

Part two - Sir Lancelot & Merlin the Wizard

After their great success & publicity in the LNDDP 2015, Fjords Vietta and Jornvic & humans Peter & Eleanor Williams were again invited to take part in All The Queens Horses part of the London New Years Day Parade. The theme being '30 Magical Years', to celebrate 30 years of the Parade which includes marching bands, floats of all shapes and sizes, cheerleaders, carriages, acrobats and of course the general public in their thousands.

Peter & Eleanor's group theme was based on King Arthur. Four horses took part. The King, (Lucie Evans rode Tonka, a magnificent Gypsy Cob), Guinavere was portrayed by Lauren Newman, Eleanor Williams on Fjord Jornvic was Sir Lancelot and Peter Williams was Merlin the Wizard riding Fjord Vietta.

Preparations had been underway for months as those magnificent costumes took some working on. Work which continued through Christmas. New Year's Eve dawned and the fjords had their final wash and brush up in a hail shower. Fjords were rugged and fed, the lorry was packed ready and they finally got off to bed before midnight. No New Year celebrations for Team Williams.

There were up at 5.15am, dressing and feeding of fjords and humans commenced, last minute checks made to ensure everything was in order. They loaded at 7.45 and the journey to London began.

They arrived just after 9am and were parked in Piccadilly. Preparations immediately got under way with costume boxes flying in all directions. Fjords were groomed & adorned, Peter & Eleanor were dressed & ready to go. Just as the Wizard was about to mount Vietta the Fjord, a little voice came from behind a group of onlookers, "Hello Wizard". The little boy was about three years old with eyes like saucers, staring in wonderment. His day had been made before the parade even began.

They assembled in planned order in their designated groups by the Ritz Hotel when a voice announced that they would have to retrace their steps as a giant balloon in the form of a Lord Mayor/ Toby jug character was about to emerge from Stratton street and had to go in front of the horses. It was BIG. Once the 'Lord Mayor/Toby Jug was safely past they quickly reassembled and were at last on their way- off past the Ritz, down to Piccadilly which was absolutely packed with spectators, the noise was incredible & the shouts of Happy New Year was constant. Fjord Jornvic liked to walk on the right hand side as close to the people as possible allowing Sir Lancelot/ Ellie to high five hundreds of people at the railings. Fjord Vietta preferred to go and mingle with the spectators in the grandstands, taking shouts, waving, flags & general noise in her stride. At one grandstand the spectators were sitting very quietly as Sir Lancelot and The Wizard approached. Fjords Jornvic & Vietta moved in closer to the front row and Sir Lancelot/Ellie & Wizard/Peter duly waved at the packed crowds in the Grandstand. Suddenly the whole grandstand erupted in cheers & a sea of hands started waving back. That's what its all about!! said Peter. The appreciation shown by the crowds to Peter, Ellie & their magnificent fjord horses is echoed by all of us. What superb ambassadors for the Fjord Horse. On they went, down Regent Street past the Cabinet Office in Whitehall. They reached the Cenotaph & lined up with other groups and the riders bowed their heads as a mark of respect to the fallen soldiers and horses. On they went, past Downing Street (wonder if the PM was peeking) & then through to the final display area where all the TV cameras and dignitaries were assembled.

The horses turned right towards Horse Guards Parade where they stopped to have pictures taken. Cameras clicked in a seemingly never ending flow of noise. London was on a heightened state of alert so as soon as a very large crowd developed around the horses, the police moved in and had to ask them to walk on as the crowds were increasing & constituted a security risk. The walk down the Mall four abreast was quite awesome with hundreds of people cheering and waving as Sir Lancelot/Ellie & Wizard/Peter proceeded towards Buckingham Palace. As soon as they arrived at the famous Palace gates a large crowd flocked towards them, their camera team was completely engulfed. After a while, the police had to step in as the ever growing crowd, pushing to get closer to the horses was creating another security risk and they had to move on, leaving a camera waving crowd behind. They set off for Piccadilly along the sand track at the side of Constitution Hill, across the corner of Green Park and back to the lorry for a well earned cuppa, & a hay net & water for the incredible Fjords. Peter said they were so very proud of them & that they all had a very memorable day that will be remembered for a long time to come.

We too were so very proud of them and of the wonderful spectacle they made. Eleanor must be congratulated on those magnificent costumes. She used over 60m of various colours of ribbon and braid on the costumes along with 80 twinkling stars.

Our Fab Four really did pull out all the stops and produced a spectacular show. We at the Society Office are still receiving lovely, heart warming comments about them. Lots of other fjord owners have contacted us too. Some saying they were moved to tears at the sight of our four wonderful fjords behaving as if it were a Walk in the Park. Well it was, some of the time anyway. Just a very famous London Park! Just when we thought we could not be more proud of our Fab Four, equestrian magazine Horse and Hound did a feature on the London Parade and guess who stole the limelight? THE WIZARD & his trusty steed better known as Peter Williams and Fjord Vietta. They 'starred' in the main photo which we have reproduced as our main photo here. What a finish to a truly fabulous effort. Thanks must also go to All the Queens Horses organiser Caroline Marsh without whom this would not be such a spectacle. Not just us but all the horses who appeared before a crowd in excess of half a million.