



A little bit of history...

The film was written by Roald Dahl and published in 1983, 'The Witches' was illustrated by Quentin Blake who famously contributed to many of the authors books.

The story is partly set in Norway and partly in the United Kingdom, focusing on the experiences of a young boy and his Norwegian grandmother in a world where child-hating evil witches secretly exist.

In 1990 the film adaptation of the story was released, created by Jim Henson Productions and directed by Nicolas Roeg. In large parts it was filmed here at The Headland and the cast were in residence for quite some time.

Angelica Houston starred as the Grand High Witch and at that time her boyfriend was Jack Nicholson. Enormous bouquets of roses would be delivered for her, and the girls on the switchboard would become very excited when he telephoned to speak to her, as there were no mobiles then.

Rowan Atkinson played the hotel manager, and he is very like Mr Bean in real life – rather eccentric. On one occasion he ran a bath and went to bed without turning the taps off. The flood reached the ground floor from his second-floor bedroom and all the equipment (photocopier, electric typewriters etc) in the film's production office in the first-floor bedroom was written off. When the porter first knocked on Mr Atkinson's door he was told to "go away, I am asleep". The ballroom scene was filmed in the studios, the special effects of the witch combusting were deemed a bit dangerous. The mice were about the size of Spaniel dogs; they had to be large to fit in all the electronic equipment to make them work, this was before the days of computer animation.

Rooms 223, 227 and 205 were used for some of the bedroom scenes. The pram pushed towards the cliff edge was the Armstrong's family pram which had been used for their children Vryan, Morwenna and George. Thousands of guests from all around the world have visited the hotel having seen the film and many wide-eyed children still look around for the mice.

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THE *spooky* AFTERNOON TEA TRIBUTE HERE AT THE HEADLAND HOTEL.

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