



The Prancing Pony

The Official Newsletter of White Horse Morris

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18 February 2021

Snow Special

Many thanks to those readers who responded to the Squire's appeal for snow pictures, several of which feature in this month's historic 25th issue *PP*. Pride of place goes to two snowmen. The first (left) is pictured alongside Emily's Anna, taken in snowy Donhead. The other (right) shows a snowmorris-man pictured in Bishopstrow celebrating Southampton's 1-0 FA Cup victory over Arsenal. (Unfortunately he had melted into oblivion when his team visited Old Trafford the following week).

As well as the pictures, we have some inspirational words from Kate which tell of her busy January, a fitness guide from the Squire, and some dates to celebrate our 70th anniversary



Kate Brooks confesses to favouring strawberry ice-cream over Brussels sprouts

Greetings from chilly Chilmark. I hope you're all doing okay. At the beginning of January we decided to celebrate as many weird and special days as we could that month.

Google was consulted and our calendar looked fuller than it has for some time, with almost every day being a special one in some way. I decided not to be fussy about the origin of the days - if strawberry ice cream day was an industry marketing ploy I didn't care, not if I got to eat ice cream.

We got off to a good start on the 4th, with National Spaghetti Day, and put extra seed out on the 5th, National Bird Day. National Tempura Day on the 7th was a bit of a disaster. I asked my green-fingered niece to celebrate Houseplant Appreciation Day (10th) on my behalf, as ours are treated so appallingly it felt hypocritical.

Organize Your Home Day, on the 14th, was an epic fail, but I did manage to clean out the overflowing pencil pot. National Popcorn Day on the 19th meant a weekday film night, much to Rufus's delight. National Hugging Day on the 21st was bittersweet. Sadly we don't have a cat, so couldn't celebrate Answer Your Cat's Questions Day (22nd). Pie Day on the 23rd was good, as was Beer Can Appreciation Day (24th), as Jon had been given some Barnard Castle "Eye Test" IPA for



Christmas. He appreciated the contents while I had a rant about Mr Cummings.

Burns Night was very shoddy, as dinner was a rush between two work Zoom calls. The best I could manage was Linda McCartney sausages, hastily toasted (speech, not cooking method), with bagpipe music playing in the background. Indian Republic Day was great for me, perhaps not so for the family, with a slideshow of the 200 or so photos I took when I spent five weeks in Delhi on a study exchange. Jon and Rufus slept well that night.



We had a little toilet ceremony on Thomas Crapper Day (27th), a lovely breakfast on National Croissant Day on the 30th and pretended we hadn't noticed that the 31st was Eat Brussels Sprouts Day. With every day feeling like Groundhog Day (2nd Feb) at the moment we have decided to carry on into February, and have enjoyed World Nutella Day (5th) and Pay a Compliment Day (6th) so far.

Kate x

Looking Ahead to "Days" over the coming month....

Inspired by Kate's example, as if you needed an excuse on *Prancing Pony* publication day, we kick off with National Drink Wine Day!

18 February National Drink Wine Day



- 19 February National Chocolate Mint Day
- 20 February National Cherry Pie Day and National Love Your Pet Day
- 21 February National Sticky Bun Day
- 22 February National Margarita Day and National Walking the Dog Day
- 23 February International Dog Biscuit Appreciation Day
- 24 February National Tortilla Chip Day
- 25 February National Chilli Day and National Clam Chowder Day
- 26 February National Pistachio Day and National Skip the Straw Day
- 27 February International Polar Bear Day and National Strawberry Day
- 28 February National Public Sleeping Day
- 1 March National Peanut Butter Lover's Day and Saint David's Day
- 2 March National Old Stuff Day
- 3 March National I want you to be Happy day and World Wildlife Day
- 4 March National Grammar Day and World Obesity Day
- 5 March National Day of Unplugging
- 6 March National Frozen Food Day
- 7 March National Be Heard Day and National Cereal Day
- 8 March International Women's Day and Nashional Proofreeding dAY



However, we do have a picture of your father at the Royal Albert Hall in 1954, as well as six photos of the White Horse Morris Men from the 1950s and 1960s, and a programme for a dance event featuring them from 1952. A member of the library staff often goes in to Cecil Sharp House on a Thursday so we could dig these out if you want. Peter Kennedy was seconded to the BBC where he made many excellent field recordings (we have many of these), some of which are available on the British Library Sound Archive website (<https://sounds.bl.uk/World-and-traditional-music/Peter-Kennedy-Collection>).

Best wishes, Nicholas Wall

Dear Mari,
My colleague passed your query on to me as I am in the building today and I was able to dig up four photos of the White Horse Morris Men over some years along with the photo of your father at the Albert Hall. They are all attached to the bottom of this e-mail. And thank you for the photo, it really did brighten up my day here in a rather cold Cecil Sharp House! Thank you again for your memories which we shall save in the archive and certainly welcome any others! Wishing you all the very best,



Alex Burton EFDSS Library

More Gold from Mari Booker

Hi Mike,
At last I got around to emailing the EFDSS librarian and here is his reply. I have made a donation to thank them. I will forward any results. He later added that they have some recordings of 'The Moonrakers', one of dad's bands.

In the early 1950s, I can remember going out for Morris dancing on a Saturday afternoon and then on to a dance in the evenings. Sometimes it was hobby horse on the car roof and then later a double bass - never both at the same time.

Mari

Dear Mari,
Thank you for your email. We would certainly be interested in your memories and a look at the photographs. We certainly feel that it is important to get people's reminiscences of various parts of the folk scene written down, especially as a lot of the people involved are not as well or young as they used to be. It is also useful to get a flavour of the times as well as information about specific events. At present we are mainly working from home so we don't have access to all of our resources (we would like to check old copies of our magazine, for instance).



This picture might be from 1965. Can anyone suggest which church? Scholars in the editorial office suspect

Widcombe-in-the-Moor. The next one features HobNob and Fool, from The Winchester Journal c 1960.



Pat and Tricia McGovern on Bodmin Moor



From Graham Lever – The dark satanic mills of Bitham Mill, Westbury by L.S.Lowry



Training Programme – Squire Perry’s Top Tips

As things seem to be heading in the right direction as far as Covid19 is concerned with case numbers dropping and a vaccination programme covering many of us, then we can start to think of dancing out again sometime this year. I know you have been maintaining yourselves in the peak of fitness since last March, and we will overlook the calorific excesses of December, but think perhaps we need to be tapering our conditioning to hit maximum performance. Below are 4 fun and easy exercises for you to follow. They concentrate on strength, stamina and spatial co-ordination.

1. Pint Shuttle Runs

Place 10 pints of beer (or other drinks) 20 metres from your starting point. Sprint to the first pint and down it. Jog back to the start and repeat until all 10 pints are finished.

REST for 5 minutes.

(Never underestimate the importance of maintaining fluid levels when Morris dancing.)



2. Kit changing (to be done after the rest period above)

On a chair, 5 metres from your starting point, put your bells, baldric (optional), rag coat, hankies, sticks and top hat. Decide on a dance tradition and get ready with the



correct kit and line up as if in a set in the way that you would normally when dancing out – i.e. don't listen, wander off, change position in the set, forget your stick/hankie **REPEAT** for different traditions five times.

3. Solo Stick Co-ordination

From your personal collection, find a long and a short stick.

Put the long stick in your left hand and the short stick in the other one (for those who can't tell, your left hand is the one on the other side from the right). Using Morris single step, clash sticks on every other step as you follow the course in No. 1 above (beer is optional) but retuning with capers (not the salted ones). **Repeat 5 times** and then change hands (i.e. the long stick goes in your other hand) and repeat again.



4. Hanky Panky

Definition: behaviour, in particular sexual or legally dubious behaviour, considered improper but not seriously so.

This is about improvisation. Using the definition above use your hankies in a way that improves your co-ordination and flexibility. You may use a bubble partner for this exercise. All attempts **MUST** be photographed and sent to the Squire for his judgement, (and possible circulation on the dark web).



More to follow in March

Optimistic News

From The Bag

Provisional dates for 2021

As we all await the details of the easing of the restrictions, here are a couple of dates to pencil in on your calendars. Let's hope we will be dancing and making music again in the not too distant future.

70th Anniversary Celebrations

Saturday 24th April - We hope to be able to have a gathering at and / or a walk to Westbury White Horse on this day to mark WHMM's first dance out in 1951.

Please save the date and further details will be sent out as soon as we know what may be possible within the parameters of the restrictions at the time.

Saturday 4th September - Party

Other

Sunday 4th July - Gold Hill Fair, Shaftesbury is still possible.

“White Horse Morris and Me”

Following the AGM, the Squire wrote to everyone *ex cathedra* requesting responses to these questions:

- What first got you interested in Morris dancing?
- How did you come to join White Horse?
- What do you like (most) about White Horse?
- What are your top six memories or experiences with White Horse?
- If you were given autocratic decision-making powers, what change would you make to the current White Horse kit?

We have received responses from quite a few of you but it would be great to hear from more White Horse past and present. So if you have not yet responded, please send in your answers.

From Cliff

Well I went to a pub, rugby songs, great fun, took on to a folk club, learnt lots of chorus songs, Morris men said, come out with us and sing 😊 now dance 😊 never looked back

👍 met White Horse men at sessions

Warminster, split between Wessex and WH, moved over, liked the bolshi bollocks of the side 🍷 fertility not fancy footing and perfect kit 😊 so here I am 😊 I was happy to go along with the women, and change, and need no worries 👍



A bucolic idyll in black and white - Snowy trees, Newtown nr Tisbury, from Nic Jones



Bob’s Ponies in the snow – not prancing, just eating



Classified Ads

VALENTINES MESSAGES (Unfortunately the following messages were left without the requisite payment, as the cheapskates amoureux wanted to remain anonymous, understandably).

<p>I can't think of anyone better to be bubbled up with so be my Valentine .</p>	
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I love your wobbly bits

Polly Glott asks “Which Language is best for saying I Love You?”
Je t'aime, Te iubesc, Eu te amo, I love you, Is breá liom tú, Ich liebe dich, Jag älskar dig, Ti amo, Te quiero, Volim te

<p><i>I love Morris Men</i></p>	<p>For the man of my dreams, please be my Valentine</p>
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	<p>Any one of you please be my Valentine</p>
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From a secret admirer

	<p><i>She's mine so hands off.</i></p>
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FOR SALE

“Liverpool for the Cup” bumper stickers (Box of 500) Free. No longer required. Can deliver.
 Morris dance stick. Secondhand, used, left or right handed, unisex, made of 100% sustainable natural materials, short handle. Slightly soiled (was used for bean-dibbing). No longer required, free to a good home.

All items for the next *Prancing Pony* to Mike Perry by Friday 12 March, and preferably sooner.