

## SURVIVORS LOCATION REPORT-Bob Meade August 1994

I remember 'Survivors' from the first time around, when I used to watch it with my parents! I longed to be able to see it again but the B.B.C. didn't repeat it, although I kept hoping. I joined 'Horizon', the Blakes7 club, and discovered from them that the 'Survivors' videos were to be released by the B.B.C. It made my day, and I really looked forward to being able to buy the tapes. Gradually, agonisingly slowly, the first series appeared in the shops. Then I found it was being shown on Sky television, which came as a terrific surprise! I just happened to come across it on U.K. Gold as I was looking through the paper for something worth watching. None of my friends had been aware it was on, but one of them started taping it for me, as I don't subscribe to Sky myself.

Being very interested in finding some of the locations used to film Survivors, I took a holiday in the Forest of Dean area, last autumn. I stayed in a lovely farmhouse guest house in Staunton, about 6 miles north of Gloucester on the A41 7. It was run by a very nice lady called Sheila and her parents. I really enjoyed myself, despite the rain! This year I went back in the spring, having gleaned more information. I wanted to find the Manor House, which I thought might be Clearwell Castle. This is now a beautiful hotel (with beautiful prices to match! ) but I thought I could afford one night of luxury in my quest for Survivors locations. It cost £57.50 and I was the only guest! At the time, the Flesh-eating Bug was making headlines, which added nicely to the atmosphere! I found that some episodes had indeed been filmed there, but there was no other information available. (Does anyone know which episodes were filmed here? - ED) I discovered later that the Manor House was actually Hampton Court in Herefordshire, also on the A41 7. Another location I wanted to find was the suspension bridge on which Abby and Jenny had a conversation in 'Gone Away'. I knew it was by a road, so I checked my Cotswold Wyedene Leisure map (by Estate Publications) and found there was only one footbridge which fitted this description. It was near a hamlet called Hole in the Wall. I went there to see for myself, and found it a really beautiful spot, as peaceful as anyone could hope for, apart from the deafening birdsong! I work on an American airbase, and it was great to be able to escape from the din of the aircraft to a place like this.

I thought there had been some filming near a place called English Bicknor, further north into the Forest of Dean. I drove on to Ross on Wye, asking for local information at the library and from a passing policeman, with no luck. Several people could remember the filming but couldn't pinpoint any locations. At last I found Sylvia at the travel bureau, who was thrilled that someone was showing an interest again. She told me the Meadow Market shop can be found in Withington, which is just east of Hereford on the A4103. It's now called 'Norman's', and is still recognisable despite extensive alterations. She told me she daily passes the little church where Jenny, Greg and Abby first met. It was situated next to the farm where she and her husband live, near Harewood End, and her husband helped me to find the little lane I needed to get close enough to photograph the church, which stands on private land. The

owners of the land breed beagles for sale to laboratories, and do not welcome visitors, unlike Sylvia's own dogs which couldn't have been friendlier (or muddier!) Her husband told me the local farmworkers were issued with walkie-talkie radios so that they could be warned when filming was about to start, and stop working with anything noisy, as the country was supposed to be deserted at the time! I wonder how much incentive was offered for this cooperation!

On another trip I was able to identify the railway station used in Bridgehead. I even saw the trains that were used, identifiable by their numbers. 'Over The Hills' have supplied me with a few more leads, which I plan to follow up as soon as I can get some more time off work. Hopefully I will be able to write a follow-up article for the next magazine if this one is well received. If any readers have identified and visited locations themselves I will be pleased to hear from them do' Over The Hills'.

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On my second Survivors location investigation my first port of call was to Bewdley Railway Station, not far from Kidderminster, where I met Roger Hobson, a volunteer with the Severn Valley Railway Company, who helps to run the line. He was very helpful when I mentioned Survivors. He vaguely remembered the filming at Highley and also on a canal between nearby Wolverley and Cookley. Roger thought Chris in the signal box would remember more, and invited me to borrow a reflective safety jacket before walking there with him along the lines. It was just outside the station, The lines were wet from a shower of rain, and I found the going quite difficult. Chris could remember seeing horses being ridden across the lines and onto the platform at Highley. I believe they were ridden by Charles and Jenny, and featured in 'Mad Dog & Bridgehead'. When I visited Highley, the sun had come out, and it looked beautiful. It was not hard to see why it had been chosen for the series. On the way, I passed the canal and I think I found one of the scenes used in 'Parasites' (see photo). No horse drawn barges came by while I was there, only diesel powered ones. Parking was difficult, so I couldn't stay long, but it seemed to me that several isolated areas had been used, and would probably be hard to identify without detailed local knowledge or inside information.

From there, I had a fairly long drive to my Bed & Breakfast in Staunton. I had enjoyed my last stay with Sheila and her parents in their farmhouse guest house and felt at home with them. In the evening I helped Sheila to catch her menagerie of goats, horses, ducks and chickens, and settle them down for the night, feeding and watering some incubating Bantam chicks en route.

The next day I headed west, filled with a substantial breakfast. First, I found Wilton Bridge in Ross on Wye, which was filmed in 'Gone Away'. I then headed for Trefynwy in Wales, planning to visit 'White Cross'. Joanne, who lives there now, told me I would be welcome to come and take some photographs. The final part of my drive involved a steep climb up a narrow road, but as I rounded the final turn, the first thing I saw was the large sloping barn, where most of the cast were together when the balloon was first sighted in 'New World'. I parked my car and walked round the corner, straight into Pet's kitchen, which I felt had hardly changed since it was filmed in Survivors. Outside is the wind pump, now lacking blades, and the pond nearby, where Joanne found me. We went to the 'White House' where she lives, for tea with her friend, Phyllis. After that, she took me on a tour of the area, showing me the foundations of the house in which Greg and Jenny lived and where Paul was born. It's been demolished, apparently due to a lack of planning permission. We moved on with difficulty through some thorny plants, (I think they were raspberries), to discover the remains of the quarantine hut. All that was there were some foundation posts. After that, we escaped from the brambles to visit Jack's workshop, still in use, mainly for carpentry, by the looks of it. This is near the big barn and the hill where the parson helped the others to lay some drainage pipes.

Joanne asked me not to reveal the exact location of 'White Cross' as her work requires peace and quiet, which would be disturbed if hoards of Survivors fans were to turn up at once. I feel I must respect her wishes, but I will try to help anyone who would like to see photographs of the location as it now stands. I feel the Survivors spirit continues here, as it's run along the lines that Charles would have appreciated. Back at Sheila's guest house, I learned a story that warmed my heart. Last Autumn, a box containing four live chickens fell from the back of the lorry that was transporting them to a cat food factory. It was discovered by a friend of Sheila's, who took it straight to her, not knowing what else to do. Sheila being the lady she is, took them under her wing (to coin a phrase) and cared for them. They were virtually featherless, and had to be kept indoors for the winter, but in the Spring, their feathers had grown, and they were able to join the rest of the free-rangers. How's that for a happy ending?