



# The Prancing Pony



The Official Newsletter of White Horse Morris

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23rd April 2020

## Spring – It's Official!

Today, 23<sup>rd</sup> April is Saint George's Day, traditionally White Horse Morris' first dance-out of the season and our first celebration of Spring, pictured here in 2016. We kick off with a Georgian quiz and feature two memories from yesteryear, the first from Kate Brooks in Chilmark and the second from Richard Baker in New Zealand. HobNob also gets another mention. Nic Jones is the first to be cast away on a desert island – an upcoming regular feature - and there are several more puzzles to ponder.



### Saint George's Day Quiz - TRUE or FALSE ?

1. David Lloyd George was Prime Minister during the First World War.
2. George Harrison was known as the 'Quiet Beatle'.
3. St. George is the Patron Saint of the Scout Movement.
4. The play *The Madness of King George* was written by playwright Tom Stoppard.
5. Belfast City Airport is named after World class footballer George Best.
6. Nuits Saint Georges is a town situated in the French wine making region of Burgundy.
7. The fictional character George Smiley was created by writer Len Deighton.
8. George the Hippo from the children's television programme *Rainbow* once made a cameo appearance on *The Muppet Show*.

### ON THIS DAY - April 23rd

1111 The last recorded dragon on English soil was slain by George Shuttleworth in Oswentwistle, Yorkshire.  
1616 William Shakespeare died.  
1661 Charles II was crowned King of England, Scotland and Ireland.  
1927 Cardiff City became the first and last non-English club to win the FA Cup, beating Arsenal 1-0.  
2001 Blessing of 5,100 Northern European vines at a ceremony at a'Becketts Vineyard near Devizes.  
2005 The first ever YouTube film "*Me at the Zoo*" was uploaded.

### From Bride to Dancer

Back in the heady days of 2009 Jon and I were planning our wedding and hoped that Morris dancing could be part of the day. Jon lived in Lower Woodford at the



time and had made the acquaintance of John Wippell, so asked John whether his side might be available. We were delighted when this was confirmed. The day dawned and it was a fantastic sunny September day, the Morris men (as they were then) were cheerful, despite having to dance on grass, and gave a



stupendous display of skill and athleticism, ably supported by the musicians and HobNob. The proceedings ended with me being hoicked (sorry, gracefully lifted) onto their shoulders at the end of [please insert name of dance and deduct house-point from Brooks]. This was a slightly nervous moment for the bride and groom, as a few days earlier we'd found that I was pregnant, but all was well and we managed not to giggle when Mike then announced that [name of dance] is a fertility dance – bit late for that!

A few years later I saw that White Horse were looking for new members and decided to give it a go. Friends had described my (non-Morris) dancing style as 'disorientated spider' and I'm knock-kneed and uncoordinated, so was half expecting to be laughed out of the village hall that first evening. But you're a lovely bunch of folk and were welcoming and encouraging, and from then on I've been a proud member of White Horse Morris. I've enjoyed all our practices and outings but particularly the two weddings I've danced at, which have brought back such happy memories.

Kate Brooks

## From further back in the past

[Our roving reporter has just received news of one of our members Richard Baker who now lives in New Zealand. He is Bob Burgess' brother-in-law having married Bob's sister Sara. Many of you will know Richard from his time with White Horse and also from when he was present at the 60th celebrations. Note what he says about our 70th anniversary below.]

I joined White Horse in the early 70s. It is interesting to note that at that time I was attempting to learn the Banjo; I had met Bob Burgess at a Folk Club and he offered to give me some lessons once a week. He always left quite early because he had to go to a meeting. After a while I asked him where he went to every week and he answered Morris practice and would I like to come? At that time I had no idea what Morris was and being a leather jacketed Rocker, it was quite a culture shock to see these guys dancing with handkerchiefs and thinking, at the time, there's no way they are getting me to do that but I did like the music so I was persuaded to join. A bit later in the piece I was absent from an AGM finding out the next day that in my absence I had been voted in as Bagman and I remained in that position for the next fourteen years.

Morris and all things attached to it have been in my blood from the start and will remain there for the rest of my life. White Horse was part of my family until I left the UK for New Zealand in 1991. I am now part of the New Zealand Morris Family but still wear my White Horse gear with pride. I have quite a few memories of my time with the team and I will try to share some of them with you all. If you are going to hold some kind of celebration/reunion for the 70th, God willing, Sara and I will be there. Stay safe.

Richard Baker (To be continued)

## Competition Time

Following Kate's wedding theme, our researchers have



unearthed this early Daguerreotype photo from a wedding taken sometime in the last millennium. Scholar and former Bagman Mike Dixon *thinks* it may have been as long ago as 1986 but adds that "it don't seem a day too long". Richard Baker is fourth from the right but who else can you name??

## Castaway on a Desert Island



Each week we plan to cast one member of the side away to a remote desert island. This week Nic Jones accepts the challenge and has agreed to share her "must have" items:

6 Music tracks: Stand by Me, Love Shack, Chasing Cars, Shining Happy People, Paradise City, Amazing Grace

Luxury Item : A Tent

Book : Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Food Item : Chocolate Biscuits

Morris Dance /Tune I would miss most : Bakewell



## Use the clues to find Dances, Traditions and Figures Part I (Part II next week)

Eg Decode *Mint Login* for this South Warwickshire tradition. (Answer: Ilmington)

1. At seven nil: reconfigure to produce February saints.
2. With total reorganisation of a jittery choke, you can trot to have fun.
3. Make elks turn into a one of the great dances of the Bledington tradition.
4. Played by Vikki Pepperdine in the *The Windsors*.
5. Gay ewes zoo contains what you need for this dance.
6. Reorder his smirk with a song of Hector and Lysander.
7. Ancient fruit of Solanum lycopersicum plant from Matthew Arnold's "City of Dreaming Spires".
8. A rude hay derby is transformed into two parallel figures of eight.
9. One flew over it in the 1970s.
10. Just before Sunday morning.

## Answers to last week's Map quiz

- a) 8167 b) South Wraxhall/Monkton Farleigh  
c) Corsham

## Follow-up Questions for anyone still interested:

From the same map, using coloured roads only:

- Start at Beckford's Tower
- > > > > < > 63
- Clues are at the next white junction on the left.

(d) In what Grid Square are you looking for clues?

(e) Residents of this road may include Alan and Gordon?

## This Week's Caption Competition



**Please send your contributions for the next Prancing Pony to Mike Perry by Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April.**

