



The Prancing Pony

The Official Newsletter of White Horse Morris

Issue #13

18th June 2020

Prancing Pony meets Max the Horse, but HobNob not invited

This week White Horse should have been performing at the Filly Loo at Ashmore on Friday, but this has been another casualty of the Coronavirus lockdown. Midsummer, like May Day will go unmarked by the Morris. However we have plenty of gems to read about this week as you hunker down at home in your bubbles. A cordial recipe from Heather, and an exclusive interview with Bob about his days as a “background actor” in various films shot locally. Bob also adds some pictures with the challenge to put them in time and space.

Physically Distanced Morris? The Squire asks....

Just think of getting out and dancing again, even if we have to make some modifications.

2 people clashing with 1 metre of stick are 2 metres apart. We could adapt dances so we have no more than 6 people together at one time. Large sets become the norm but as one of our members said – “None of those cuddling dances”. Pure white sterilised hankies to show how clean we are. Everyone carrying hand-sanitiser and wearing a mask. All things are possible. Thanks to those of you who have said you are interested. So far we have:- Nic, Heather, Helen, Kate, Andy, Mike P, Sam, Sarah, Holly, Daisy, Reuben.(+ possibly John, Mark and Calvin).

Some more would help of course so let me know what you are thinking. I understand if you do not want to be involved at this stage.

This picture shows what we might have been doing tomorrow at Ashmore. Ghosting effects by Tim Jones):



I have a vague thought about combining a sort of practice, in kit, with the 72nd anniversary of the NHS on Sunday 5th July, perhaps on Bishopstrow’s field. By then we will know more of where we are with the relaxation of the lockdown measures.

Crisp Elderflower Cordial

Thank you for doing the Prancing Pony each week, I do enjoy reading it. I am trying your recipe for peperoni tonight.

I thought I would send in a recipe for elder flower cordial as the elder flowers are out now, although it is

best to pick them when they are dry. It is a recipe from Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and very tasty. I made half the amount and just keep it in the fridge rather than sterilising it, as it does not last long in our house, so there is no need. I also missed out the citric acid as I did not have any. Heather

Elderflower Cordial (Makes about 2 litres)

- About 25 elderflower heads
 - Finely grated zest of 3 unwaxed lemons and 1 orange, plus their juice (about 150ml in total)
 - 1kg sugar
 - 1 heaped tsp citric acid (optional)
- Inspect the elderflower heads carefully and remove any insects. Place the flower heads in a large bowl together with the orange and lemon zest.
- Bring 1.5 litres water to the boil and pour over the elderflowers and citrus zest. Cover and leave overnight to infuse.
- Strain the liquid through a scalded jelly bag or piece of muslin and pour into a saucepan. Add the sugar, the lemon and orange juice and the citric acid (if using).
- Heat gently to dissolve the sugar, then bring to a simmer and cook for a couple of minutes.
- Use a funnel to pour the hot syrup into sterilised bottles. Seal the bottles with swing-top lids, sterilised screw-tops or corks.

Amphibians

I have attached a photo of our pond as it is looking nice at the moment. We have newts and frogs although they don’t spawn in this pond anymore. They always spawn in our other pond up the garden. I wonder whether it’s because the newts eat the tadpoles?





Castaway Tony

Music Tracks:

Ennio Morricone - *Ecstasy of Gold*,
 Uriah Heep- *Lady in Black*,
 Melanie- *Pebbles in the Sand*,
 Wishbone Ash -*Leaf and Stream*,
 Oli Julian - *When in Rome*,

The Who - *Baba O'Reilly*.

A song for every mood , so long as every mood is quite chilled out

Food Item: A big block of extra mature cheddar cheese. Heaven on a buttered cracker.

Book: *The Travelling Cat Chronicles* by Hiro Arikawa. - Just a beautiful little tale that brings a tear to the eye.

Luxury Item: A surfboard , I can't surf , but if I'm stuck on an island I have plenty of time to learn.

Morris Dance: - Ring o'Bells. Just think it looks good.



Morris – A Life with Bells on

Readers may recall the film from a few years ago called “Morris- A Life with Bells On” much of which was filmed locally but not all will be aware that our own Bob Hill was a member of the cast. Helen Sanderson caught up with him at his Beverley Hills apartment for this exclusive interview:

Helen: Hi Bob, do you have any previous acting experience - school plays, amateur dramatic productions?

Bob: I took part in a number of plays at various schools, as my parents moved around quite a bit for my father's work. The first, from what I can remember, was one of a group of shepherds, complete with tea towel over my head secured in place with a dressing gown cord, in a nativity play in my early years at a little village primary school in Hampshire. Not a speaking role, I just stood there with a toy lamb while the teacher did the narration. For some reason Tisbury seems to be a place

producers like to use for their films ranging from three series of *Robin of Sherwood* between 1984 -6, with Clannad doing the sound track <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WorgQGCFeLM> , to the river scenes with Depp et al in *Chocolat* that was filmed on Fonthill Lake. I took part as an extra on a film that went virtually straight to DVD *Cheerful Weather for a Wedding*, first as a spectator of a cricket match on Fonthill cricket pitch and then as an inebriated 'local' at the wedding feast in Tisbury Tithe Barn. Many who have seen the film say I was particularly in character for the latter part - I cannot understand how they think that way.

Helen: Yes, I believe Mark was also in the cricket scene <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbVU-1pecy4> How did you get involved with the film *Morris - A life with bells on*?

A lot of the film was shot around Chicks Grove, with The Compasses being the pub where one of the dancers was supposedly the landlord. They wanted a barn to film an inside drinking session and there was one beside the house I was living in at the time, which they used and for which I furnished the cider from a pressing I had done the previous year.

When they were using the barn I kept my horse in a field up the road because he liked to try and muscle in on what was going on and when they ignored him he would make noises to get attention and that disturbed their shooting. It was while bringing him back down to the house one morning that they were filming outside of the pub and I waited for them to finish the scene. Instead they decided it would add some



'character' to the setting if I walked through leading the horse while they shot. The horse, this time, behaved impeccably and they managed it in one take. In the credits at the end of the film he gets a line in the cast roll as '*Max the horse - himself*', but I did not get a mention; that just shows how fame is a fickle thing. (Bob is the one on the right in the picture).

Can you tell our readers about your experiences on set?

No make-up, hair-do or anything. However, I did get a cup of coffee and a bacon sandwich from the catering van as some recompense. As above just, a walk through on this film, but a bit of sitting down or staggering around on the previous one.



In the film, The Compasses Inn becomes The Traveller's Staff. Were other locations in the local area featured?

As well as my barn they used Sutton Mandeville church for a ceremony and some of the more rural and

fete scenes were either in the fields or farm yard and work shop of Colemans Farm in Chicksgrove. Part of the dance-off was filmed during the Wimborne Folk Festival. Florida was filmed in Bournemouth and the airport was Southend.

Was there a first night première?

Yes, the Leicester Square Odeon, but neither Max nor I got an invite. I am sure I could have permed his mane and polished him up well to do the red carpet bit. A few months later there was a local première at the Victoria Hall in Tisbury where White Horse did dance before and during the interview. We also were filmed and interviewed by a CNN news team and it was later broadcast across the US and Europe.

Did you meet the fictional Chief of the Morris Circle played by Derek Jacobi?

No, nor Harriet Walter. He apparently came down to visit and had a meal at the pub, but had no association with the lower levels of the cast or non-cast.

As a real life Morris dancer how did you rate the dancing?

The whole thing was a spoof and that is how it should be taken and as I saw it. If they had tried to use real Morris dancers, instead of actors, together with the right steps and names for the accessories then I think it would have done the custom a great deal of harm by devaluing what it is and the culture behind it.

However, with the documentary style that it was filmed in there was just enough distance to keep it separate from the real thing. When they were filming I tried a few times to get the producer to use White Horse, but in retrospect I am glad he did not. It would have given us a fillip of publicity at the time, but it could have caused some embarrassment in the longer term.

Are there any plans for a sequel?

Not as far as I know. I suspect the whole thing was something of a tax dodge as at that time it was possible to borrow to invest in a project, such as a film, and if it made a loss that loss could be written down against other tax that might be due. It became very corrupted a little while later when a whole lot of celebs got involved with fake borrowing schemes and got jumped on by HMRC.

I was not the only person from White Horse who was involved. There were a number including from memory John Wippell and Alison Dyke who attended the producer's call for interest and attended the church service and a 'fete' in a nearby field.

If you can think of anything else that may be of interest, funny stories etc. too that would be marvellous. Unfortunately there will be no fee for this!

Just like my film participation.

Thanks so much

Please send items for the next *Prancing Pony* to Mike Perry by Monday 22 June.

Where and When Was It?

Three pictures, courtesy of Bob, with the question Where and When was it?



Castaway Chris' Discs

From your Northern Correspondent.

The weather up here is damp, dreary and chilly so my thoughts have turned to long, balmy days and silver sands on my desert island. Here are my Desert

Island music tracks:

San Francisco - Scott McKenzie
You're so vain - Carly Simon
A 'double choice' *Lark*
Ascending/Fantasia on a theme - Vaughan Williams
Atherfield - Andy Cutting
Sloe Gin set - Bellowhead
Hares on the Mountain - Rosie & Danny

Book: *Practical Self Sufficiency*- Dick and James Strawbridge

Food- Nutella

Luxury item - Solar-Powered radio

