



The Prancing Pony

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White Horse Morris Dance Out again



Depending on your favoured sport at the moment, we open the batting, or - if you prefer - kick off this month with some reflections from our inspiration and leader Squire Perry on the return to “dancing out”. There is more correspondence in the columns, some relating to ancient photos of HobNob, and a nice message from Knotty who came out to watch in Warminster. Then there is part 3 of Robin Marshall-Ball’s serial reminiscences, which



include some self-drawn cartoons – another first for PP, and affectionate stories involving some of current dancers and food. We also have a Butterfly challenge from Nic Jones and a Call my Bluff from Helen. There is a section on pizza making from Kate but it has caused the Squire to go into shock and is now shielding.

The Squire makes some observations on “Dancing Out” again

What a difference 16 months without dancing out makes. Our last dance out prior to The Bell at Wylde was at The Stroud Wassail in January 2020! It has been so good getting out and about again, meeting up with members of the side and even defying the odds and remembering the dances. It has been seamless (almost!).



On the 19th May we kicked off at our home pub, The Bell at Wylde. The new people running the pub were very welcoming and delighted to have us back. It was



freezing cold and wet in May but we did well with a lot of enthusiasm.

The next week saw us doing an away fixture with Sarum Morris at The Barford Inn. Again we danced well and made a real impact with the audience. Our dancing and playing was described as being with gusto. We had a lot of dancers and musicians so put on a great show.



On the 2nd July we returned to our roots at The Weymouth Arms Warminster. In the 1970s and 80s White Horse Morris Men used to practice at a hall in Pound Street just up the hill from The Weymouth. The pub became our home pub and



was central to us when we hosted the 200th Ring Meeting of the Morris Ring of England in 1983. We

kept going there until the hall shut and we had to find a new home. We finally ended up in Wylie.



Nat and Shane at the pub made us very welcome and an appreciative crowd kept us dancing and playing until late.

Our last dance out, prior to publication was at The Black Dog at Chilmark on the 9th June 2021 where a huge crowd was thoroughly entertained. There was some great dancing and some



interesting calling – we had fun and the crowd didn't notice. It was a balmy evening and the singing of the thrush finished off a (near) perfect time. Several dancers were fined for various infractions; Pete Hewitt



for dancing his first dance wearing a maroon smoking jacket in homage to Noel Coward, and Mike Dixon for being the only dancer in the all-male set to have dark hair.

Since we started out dancing again I have been collecting comments. Here are a few (unattributed):

- It's great being out again, especially as the Squire is so gorgeous.
- I wish we could dance out more so that I can spend more time with the Squire

- Do you think the Squire likes me?
- How does the Squire keep his body so perfect?
- Do you think that the Squire has this amount of energy all of the time, if you know what I mean?

Boringly there were also these:

- Was that a thrush or a nightingale singing?
- I really like the Prancing Pony and I read it all of the time.
- I always answer emails.
- It's great to be able to get back to dancing and meeting these great people in White Horse.
- We always seem to dance with more energy than other sides.
- In this group of 5 people there are 5 different baldrick badges.



Knotty says Hello

Hi Mike,

Being a senior member who has not danced for some years and having been rather poorly for the past few months I thought I would put in an appearance at the Weymouth Arms on Wednesday, I was very gratified by the reception Liz & I received. Everybody came and made themselves known old friends and new, I think that White Horse Morris is one of the most friendly sides that I have known. After the dancing we all went into the pub courtyard and I thoroughly enjoyed the singing and the music. Having been poorly, I could not stay until the end, because I still tire easily but I will remember that evening for a good long time. Well done White Horse Morris.

Knotty ("Stilton") Ash

[Knotty is also pictured (in equine form) in the b/w Ring photo on page 5.]

Whose bike is named Corona Virus ?



This page has been left mainly blank so that you can make notes for the next edition of The Prancing Pony.

The Prancing Pony is exhausted and has found that getting blood out of a stone has been debilitating. Rather than going to the Knacker's Yard or facing a humane destroyer it is being put out to stud/be studded and will re-surface with a foal later.

To celebrate the final (for now) 30th edition we invite you to send in all of your fond memories of this heroic venture that has had contributions from you all. I know I have nagged in order to get articles, photos etc. but it worked – sometimes!

Thanks for all of your patience and particular thanks to Helen and Mark for getting it together for YOU!

Please drown me with you final-ish contributions by Friday 16th July 2021.

ID That Butterfly/ Spot the difference - From Our Entomology Correspondent Nic Jones

I have been interested in butterflies for all my life that I can remember. Identifying them has become somewhat easier with the use of the internet. However, there are still a few species where a decent photo is required to get a confirmed ID. SO.... See if you can “spot the difference” and see if you can ID the butterflies. (Note: Photos have been “acquired” from the internet, as I am writing this at work!) <https://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk> - but no “cheating”!! 😊

1) A.



B.



2) A.



B.



3) A.



B.



Kate shares her secret trick to avoid a soggy bottom when Saturday night is "pizza" night

.....in the Godfrey Brooks household. I sometimes make a proper dough (Hugh FW has a good recipe) but more often than not I use this quick recipe, which doesn't need proving.

Preheat oven to 230°C (210°C fan). Dissolve 7g yeast and 1 teaspoon sugar in 235ml warm (45 C) water. Mix and let stand for about 10 mins. Stir in 340g bread flour (I use 140g granary, 200g strong bread flour) and 1 teaspoon salt. Mix well, then add 2 tablespoons olive oil and beat until smooth. Rest for five minutes. The recipe says, *'Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and pat or roll into a round base.*

Transfer to a lightly greased pizza pan dusted with fine polenta or cornmeal. Spread with desired toppings and bake for 15-20 mins.' But I split the dough (about 600g altogether) into three big thin "pizzas", use normal baking trays and don't bother with polenta or cornmeal. I cook the bases for a few mins before adding toppings, as I find it prevents a soggy bottom.

My top three toppings are korma sauce, mushroom and pineapple; ratatouille, cheddar and pine nuts; and leftover potato dauphinoise potatoes and cheddar.

Squire has no comment i.e. is speechless.

Kate x





THE MENDIP ALE!

The traditional Yuletide gathering of all respectable and reputable Morris sides in the Westcountry – Mendip, Taunton Deane, Bathampton, Priston Mill, and so many others. Even Sides from such far-flung outposts of the Empire as South Dorset or even the Forest of Dean, gravitated one dark winter’s evening each year, to a remote village hall somewhere just below the snow line on the Mendips. There to quaff ale, feast on Nature’s (or at least the local supermarket’s) bounty, and to impress all with their dancing prowess - each side had their own ‘exhibition dance’ to wow the unsuspecting onlookers.

White Horse Morris Men (bear in mind that this was in a ‘men-only’ era when women had yet to be invented) were NEVER invited to the Mendip Ale. yet we always went anyway! No, I tell a lie. . . . we were invited on one occasion, and that was the only year when we refused to attend. Perhaps it’s an age thing, but my memories of the Mendip Ale are now quite fuzzy round the edges, but there are a number of vignettes which stand out.

“The Pepperami Incident”

It was the last day of the Christmas term, and school closed at 1.00pm. All the staff piled into the Rose & Crown in Bulford where, quite uncharacteristically, the

Head had placed a large tab in the bar. As I wasn’t driving that day, with no thought for my personal safety, I heroically took it upon myself to drink loads of beer for and on behalf of the others. In late afternoon we were reminded that it was the night of the Mendip Ale and we headed over the Plain, me stopping off in Warminster at Pete and Liz Pike’s to change out of ‘school kit’ and into White Horse ceremonial regalia.

At the appointed time we all piled into our armoured personnel carrier (oh! OK, a hired minibus) on the raiding mission. In-flight briefing was given by our driver, Richard Baker (in later years he fled the country and is now reportedly living in Australia (actually NZ – ed.) in a place called Didjabringabeeralong). We stopped at a pub on the route, for most of the side to wet their whistles and get into the swing of things, but for me it was merely to top up my alcohol level. It was then that I realised that I hadn’t eaten anything all day, so scanning the bar for a ‘solid filler’ my eyes lit upon a pack of Pepperami. Stripping the foil off the delicacy I started eating, only to realise by the myriad faces reflected in the large mirror behind the bar, that lots of people were shouting at me! “bugger them” I thought, and continued my private meal. Thereupon Bob Hill grasped me by my shoulders and swung me round to face him. For the first time since I had known him, I actually understood what he said.”You are

supposed to take the bloody plastic covering off as well before eating it!" he shouted!

"The Grand minibus Hijack"

As one Mendip Ale drew to its late night close, tired Morris sides sauntered back to their respective minibuses, happy and replete with their ale and feasting, satisfied with their dancing, and looking forward to the Yuletide. White Horse were often among the last to leave. On this particular evening we were scanning the tables for any remaining edibles to 'liberate' when a very worried Frome Valley man ran into the hall, announcing that there was a problem and he was in need of WHMM assistance. Apparently when they had said their farewells and were boarding their minibus, they encountered a figure clutching a hazel stick slumped and asleep on the back seat. Unidentified in the darkness, their attempts to rouse the sleeper only resulted in wild waving of the said weapon and shouts of "Get out of my minibus". On one wild sweep of the stick the hijacker's coat fell open to reveal he was wearing White Horse colours. it took us some time to persuade Pete Pike that the minibus he had boarded wasn't really ours, and please would he let the other side have it back?

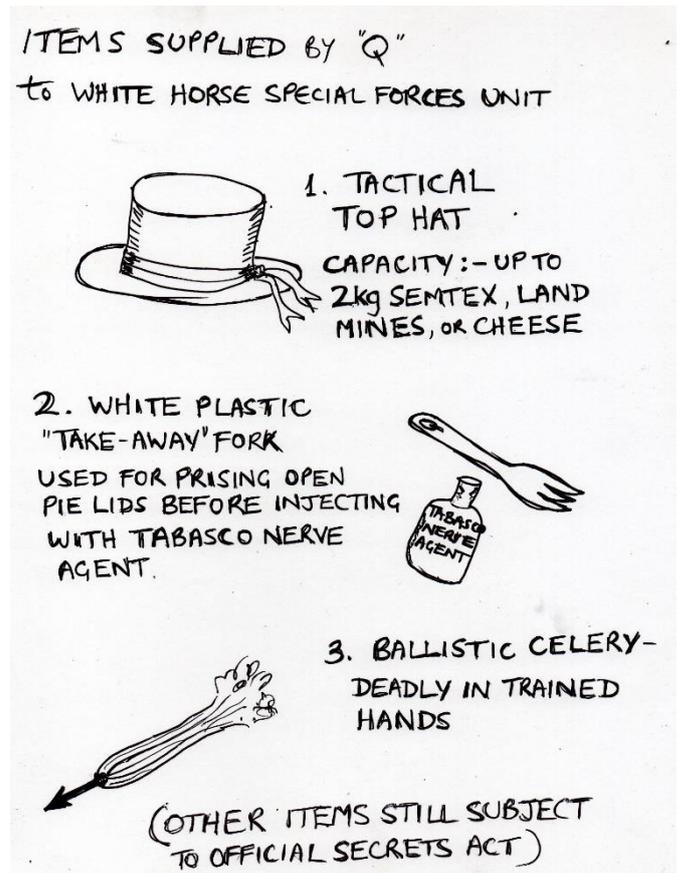
"Stilton? What Stilton?"

Picture this – a main hall where everybody gathered, there to respond to the call for a massed dance, each side dancing the said dance slightly differently and in their own style, and at other times to watch and critically appraise the 'exhibition dance' of each side. All the sides were in the main hall, except White Horse. We gravitated to the annexe to the main hall, wherein small tables bowed their spindly legs under the weight of various real ale barrels, and along the wall trestle tables sagged with the myriad platters of cheeses, cocktail sausages and pineapple onna stick, cheese wedges, highly suspicious dips, really nasty sticks of celery and all manner of other 'feasty-type' things. (Oh that reminds me, we once performed 'Shooting Adderbury' at the Ale using celery sticks!) Now, on one of these trestle tables the centrepiece was a full round 1.5kg Stilton Cheese. Early in the evening it had mysteriously disappeared, much to the consternation of the hosts. As suspicion seemed to naturally fall upon us, we spent the rest of the night in the main hall, dancing and singing as appropriate, yet even by the end of the evening the Stilton had not re-appeared. For those of us who know and appreciate the elegance and grace of Knotty's normal dancing, on this particular evening his deportment while dancing was even more exemplary – we were all sooooo impressed.

It was only when we were boarding our transport for the journey home when someone casually asked to the rest of us "What really did happen to that Stilton?" Knotty took an elegant step forward – "What Stilton? Do you mean this one?" He raised his top hat, and above many layers of serviettes shielding it from his head was a perfectly undamaged large round cheese. . . . he had been dancing with it under his hat all evening!

"Who's the Squire Now?"

Pat McGovern assumed the Squirehood of White Horse Morris. In true egalitarian spirit Pat led the side to great things, such as hosting a Ring Meeting and other important events, but for the Mendip Ale his leadership only served to enhance our reputation as the 'provisional wing' of the Morris Ring of England. He had one particular technique of totally exasperating the Mendip appointed Master of Ceremonies at the Ale. Emanating the importance that such a rank and title bestows, the MC would approach us with the barked question "Who is the Squire here?" Pat would gather us round in a circle, and pointing to each in turn would utter the immortal words "Eeny – Meeny – Miney – Moh. . . ." and so on until one of us was 'It'.



"The Drowning Man"

It was Ed's first Mendip Ale. A novice dancer at the time, he joined in with many of the massed dances – not necessarily with the WH side, but it did seem to sow confusion among the other sides! In addition he took his cue from the more senior members and became really adept in the 'Pete Hewitt technique' of surreptitiously slipping a dose of hot chilli pickle into a mince pie before carefully replacing the pie lid and putting it back on the plate. We, of course, had removed mince pies for WH consumption to another 'marked' plate on the table. There were a number of other sabotage techniques perfected by Calvin Eales and Richard Baker which were quickly learned by our 'newbies'. On his first exposure to the pressures of a Mendip Ale, one thing Ed hadn't learned concerned the consumption of beer. Throughout the evening he seemed determined to perfect a new technique of 'mass internal storage' – perhaps for scientific research purposes as he was after all a college lecturer? The end

result took me back to an imagined night gas attack on the Somme. He sat, or to be more accurate, was slumped, on the seat behind me in the minibus for the journey home. I thought he was drowning. Clutching the back of my coat collar, the miles were punctuated by loud choking, gasping, totally incoherent garbled sounds and the occasional squeak – I dared not turn round to help, indeed I couldn't as his hold on my coat, and sometimes my throat, prevented all thoughts of assistance.

In retrospect, yes, we had the enviable reputation of being a 'terrorist organisation' among the Morris sides in the Westcountry. In subsequent years, whenever I meet another Morris dancer from any part of the country and declare that I was with White Horse Morris, the most frequent response is an awestruck "Bloody Hell! You weren't with them were you?" We were young, we got up to all sorts of pranks and tended to treat 'serious' Morris sides with grave suspicion, but when the chips were down we were bloody good dancers – our 'exhibition dance' – 'The Lass from Richmond Hill' was danced with precision and beat all-comers. White Horse Morris – simply the Best!

Robin

More Hob-Nob from Steve Matcham

Dear Helen,

I've attached two more photos, unlike the previous one I can say with 100% certainty that these were taken at the 1954 Salisbury Ring Meeting. They depict the hobby horse known as the Salisbury Hob-Knob.



The soft focus image was probably taken by the same anonymous photographer who took the Kimber / Schofield image. The better quality picture

was taken by Mike Wilson-Jones who attended the meeting with Westminster Morris Men. Feel free to use them however you wish.

Circulating these images amongst our club members elicited this recollection from Peter North:

"I went to the Salisbury Ring MTG in 1954. We mass danced in the streets after the Feast and there were hundreds of drunken soldiers around. Some of them fought with the Morris men but the Morris men won as they were armed with sticks!!!!!! I don't think the Martlets were involved in the fighting." Happy days!
Peter

Best regards
Steve Matcham



Coincidentally we also received this from Duncan Broomhead, Keeper of the Morris Ring Photograph Archive. The negative he refers to is the second of the two above.

Hi,

I bought this glass negative of the Salisbury Hob Nob and two Westminster MM on eBay. I have since been told that it might have been taken at the White Horse MM, Ring Meeting in Salisbury on 4th September 1954. I wonder if you can check your archives to see if Hob Nob attended, and also which sides attended.

Best regards

Duncan Broomhead

Keeper of the Morris Ring Photograph Archive.

Would anyone like to "check our archives"?

Helen invites you to Call Her Bluff

Peawet, or as it is known in France, fuet, is something that has challenged people's understanding for decades. Below are some definitions but are they all right or just one? You choose.

CALL MY BLUFF - PEA WET (All answers to Helen)

1. Peawet is an old, colloquial word, originating in East Anglia for a lapwing. Lapwings are often to be found nesting in the reed beds and marshes of the region, notably to the west of Great Yarmouth. The word is still in common use amongst the locals living along the quiet country lanes of the Norfolk B Roads.
2. Pea-wet is considered to be a delicacy in the Lancashire town of Wigan. A by-product of the mushy pea making process – it is the reduced water in which the dried marrowfat peas have been boiled and used as a sauce or gravy. Usually enjoyed (Do you mean endured?–Ed.) with chips, various 19th Century records refer to pea-wet and bread as being a commonplace breakfast. The cries of 'Gerridownya, Irrulpuairsonthachest' are often heard in Wigan as parents gently coax their children to partake of this nourishing delight.

3. Peawet was a term used in the Victorian East End of London to describe a thick fog heavy with moisture. Picture the scene – a swirling mist rising from the river, cold and damp. A miasma, ladies and gentleman, of unhealthy air and vapours with that kind of drizzle that soaks you right through. The threat of being ‘peawetten’ in Victorian times could strike fear in the East End as it often led to fever or similar maladies. Costermongers believed a prolonged, hard peawet could ‘turn their wares’. Indeed The Great Peawet of 1878 led to a shortage of bananas, but in true Cockney spirit they went and made a right song and dance about it.

A press cutting from the Warminster Journal

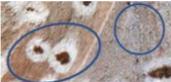


Answers to the Butterfly-Spot the difference

1 A. Common Blue



B. Brown Argus



2 A. Essex Skipper



B. Small skipper



3. A. Large White



B. Small White



Answers to the Butterfly Spot the Difference:

All items for the next Prancing Pony to Mike Perry by Friday 16 July and preferably sooner.