



# The Prancing Pony

The Official Newsletter of White Horse Morris

Issue #31

<http://www.whitehorsemorris.org.uk/home/4594741622>

30 September 2021

## White Horse Makes 70

In 1951 White Horse Morris Men first danced out in public and this is what we have celebrated this year, although, in truth, the group will have formed in 1950. Initially it was a group of men of different ages and backgrounds who had the common interest in Morris Dancing. As they say, that is now all history.



You no doubt know how the side developed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>, becoming mixed in 2011. You can see more about this on the website. It was long in the planning with Covid -19 making



decisions both difficult and uncertain but eventually we found that we could celebrate on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and this we did in great style based at the Village Hall in Sutton Veny.

We welcomed back old friends and also made some new ones as we danced out at Wylve and Heytesbury

and some of them joined in with the dancing and playing. We also danced at Sutton Veny.



Dancing at The Bell at Wylve  
and The Red Lion at Heytesbury





Back at Sutton Veny there was an incredible display of caking making skills from decorated and delicious to just downright delicious.



These were eaten with celebratory Prosecco and tea!

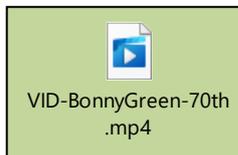


During the evening there was more dancing, more eating, more chat, even more chat, and much cake was consumed.

There were various dances outside, including a demonstration of the Upton upon Severn Stick Dance, danced with sticks and then a final



Bonny Green Garters with several even more elderly men joining in. Both of these were captured on film and can be seen on the website and also here:

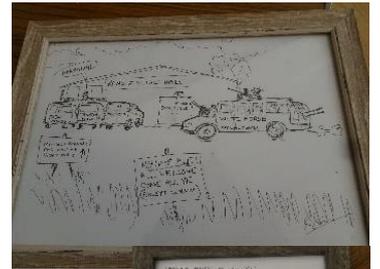


And then a Powerpoint presentation! You couldn't make it up but The Squire did!

He has offered signed copies of the presentation for not much money but it is available from this link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/01hic83t993k9k65ukc9j/70th-presentation-v2.ppt?dl=0&rlkey=d42cv6d1xhadcmlic60763sik>

Robin Marshall-Ball's cartoons were raffled and the money raised will go to buying some WHM 70 badges.



Then there was music from The White Horse Big Band with guest appearances from Martin "Big Box" Smith and Colin "The Serpent" Dipper.



Thanks to everyone who made it such a great day and here's looking forward to the next one!



Oh! Hob Nob was there as well.



## Comments on the Day

Hi Mike,

*The day was appropriately celebrated by members not only past and present, but also, it is to be hoped, future. Some quite young people were present and seemed to show interest. Never underestimate the power of the Morris.*

*My own memory of a first encounter with the Morris was Winchester Morris at Sutton Scotney, dancing in around 1954, when I would have been about 6 years old. I never forgot the fascination of those hankies. It took me nearly 30 years to take it up, but the flame was kindled.*

Graham Lever.

*Thanks Mike, it really was the loveliest of days*

xx Kate

*Thank you so much for organising the celebration – it was perfect.*

Colin & Kath and the poodles!

## 1951 - 2021

Just over 70 years ago on April 24<sup>th</sup> 1951 White Horse Morris Men gave their first public display at The Laverton Institute, Westbury.

This was followed by a varied Summer and Autumn programme culminating with a tour in Devon during November and a dance out in Salisbury on December 21<sup>st</sup>. In 1951 White Horse Morris Men performed at 11 fetes and in 17 villages.

Other notable firsts in 1951 include:-

January 1<sup>st</sup> The first national broadcast of The Archers

March 12th Dennis the Menace appears in The Beano



April 17<sup>th</sup> The Peak District is designated as the First National Park of the UK

May 28<sup>th</sup> The Goon Show airs for the first time

October 31<sup>st</sup> Zebra crossings are introduced officially after two years of trials

Undated G.C.E. Ordinary Level and Advanced Level subject-based qualifications replace the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate

When the good folk of Westbury and surrounding villages were not being entertained by White Horse MM there were plenty of other entertainments to keep them occupied. A trip to the flicks and one could have enjoyed films such as *The Lavender Hill Mob*, *Green*

*Grow the Rushes* and *The African Queen*. Popular radio shows played hits from Doris Day, The Billy Cotton Band, Vera Lynn and Gracie Fields. New book publications included John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids*, *Prince Caspian* by C.S.Lewis and *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*.

Also celebrating their 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday in 2021 are:-

Politicians Gordon Brown and Chris Smith

Economist Howard Davis

Liverpool Managers Kevin Keegan, Kenny Dalglish

Dr Who Peter Davison

Singers Phil Collins, Sting, Chris Rea and Bonnie Tyler

May 1951 saw the opening, by King George VI, of The Festival of Britain. Taking place over the summer months The Festival of Britain was a national exhibition and fair; an opportunity for celebration after the hardships and austerity of World War II.

Many towns held their own events to mark The Festival of Britain. Chippenham Pageant and The Mere Festival of Britain were both attended by White Horse MM during their busy first year of 1951.

## The only member of WH to sit in The House of Lords?

Dear Bishop Alan,

I was speaking to your brother Martin at the 70th anniversary of White Horse Morris and he mentioned both you and your Dad. In fact he sent some photos through which had all 3 of you there. As nobody ever leaves White Horse I thought I would take this opportunity to say that you are welcome to come and see us when you are next in Wiltshire! Seriously though, if you feel able and wish to then by all means look us up.

Things have changed over the years and we are now a mixed side but we still have the original White Horse spirit and enthusiasm.

Best wishes

Mike Perry

Squire, White Horse Morris

## And there was a reply!

Dear Mike

Thanks for your email which came out of the blue. Funnily enough I was in Wiltshire on Friday as it was Martin's birthday last week and we had a family get-together. So we had a chat about White Horse Morris and reminisced about the years we spent



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playing and dancing - nearly 50 years ago (I was barely a teenager at the time!). It's funny to see some of the photos on your website with so many people who I haven't seen in years - Bill Bush, Peter Sparks, Roger Pinnaker (?) etc.

Thanks for the invitation to come and join you one evening. I'm not sure how likely that is as life is pretty busy and I am occupied most evenings. However, at some point in the future I will retire to Wiltshire, probably to Bradford on Avon, so who knows....

Best wishes,

Alan, Bishop of St Albans

### More from Martin, brother of the Bishop Smith

Hello Mike,

Thank you for your email. As promised I am passing across some names of those who were in the team circa



1967 THE CLOSE, SALISBURY  
L to R: ? Eric Smith, 'Thea' Clayton, Francis Clayton

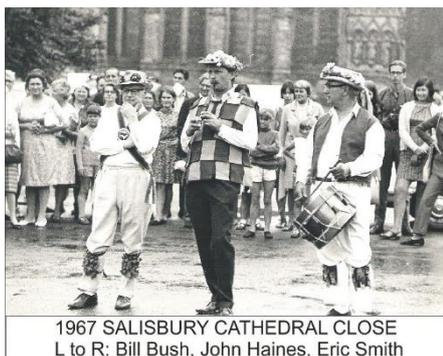
1967/68 along with any details I can remember. I haven't had time to match them up with the various photos but will do so in due course. I hope that whoever collates a this information finds it interesting. If you do have any more queries, please let me know.

I thought the 'get-together' at Sutton Veny was a great night. Knew far more people than I expected and it resurrected many old tunes in my head. Hope to see you again soon.

Martin

### W.H. MORRIS IN 1967

- Bill Bush (Bagman) – (Need we say more?)
- David (?) - Short, stocky chap. Played melodeon. Was a Chemist.
- Ian Francis (Bournemouth) – Married to 'Thea'. The team provided the Guard of Honour at his wedding in 1967
- Ian Paul (Squire) – (Already well documented)
- (Capt) John Haynes (Worton, Devizes) - Musician. Played a self-made Flageolet and also Double Bass. Recently retired (I believe) from Royal Hussars.
- John Smith (Trowbridge) - Schoolteacher at Adcroft School of Building)



1967 SALISBURY CATHEDRAL CLOSE  
L to R: Bill Bush, John Haines, Eric Smith

- Martin Westlake (Fordingbridge) – Already well documented
- Michael Coward (Semley, Shaftesbury) - Tall Chap, Farmer
- Peter Sparks (Melksham) – Accordionist and occasional dancer. Also ran the Avon CD Band with his wife

Josie on the piano. Later moved to Temple Combe where he ran a Nursery. Last heard of in Weymouth



1967 The Old Duke, Bratton  
L to R: Eric Smith, Tony Sparks, Peter Sparks

- Pip Potter (Mere, Wiltshire) – Schoolteacher at Duchy Manor School and keen dancer
- Roger Pinnegar – (Already well documented)
- Tony Sparks (Somewhere in Somerset) - Brother of Peter Sparks. Played Guitar and Whistle and danced when pushed!
- Peter Swann (Westbury) - An Architect by trade and played Fiddle for the WH Morris. Died circa.2020
- Ian Petts (Bournemouth/Salisbury?) - Dancer and CD Caller
- Rupert Simon (Bath Area) - Danced with the team occasionally. Very keen on Rapper Sword.



1967 MERE, Wiltshire  
L to R (Back Row): ? with Les Gould, ? with Roy, Christine Felton, Bill Bush ?, John Smith, ? Pip Potter, Mike Gould, Rosemary Smith, Martin Smith (Kneeling in the front): Peter Sparks and Eric Smith

- Eric Smith Hawkeridge, (Westbury) – Accordion and side-drum

### OTHER INFO

(1) Out of interest you may, or may not know that during the summer months, it was quite common at a lot of venues, for the team to be accompanied by four or five couples (sometimes six) who provided a 'Country Dance' Display to give us all a rest. This included wives/girlfriends of our actual dancers.

(2) In 1967 the team were hired to perform on the set of the Thomas Hardy Film, 'Far from the Madding Crowd' which starred Julie Christie and Terence Stamp. This was filmed at night in Devizes Market Place

outside the Corn Exchange. Although we were there for what seemed like hours, our eventual screen contribution was quite short but at least we were able to boast about it.

(3) The Team practised on Friday nights in the backroom of The George in Codford.

(4) We turned up in Wincanton one Friday night to find that Bill Bush had forgotten the sticks. Luckily a local hardware store was still open so he went in and bought six broom handles. He borrowed a saw to cut them in half so we would be able to dance Ring 'O Bells at the end, but didn't get that far. We had demolished them all by the second dance.

Martin Smith

### Late Sowing – Calvin Eales

Dear Mike,

I am very pleased with this late sowing and it is worth noting, it followed my Garlic crop which I harvested in July. For those of your readers who are following or practising the Charles Dowding “no dig” organic system, no further compost has been added to the growing bed. Seed was sown on the first of August and was ready to pull in five weeks; late sowing is well worth the effort. I've got salad leaves ready and turnips nearly ready, all sown at the same time in the same bed.



Calvin

### From Margery Thomas

Hi Mike, Thank you WHM for a splendid 70th celebration and for your hospitality and congratulations on your 70th! Calvin, thank you for your beautiful singing for our lost men.

It was great to be with you, bittersweet as always, but always a home-coming. For Pete T it is ten years on 16 October. I will never forget you coming to dance for him in April 2012, thank you. The friendships Peter and I made in the late 1970's through WHM have lasted and enriched our lives. Dear Pete Ash was godfather to our son Chris, born in the winter of discontent of 1979. Pete T helped set up the '83 Ring Meeting so part of our annual leave from Brazil included that weekend.



I enjoyed getting to know the newer members, lovely to see babies and toddlers there. Pete T would be so glad that women dance with the men, brilliant! All part of the journey our society is still on. Don't get me started.



I made the new skirt for Hob Nob in 1979-80 as we were preparing to go to live in Brazil, took my sewing machine with me to work on it when staying with Pete and baby Chris in a cottage in winter in Goodnestone on the bleak north coast of Kent while Pete worked on the Brazil project at Marley Floors in Lenham. I also repaired the original farmer's smock that Bill Bush had. I am so pleased the archive has been lodged safely, do hope the 1970s folder reappears and I will look out our photos this winter to help fill that gap. A historian recently told me that it is the fine grain of personal and local information held in such records that give future historians the detail of real lives behind the headlines.

Pete's father, Jack Thomas, was stationed outside Warminster at the end of the war, he and Florence had a flat on Warminster High Street above a shop, with just a single camp bed and utility saucepans. In the winter of '47 Jack would walk to Frome to work in Lloyds Bank. Peter was born in Frome, so coming to live there from Lancaster brought him back to his roots and we heard a lot about the villages and wartime life on the Plain, and I love returning to this area, threading the old and new memories together.

That 70th Anniversary Saturday started with Liz Pike and I finding Autumn Ladies' Tresses orchids up on Edington Hill, then sun and music and dance in golden Wiltshire Villages, a chat about ticks and Lyme's disease, bubbly, cakes, more dancing, more catching up and getting to know folk, lots of photos oh and still trying to identify those buttocks in the Ring shower queue. I think I'd better stop!

We took various photographs of the day which can be seen using this link:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/FCP97VjLaa5mKhxw9>

Do call by when in Kent. Five minutes from Junction 9 on the M20. Wassail!

Margery

### Hat and Waistcoat

Reuben found a wonderful green waistcoat with White Horse emblem on the back and fancy embroidered button links, along with this ancient hat, which bears the date "1895". The hat belonged to Ioan Jenkins but the provenance of the waistcoat is still a



mystery, although the latest theory is that it was worn by Pip Potter.

The Squire has written to the tv show "The Repair Shop" to ask if it can be repaired and threatened that we will dance if they take it on. No news on this yet.

There was discussion at a recent practice about what we should do with these items. The most popular suggestion was that Mike should ask Emily Farewell if she would like to look after them and wear them when she is able to dance out again.



Emily's reply is below:

*I would be honoured. Thank you.*

*What a lovely afternoon it was for the 70th celebrations. I am looking forward to when I can come more regularly.*

*Yes, back at school part time. Going well on the whole. Anna has settled into school so far, and Matilda has settled into nursery. Currently waiting for Matilda to fall back to sleep....it could be a long night ahead of me. Thankfully I don't work Fridays.*

*Hope to see you soon.*

Emily

### Baldricks

All of this looking back to 1951 has led to much discussion amongst the baldrickologists in the side. The two pictures below show how the design of the emblem and the colouration of the strap has changed over



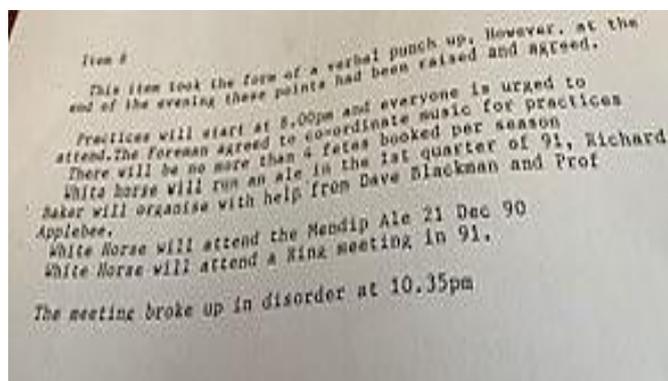
the years. The first is from the archive back in the days when black and white was being replaced by kodachrome, the second is from the

Squire's ironing board last week. Students of the emblem may mourn the loss of the white cloud from the original and the substitution of the letters WH.

### WHM AGM Wednesday 27 October

The date has been announced and members have been trawling through the "What's On" columns of the local papers to find important concerts and public lectures or committee meetings that they could attend on 27 October. But the truth is that this will be the only show in town on that evening

Of interest to senior members and as an example to more recent recruits, is the extract below from the minutes of the 1990 AGM.



Item 8  
This item took the form of a verbal punch up, however, at the end of the evening these points had been raised and agreed.  
Practices will start at 8.00pm and everyone is urged to attend. The foreman agreed to co-ordinate music for practices  
There will be no more than 4 fates booked per season  
White horse will run an ale in the 1st quarter of 91, Richard Baker will organise with help from Dave Blackman and Prof Applebee.  
White Horse will attend the Mendip Ale 21 Dec 90  
White Horse will attend a Ring meeting in 91.  
The meeting broke up in disorder at 10.35pm