



# The Prancing Pony



The Official Newsletter of White Horse Morris

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19 December 2022



## Merry Christmas White Horse

Twenty Three members of the White Horse Morris family met for a very nice Christmas Dinner at The Carriers in Stockton. There are more pictures elsewhere in this seasonal special of *Prancing Pony*. Reuben asks us to remember the “character” of the dance. We also look back on the events of 2022 and feature a recipe, puzzles, advert and review of our seasonal outing to the Christmas market in Tisbury. The one in Shaftesbury was cancelled due to a forecast of bad weather including high winds, but we still have the annual dancing at Stourhead coming up on Boxing Day. See you there?



## A Year of White Horse Morris



A lot has happened over the year with numbers continuing to grow and more events being supported.

We kicked off (a Prancing Pony euphemism) with a Wassail at The Donkey Field Community Orchard.

In April, when we started our annual programme we had torn calf muscles to deal with due to the cold weather and lack of warming up but our numbers meant that we could continue as normal.



May Day (actually the 2<sup>nd</sup>) at Ansty was very colourful, with some wonderfully foliated hats as these pictures show. We also took on The Green Man Festival in Bradford on



Avon and met up with Beltane.



Holly and Daisy stunned the crowd with their version of Bacca Pipes and got the biggest cheer of the day.



The Wimborne Folk Festival was another great day out where we once again more than held our own amid a great variety of teams and traditions.



By now the weather had started to warm up and the searing heat culminated at the Sarum Day of Dance with temperatures reaching the high 30s. Once again we performed well and I think offered something different to the many sides that were there. Watch our version of Sherriff's Ride by clicking on the link below



<https://photos.app.goo.gl/TwUQnX11rKrHjkhj6>

In between these weekend events we continued our weekly programme in the deluges at Edington and the Filly Loo, to one man and no dog at Stockton and the incredible village events at (the now publess) Chitterne and Berwick St John where they opened the pub specially.



The Rainbow on the Lake at Steeple Langford provided a new venue.



We also danced for the children at Exeter House School in Salisbury,





...and for the Beaver Scouts in Westbury

The Bennett Arms at Semley led to some bizarre facial expressions.



We kept dancing through August before we went inside for more practice but then took on 'Tiz the Season in a very cold Tisbury.

**'Tiz the Season 2022**

The Christmas Market in Tisbury this year was a slightly smaller affair than in previous years, and footfall was down, perhaps partly due to the very cold but also damp weather. Nevertheless White Horse Morris ventured forth and



heroically inflicted "entertainment" on the good shoppers of Tisbury High Street. There was a good turnout of dancers and also a welcome appearance from HobNob, with John in the engine room and Ali acting as his ostler.



Sticks were banged and hankies were waved in a wide range of dances, including a first outing for Saturday Night. Holly danced the Bacca Pipes Jig to solo fiddle from Sam, and the crowd were pulled in with a spirited rendition of Not for Joe.



Hats were decorated and the new dress code was meticulously observed.

**WHM Christmas Dinner at The Carriers**



The pictures below show the intense concentration as diners grappled with the quiz questions set by Mark. The tasks involved identifying Morris dances concealed in anagrams, and WH members from heavily cropped pictured and solving a few Christmassy dingbats. Squire Perry repeatedly and rigorously enforced a strict no-talking rule, hence the somewhat glum faces. But there was good spirit, hats were worn and conversations were enjoyed.



We still have Boxing Day at Stourhead to come , but looking ahead ..... what will next year bring?

## Calvin's Plums (... and other fruit and veg)

Calvin spent the autumn in his garden, busily harvesting the fruits of his labour and nature's bounty.

For the full slideshow, click the link below....

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/22THFEPxNsz4cw8x9>



## Recipe (from Julie)

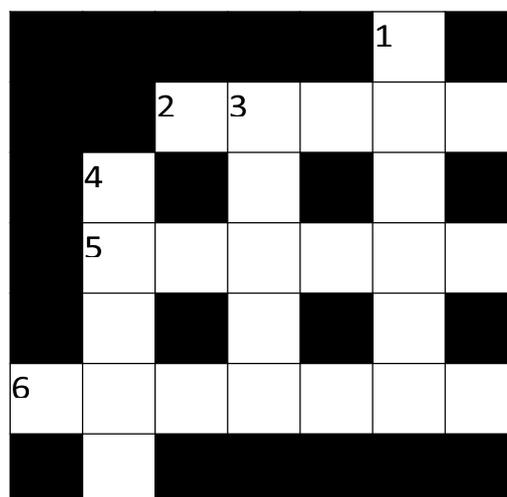
Here is a delicious Lebanese recipe for using up all those surplus courgettes from the allotment or garden. Perhaps more suitable for the summer than midwinter, it goes very well as a side dish with fish. Serves 2-3 people.



- 100g onion
- 3 tablespoons of sunflower oil
- 2 garlic cloves
- 500g courgettes
- 3 medium eggs
- Salt, pepper and ground ginger to taste

- peel onion, cut in half and slice thinly. Put in a frying pan with the oil over a medium heat;
- finely slice the peeled garlic and add to pan;
- cook gently, stirring occasionally until the onion is golden in colour;
- in the meantime, wash the courgette, grate it into a large colander and set it aside to drain.
- when the onion is golden crack the eggs into the pan and fry until cooked, stirring all the time
- move the pan away from the heat
- with your hand take some of the grated courgette, squeeze the liquid away and add courgette to the pan. Repeat until all the courgette is in the frying pan. Put back on the heat and stir well.
- add pepper, salt and ginger to taste (I use a couple of teaspoons worth)
- put a lid on the pan and turn down the heat
- simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

## Never a cross word from Phil



### Across

- 2. with 3-Down & 5-Across: Professional sports team (according to Facebook) [5,5,6]
- 5. See 2-Across
- 6. Your kit should include 2 of these on your shirt [7]

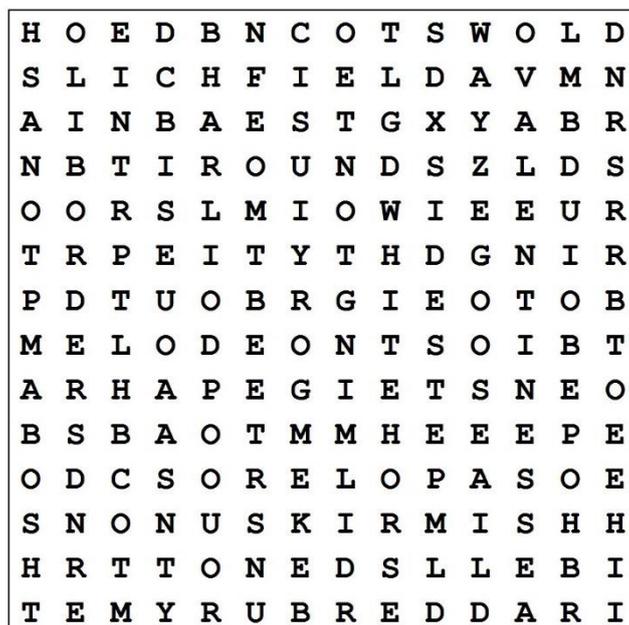
### Down

- 1. Something a railway worker, postman or nurse might have before Christmas [6]
- 3. See 2-Across
- 4. What should always be worn while dancing out [5]

## Morris Wordsearch

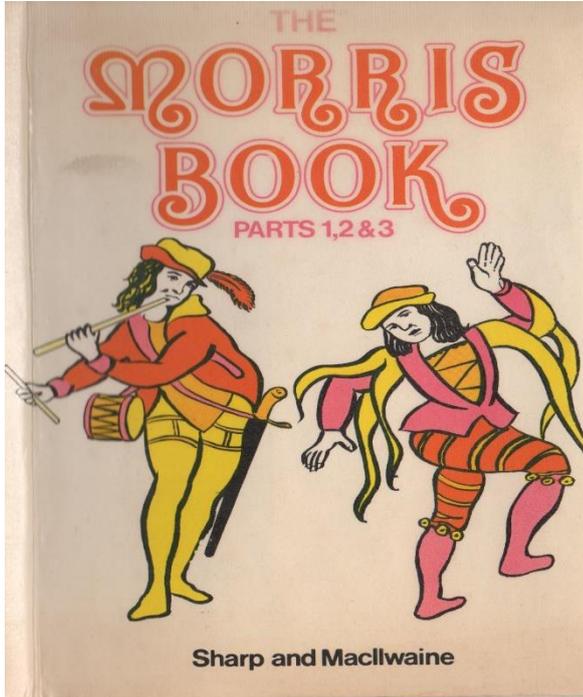
21 Morris-related words have been hidden in the matrix of letters below; they appear horizontally, vertically and diagonally, forwards and backwards.

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| ADDERBURY  | MELODEON    |
| BADBY      | RING        |
| BAMPTON    | ROUND       |
| BELLS      | SET         |
| BLEDINGTON | SHOOTING    |
| BORDER     | SIDESTEP    |
| CAPER      | SKIRMISH    |
| COTSWOLD   | VALENTINES  |
| ILMINGTON  | WAYZEGOOSE  |
| LICHFIELD  | WHITE HORSE |
| MEDUP      |             |



**“The Character of the Dance” – Reuben reflects on The Morris Book by Cecil Sharp**

This book is a tremendous source of Morris knowledge, written by Cecil Sharp, the man himself. The text shows how even CS couldn't really sort out the basics of how to perform 'the step', which foot to start on or which way to turn. Let alone the hand movements. So why do we get perplexed about them? All we need to do is assimilate the character of the dance.



the best dancers have, however, told us that their rule, whatever their practice, was to begin with that foot which would most easily start them on their journey—*e.g.*, the left foot in moving or turning out to the left, the right when dancing in the opposite direction—unless they were debarred from doing so by some superior consideration. As this is obviously a sound maxim we have adhered to it throughout our instructions, even where this has compelled us to alter what we have actually seen and noted down.

In some of the figures, to have given precise instruction on this point would have necessitated several additional diagrams. In these cases we have left it to those concerned to vary the instructions in accordance with the principle above enunciated. A change of foot can easily be effected by the suppression or interpolation of a hop; and, by way of illustration, we have in some instances indicated where and how this should be done.

Another troublesome question was the discovery of the principle which governed the direction in which a turn should be made—*e.g.*, in facing front or forming column. Eventually we found that the rule observed by the best dancers was, whenever possible, to turn outward, not inward. Here again, for uniformity's sake, we have adhered to one rule throughout our instructions, even though, in doing so, we have sometimes had to change what we had actually observed.

But by far the most perplexing question has been that of the hands. Of all the movements in the Morris dance these are the least stereotyped and stable. Careful observation has, however, enabled us to determine the limits within which this variation is usually confined. Consequently we have found it possible to set down what in our opinion may fairly be considered the average and normal practice of Morris dancers. In doing this the exigencies of notation have forced us to prescribe certain movements to be made in unison by all the dancers of the side. This, if carried out with military exactitude, will of course produce an effect of

in these pages is, therefore, what we have actually seen; we have consciously altered nothing.

The difficulty is, of course, one with which all collectors are familiar. Instability, the tendency to change, is inherent in, and must always be the invariable characteristic of, things which have survived solely by tradition. Finality is, in the nature of things, unattainable; like the horizon, it recedes as you approach it. After all, it must be remembered that variation, though it may, of course, connote corruption, is far more often indicative of health, growth, and vitality; of evolution, that is, not devolution.

By way of illustration we may instance the Morris-step. It has been said that no two traditional dancers perform this step in exactly the same way. Literally, of course, this is so. But then no two men walk alike; indeed, no two individuals do anything in precisely the same fashion, more particularly those things which are elemental in character. And yet we all know what we mean by walking, and are able to distinguish it from ambling, running, trotting, and other similar movements. Similarly, those who have studied the traditional Morris dance, who have carefully observed the way in which the Morris-step is performed by competent village dancers in many different parts of the country, know what the step is, are able to differentiate it from other steps, and ultimately, by noting the limits within which individual variation takes place, to tabulate its essential characteristics. And it is these, of course, which we have endeavoured to set forth in the following pages.

As already stated, we have in certain cases found it necessary to vary in our instructions what we have seen and noted down. The order of the feet is a case in point. Although we have ample evidence that traditional dancers are fully alive to the importance of this question,\* we have frequently found them, in practice, very careless. Many of

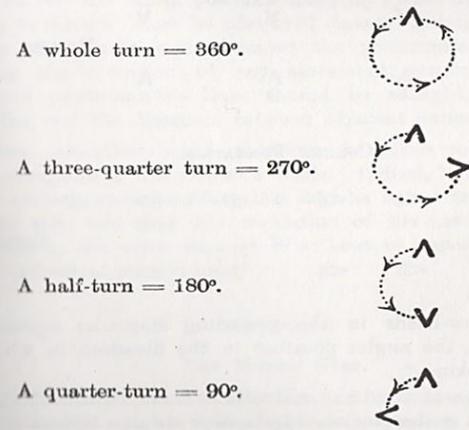
\* Mr. Percy Manning was told by an old dancer that when his side was competing against another team, although they were the better dancers, they were "beat before they begun," for one of their men started off with the wrong foot. Having lost, they had to pay for a dinner for both teams.

regularity and precision which is not in accordance with tradition. The only way in which this difficulty can be met is for dancers first of all to learn carefully and accurately the movements as described, and then to allow themselves a certain latitude in the execution of them. Those who have assimilated the character of the dance will then probably be able to vary the movements after the manner of traditional dancers.

In the description of the steps, evolutions, &c., now to be given, the following technical terms and expressions will be used:—

“Clockwise” (cl.) and “counter-clockwise” (c-cl.) refer to the direction of circular movements.

To “pass by the right” is to pass right shoulder to right shoulder; “by the left,” left shoulder to left shoulder.



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### Morris-themed Cocktails

#### **The Bakewell**

1 jigger each of Amaretto and Kirsch, pour over crushed ice in a tall glass and top up with soda water. Serve with a cocktail cherry on a short stick. (Disclaimer – this a Medup concoction).

#### **Young Tom Collins**

50ml Gin, 25ml lemon juice, 25ml sugar syrup, 125ml chilled soda.

Build the drink over plenty of ice in a tall glass, stir gently and garnish with a slice of lemon. Drink immediately.

#### **Old Tom Collins**

As above but don't drink immediately.

**The Quaker** – see Pete for this week's recipe.

#### **Over the hill(s)**

A lovely cup of tea or cocoa with a nice bit of cake.

#### **The Squire**

Lambrini or any sparkling Perry served in a cocktail glass. Garnish with pineapple, lots of pineapple. A perfect match with pizza.

Bottoms up!

### Here We Come A-Wassailing?

*Here we come a-wassailing among the leaves so green;  
Here we come a-wandering, so fair to be seen.  
Love and joy come to you, and to you our wassail, too.  
And God bless you and send you a Happy New Year*

We resume for practice on 4 January....

... but before that, we are due to dance at Stourhead at 11.30 on Boxing Day.



Also don't forget to tell Helen whether or not you can make it to either of the two Wassail events we have been invited on 14 & 15 January. It would be a shame if we can't raise a side for either of them.

