - Del was becoming very annoyed so he phoned Laura and Issy to try and hurry them up. Finally the crew (except Miles, Shirley and Ritchie) left for West Burton at about 9.45. All the boys went in Chris's car and all the girls in Isobel's.

Del thought it would be a good idea to test out a quicker route to the location, how wrong could he be! Chris ended up driving up and over a mountain, more suited to a jeep than a Sierra. James kept imagining he was in an advert for a new car, while Chris thought he was in the RAC Rally! Some 45 minutes after the girls arrived at the location, Chris pulled up. All the girls seemed to have gotten some sleep while they were waiting. Everyone felt slightly uneasy, as we had not asked permission to film at the falls this time, so all the equipment was discretely set up. Issy was determined not to get her feet wet again so she came prepared wearing huge waders!

The shots were quickly achieved as everyone new what to do - as after all we had done it all before. When it came to re-shoot Nicola's scene lying on some rocks, Chris discovered that the food colouring Jim had brought to simulate blood was pink! It however had to do. Del said "Just pat a load of mud over it, no one will notice!" There was a problem with the underwater shot because Issy thought, when looking through the camera, it went all black, so back at the car the magazine and camera were checked - luckily they were fine.

The afternoon was taken up filming the big Dragon again. Chris attached a 4kg weight to the end of the support pole, just to give the head more balance. Egg white was smeared all over its mouth and tongue, and its saliva bottle was filled with a mixture of glycerin and egg white. When it came to shooting, the dragon looked and operated much better than the previous attempt in July. In-between takes a group of tourists came over asking what we were doing and filmed the Dragon with their video camera.

Filming finally stopped at about 3.45pm. As we were all clearing up, Del put the hover pipe, needed for the flame effect, into the fish tank - everyone who saw Del carrying the tank thought he had caught a snake! The cars were packed and we left West Burton feeling tired yet happy we had achieved what we set out to do.

At 5pm we arrived back in Harrogate, the girls stopped off at Mac Donald's to get some grub, while Chris drove Jim home and unpacked the gear at Mikes. Later the rest of the crew, except Laura and Katherine (who had left to go home) arrived at Mikes. We were all sitting down feeling knackered when Mike, looking quite concerned, sat down. He turned to Del and expressed his true feelings about the weekend, having not been told anything about what was going on. Del got extremely embarrassed and a deadly silence filled the room. Everyone had thought Del had told him but obviously he hadn't. Soon after that everyone split! Shirley arrived to take Nicola back to Tamworth and explained to Del that her parents reprimanded her. They didn't want her to take the car all that way, but Shirley being Shirley took the car anyway. Del went with them, so Chris stayed at home.

On Monday morning Chris and Del took the equipment back to Leeds. Del was dropped off and Chris drove all the way back to Wellingborough.

Well this is finally the end. I have to say it's been tough. Drakkon has had its many ups and downs for everyone. There's not only been financial strain, but physical and mental strain also. Looking back though I'm sure everybody thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It made people work as a team and good friends were made. Although the film has still a long way to go before coming to the screen, I can truthfully say on behalf of everyone who took part in the production, Drakkon will no doubt linger in our fond memories for a very long time.

by **C.R.Eldridge.**