



The Prancing Pony

The Official Newsletter of White Horse Morris

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Rioting in Heytesbury as lockdown prevents Morris Dance tour

The good people of Heytesbury were deprived of their much-anticipated annual opportunity to perform “*Not for Joe*” outside the Red Lion this week as Police clamped down on Lichfield Heys and Whole Jips as “non-essential travel”. Village Constable Bob Burgess was called upon to start playing his banjo and crowds quickly dispersed. White Horse Baglady Helen Sanderson vowed the tradition would be restored next year.



“Finding Morris”-A Hinge of History, ex-Squire Pat McGovern remembers.

Monday, 16th April 1979 was Easter Bank Holiday

Monday that year and was also one of those hinges of history when life changes forever! We had gone, for a family day out, to Stourhead. As we made our way down from the car park to the gardens, we could hear the unanticipated and magnetic sound of melodeons, drums and bells.



Outside the Spread Eagle Pub, the sight that met our eyes was pure awe and wonder; I had never seen anything like it before! We stood in complete amazement, lost in the spectacle of movement, music and magic. We watched a couple of dances before I recognised one of the team but couldn't remember his name or where I had met him. It took a walk around the whole of the Stourhead Gardens, with the brain cells working overtime, before it dawned on me who he was and where we had met. It had been in a Remand Home and I hadn't seen him since 1975. I should add quickly that we were both *working* there, he as a Child Care Officer and me as a Teacher. His name was Arthur Goring and I couldn't believe it was him, dressed in his kit, dancing and taking turns to collect from the crowd. I waited until he wasn't doing anything and went over to say hello. He had to do a double take before he recognised me. The last time we had seen each other was at my leaving do in a pub on the Goldhawk Rd, Shepherds Bush, West London. After a quick catch up on how we had both made our way to Wiltshire, I had to ask him what all this music, celebrating, dancing and pure street theatre was all about. Arthur said it was the best thing he had ever come across and I should join!

I just loved the whole idea and agreed to meet Arthur outside Warminster Post Office on the following Wednesday evening to go with him to practice in the Pound Street Hall. What an experience! I knew nothing about Morris Dancing but the welcome was amazing. After a short time watching, I was up and learning a dance - Shepherd's Hey, I thought it was

brilliant! The Foreman was Glen (from Barnstaple), the Squire was Calvin Eales and the Bagman was Richard Baker. I can remember that on that evening, 41 years ago, there was a goodly number in the side and at that practice: Knotty, Pete Hewitt, Pete Thomas, John Wippell, Bob Burgess, Arthur Goring, Pip Potter, Alan Harrison, Keith (mate of Pete Thomas, can't remember his surname), John Pearson, John Allard, Pete Warren, Tony Tutton, Rob Price, Ian Petts, Brian Dempsey, Sid Hemsley and someone called Bicycle Clips (or Prof) whose name I never found out.



It turned out that Keith and I lived near each other in Trowbridge and Alan Harrison, who drove down from

Chippenham, offered to pick us up and bring us over to practice on Wednesdays. And so it began! Wednesdays took on a whole new perspective as the focal point of the week and I first danced out on Crofton Beam Engine Day, Spring Bank Holiday, May 28th, 1979. The side danced outside the Royal Oak, Marlborough, the Red Lion, Avebury and Crofton Beam Engine – a truly great day out! Mike and Val Perry with their two boys met up with our family, that day at Crofton.. Mike and I worked together at Durrington and a little while later when they moved to Warminster, Mike joined the side too.

Morris Dancing became such a big part of our family's life until we left for Cornwall in 1987. It has given me a wealth of wonderful memories and special friendships which will never be forgotten. Keep well, keep safe and keep going!

Pat McGovern
(Team member 1979-88; Squire of WHMM, 1983/84)

Please send items for the next *Prancing Pony* to Mike Perry by Monday 25 May.

From Sarah

Thank you for your email and thinking of us 😊. We are all well. Strange thing to say but we have been quite busy over these past few weeks. I am still working four days a week and Sam has been home schooling the girls and fitting in his gardening too. Sam has made a chicken coup with some help from the rest of us, and been cycling with the girls every day with me joining them when I could. Unfortunately, this all changed when Holly broke her elbow just over a week ago, luckily A&E was very quiet and they were seen and dealt with very quickly. Holly is managing very well with her one arm.

I have attached a picture Holly created before the elbow incident and also the caption she wrote with it, just thought you might like to add it to the weekly White Horse News Letter. Thank you for the time you spend on the newsletter, it is good to read it each week. I hope this email finds you well. Take care,

Sarah x

Salutary words from Holly

This painting is showing love and hope towards everyone but directly for the NHS,



postmen, grocery store workers, delivery service, carers, bin men, lorry drivers, volunteers and any key workers during this pandemic. Thank you!♥

The phrase 'Rise Above It!' Came from the fact that we all need to be responsible, good people, to get on top of and help stop COVID-19. 'Rise above it' means lots of things but mainly to not get tempted (be selfish and buy things others are gonna need more or as much as you) and to not cheat your way out of things (like not leaving your post for 3 days or ignoring hygiene advice). We can all be good and bad people but during this pandemic we all need to try our hardest and be grown up. So stay home and Rise above it!

Mike and Val go Walking on Salisbury Plain

From Bishopstrow it's really easy to get on to Salisbury Plain. We've been walking the hills behind us for years and can do walks of 2 or 6 hours. We've been over Battlesbury, Middle, Scratchbury and Cotley Hills countless times and have never been bored with them. They change daily and of course through the seasons.

The lockdown has given us the opportunity to walk almost every other day and we have noticed the landscape, flora and fauna move from winter into spring in these weeks from March to May. Early on we would walk in full winter kit (down jackets,

insulated trousers, multi-layers, hats) but now we are walking in t-shirts and shorts.



Salisbury Plain is a chalky upland so the soil is whitish. Combined with a blue sky and the greenness of new grass of course this gives rise to the colours of the White Horse Morris baldric and badge. It also creates a unique habitat for flowers, butterflies and birds. Of the dozen or so types of butterfly the best have been Green Hairstreak and Adonis blue for their vibrancy. We have seen over 20 different types of birds and it's always a pleasure to hear Sky Larks. The Yellowhammers have been stunning and Stonechats are really pretty. There are many types of flower on the hills, from Cowslips to Sainsfroid and now in May, Fragrant Orchids. The Wild Garlic is abundant and offers its own perfume as do the abundant Hawthorns in full blossom.

Since the start of the lockdown we have gradually increased the length of our walks so that now 12km is a short day and 20km involves a lunch break. By 17 May we have walked 288km (180 miles) and ascended 6,000m (19, 700ft). This is equivalent to walking from Warminster to Leeds and to have climbed Mont Blanc plus Ben Nevis.

We see other people but it's never really busy. This allows us to stop and look – the scenery is stunning no matter which way you look, with, perhaps, the exception of Battlesbury Barracks from Battlesbury Hill. Views to Cley Hill, The Great Ridge, Longleat Estate and into the Plain towards Chitterne and Pewsey. From the tumulus on top of Cotley Hill it is possible to see the Pewsey White Horse on a clear day, using binoculars. A distance of some 25km. We will continue to walk even when we are back to some normality and who knows, Everest (8,848m) may be conquered and Land's End reached from John of Groats (874 miles).

Mike and Val Perry 17 May 2020

Castaway Maggie's desert island desserts

Music tracks:

Mozart's Clarinet Concerto
I Put a Spell on You - Nina Simone

Bach St Matthew Passion
Perfect - Ed Sheeran

Both Sides Now - Joni Mitchell,

Sweet Dreams – Eurythmics, *Angie* - Bert Jansch,

Norwegian Wood - The Beatles

Book: - *The Power of Now* - Eckhart Tolle ...

Food: - Moules Mariniere

Luxury Item: - A pair of scissors

