



# The Prancing Pony

The Official Newsletter of White Horse Morris

Issue #04

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## The Prancing Pony begins to Canter

Thanks to Liz Pike for more HobNob chronicles, and to John Wippell for his memories of founder member Bill Bush. Then we have photos from Mike Perry's nocturnal visitors, some ornithological details from Helen, and a logistical quiz from Mike Dixon. Please send in more memories from yesteryear for the next issue.

### Origins of HobNob – the story continues

“The Salisbury Giant and Hob-Nob were first mentioned in 1570 and 1572 respectively, in records from the Salisbury Guild of Tailors but it is probable he existed by the 1400s. Originally used by the Salisbury Guild of Tailors on the eve of the feast of St John (Midsummer's Day), they have been a part of processions and festivals in Salisbury, originally to mark the eve of St John the Baptist's Day (June 23rd) and the eve of the feast of St Osmund's translation (July 15th), but later to be paraded for special occasions, such as royal weddings and jubilees.



Hob-Nob's purpose in celebrations and parades was to clear the way for the Giant – he is smaller, and horse-like, with jaws fitted with hob-nails to snap at members of the crowd if they were in the way. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there were reports of the hobby horse chasing people and ripping their clothes with his teeth as a result of people throwing things at him. The Giant and Hob-Nob could each be supported by one man holding the frame.

Similarly, it has been argued that Hob-Nob has links with the spring festival of St George. Indeed, there were records of the dragon being fought by St George in the company of St Christopher in 1455. Thus Hob-Nob may have earlier belonged to the Guild of St George in Salisbury (a merchant's guild).” This exert is from, Julie Davis, County Local Studies Librarian.

### White Horse HobNob

At some point in the early formation of White Horse in the 50's a replica Hob-Nob was adopted as its mascot. Who made it is probably now lost in time\*. It

was refurbished in the 70's by Margery Thomas, a white horse widow, married to Pete Thomas. (He would have been 70 last week). She is a talented needle woman and refashioned the skirt and head



piece. She did an excellent job as it still in good shape and has survived the washing machine this week. I assume the head must have had a make-over at this time as well.

My best memory of HobNob is taking him and the giant with a few White Horse men to *Dance England* in Derby in a hired van. Following the display the tired hungry White Horse ensemble decided a curry was the answer. Imagine the surprise on the Indian waiter's face when asked “Can we bring in our horse?”!



Liz Pike

\* Page 82 of the White Horse First Scrapbook 1951-69 records that HobNob was made by Mr Denis Grant King-Cheverell and his first outing was in 1954.

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QCBUIX\\_uf7bGwLJIN-nCmVdlMH5Sz](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QCBUIX_uf7bGwLJIN-nCmVdlMH5Sz)

### A Quiz from Mike Dixon

Using coloured roads only, on the attached map: start at the Junction of the B3105 and B 3109. Go through following spot heights: 93,89,78,74, 98, 162, 166.

At the last instruction (Google Street View will help!)

- 1) What Grid square are you in ?
- 2) Where should you head towards if you want to go camping?
- 3) Towards where is the Diverted Traffic Heading?

### Answers to Kate's Quiz from TPP#03

Calvin, Ali, Heather, Sharon, Holly, Dave, Chappel, Chris, Daisy, Andy, S(c)arah, Liz, Kip, Knotty, T(w)ony, Mark, Julie, Farewell, aJudyKate, Cliffs, Rowan, Shirley, Helen, Pete, Sam, Mike, Donna, Bob, Liz, Rosie, Maggie, John

## **Blasts from the Past - John recalls Bill Bush**

One Saturday evening in the summer of 1972 Carol and I were standing on the road out of Westbury. I had my thumb out in classic hitch-hiker pose. We were trying to get a lift to Bratton Village Hall where my brother-in-law was playing for a barn dance. A car stopped and an elderly man (71, same age as me now) wound the window down. "Is that a type-writer you've got in that case?" he asked. "No, it's not, it's a type of squeeze box, actually," I replied. "Thought so. Jump in!" he instructed. And that was how we met Bill Bush, one of the founder members of White Horse Morris.



Bill had tremendous drive, energy and charm, coupled with a fiery temper. He was the most persuasive money collector White Horse has ever had. He could charm the birds out of the trees and the pound notes from people's pockets. His unique collection receptacle was an orange plastic bucket.

Bill only took up Morris dancing because it was less dangerous than playing football, which he was still doing at the age of 50. "What convinced you to give up?" I asked him. "Well, I was playing centre forward and I took a shot just as the full-back tackled me and I thought, wow, that hurt. I nearly had to go off. I didn't want to tell my wife so I went to bed without saying anything but that night it was hurting a bit so I went downstairs and turned the light on and my leg had gone black from my knee down to my toe, so I had to admit my footballing days were over. My friend Roger Pinnegar (first squire) suggested I take up Morris dancing."

As a teenager Bill used to deliver milk by horse and cart round Westbury and out to some of the villages. In the quiet country lanes, rather than sit on the cart, Bill liked to ride on the horse's back. Many years later, Michael Coward, another WH man got married and the conveyance from church was a horse and cart. The horse wasn't comfortable with the crowds of well-wishers standing round and was getting rather jittery. Bill clambered up on the horse's back, took the reins and guided the horse just as he had done all those years before.

Bill told me that one hot summer when it hadn't rained for weeks, he noticed that the grass round the White Horse at Edington had dried and gone brown in certain places. He was convinced that you could see the ghostly outlines of the old Saxon dragon's tail and horns around the chalk horse. Bill lived into his late eighties and his enthusiasm for Morris and folk dancing remained till the end.

This picture shows him in Salisbury on Boxing Day 1965. I also have a picture in my mind of Bill at

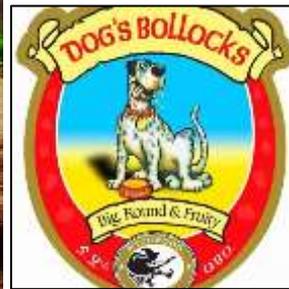


Ashmore Filly Loo, car window wound down, Bill sitting in the evening sun watching the proceedings with a

wonderful serene smile on his face. Eventually, Bill suffered a stroke and had to go into a nursing home where the White Horse summer tour visited him. When he heard the music and the jingling bells he showed his delight in once more being part of the Morris that was so much part of his life.

John Wippell

## **Caption Competition**



Does anyone remember "real ale"?

## **On This Day (16<sup>th</sup> April)**

- In Wiltshire 1232 Ela Longspee, Countess of Salisbury laid the foundation stone of her convent at Lacock Abbey.
- 1970 The Simon and Garfunkel classic Bridge over Troubled Water was Number 1 in the U.K. charts.

## **Nature Corner**

The Squire set up a trail camera and every night has regular visitors to his garden.



## **Rare Bird Spotting in Wiltshire – The Wayzgoose**

**Family:** Border Morris.

**Haunt:** Sept-April Indoors; April-July Outdoors - Public Houses, Days of Dances; August - Generally migrant - to sunnier climes.

**Plumage:** Blue and Green. Black cap.

**Eggs:** Poached (courtesy of Wharfedale Wayzgoose Border Morris)

**Food:** Chips

**Call:** No adult call but may occasionally call to fledglings for encouragement.

**Behaviour:** In air in flocks of 4. More recently in flocks of 8 displaying a symmetrical flying formation ending in a spectacular circular display before roosting.

**Please send items for inclusion in the next Prancing Pony to Mike "Reuters" Perry by Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April.**