



The Prancing Pony

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Thunder and Lightning postpone Flashmob

The unfavourable weather forecast on Saturday 24th led to the postponement of the planned “flashmob”

on Bratton Camp, above the White Horse at Westbury. We will



look at a suitable date in the future. However we had a great turnout of both dancers and spectators in Tisbury last Wednesday.

Since the last issue we sadly learned of the passing of Knotty Ash, and will be commemorating his life next Friday.



Hob-Nob with White Horse MM at their Ring Meeting in July 1983.

Knotty was one of those responsible for the resurrection of Hob Nob in the

White Horse tradition and is pictured here centre stage. In this last Prancing Pony before a well-earned break, we start – appropriately enough – with an Ode to HobNob from Ali Packer. Bob Hill explains how pubs got their names, Calvin Eales tells us about his impressive vegetables, and Mari Booker shares another picture of Ioan Jenkins from the monochrome



years, and Mike Perry shares a brief memory of Knotty.

Ode to HobNob

O HobNob, with your bulging eye,
Your snappy mouth and manic cry,
Your tresses thin, your raiment strange
(I fear you had a touch of mange)
In David's workshop there you'd lie,
On you his farrier's craft he'd ply,
And I grew fond of you and said,
"This Morris lark's gone to my head.
I'll take you out to dance one day."

HobNob, a somewhat magic figure -
To carry her one must have vigour -
So two old girls, both her and me,
Now make a huge, heart-wrenching plea:
If you can stagger, walk or dance
Please take our Hobnob out to prance!

Ali Packer

So then upon the First of May,
We trotted off down Anstey way
To meet the celebrating crowds
Cavorting under thunderclouds.
"Make way for HobNob!" I would cry,
Delighting only I kept dry.
"A talking horse?" some children said
"We don't believe in that of course".
But smaller ones admired in awe,
And gave you grass to fill your maw.
A father whispered in my ear,
"Please sing her happy birthday, dear!"

Tim Jones captured the ghostly Morris outside The Boot in Tisbury



How the Pub Got its Name – Bob Hill

In the High and Far-Off Times the pub, O Best Beloved, had no name. Most of the people who frequent pubs will never really consider why it is called what it is, they just know it as just a name that is on the board on the front or the sign hanging over the street or it may have some pet name. For most pubs, particularly those not renamed by some amorphous pub co, there is some element of history in their name. It can be related to where it is or it may have origins that go back hundreds of years.

From Roman times a common indication of a pub was to hang jug above the door to indicate what was for sale in the form of ale or wine. A branch of an evergreen shrub or a bush was also used and that could still be seen in some pubs with that name. It was under the governance of Richard II in 1393 that pubs were first ordered to hang a sign outside to make them easily visible. Given that the majority of the population could not read, an illustration or a symbol of some type was often used.

After considering the name also cast your eye over what may be carrying the name. Some are simple boards on the wall above the door while others may be atop a post to the front, but the best are those that are hung from ornate brackets. Of those worth looking at, one of the finest in the south of England is of mid-18th century, wrought iron and is on the front of the Bell at Wylde, but finer than that is the one that still hangs over the road in Mere on what was the Ship. Also look at both the Lamb and Grosvenor in Hindon.



So for a simple exercise let us explore the names of the pubs that we are dancing out at this year. Some are reasonably obvious, but for others it is like opening a door into the past, although it should always be remembered that the name we may have known all our lives could have changed long, long ago. From this year's programme we have:-

Bell Inn: This is a name commonly given to pubs close to churches and is somewhat self-explanatory as that is where the sound of ringing could frequently be heard. In some locations it was sometimes derived from property that was church owned and that body took revenue from thirsty travellers or those exhausted by long sermons.

Barford Inn / Green Dragon: The present name is one that the pub was given within the last twenty five years or so, but before that it had long been known as the Green Dragon. That comes from the coat of arms of the Duke of Pembroke and in this location it was once part of the Wilton Estate owned by that family. In many pub sings it is often associated with George & the Dragon that in turn has religious connotations dating back to Edward III who adopted St George as the patron saint for England in replacement of St Edmund. The emblem of the kings

of Wessex was a white dragon, but is sometimes remarked as being gold.

Weymouth Arms: this is one of many pubs that were commonly named after local landowners, and were frequently owned by the same as an income stream. Here this is one of the titles of the Thynn family of Longleat and is a Viscount style given to the eldest son of the Duke of Bath.

Black Dog: This is suggested to come from the armorial bearings of Guy Beauchamp Earl of Warwick who in the 14th C was one of the plotters to kill Piers Gaveston the lover of Edward II. Throughout the West Country it can also refer to a spectral creature in the form of a huge snarling canine that is said to haunt the lanes and woods of deserted places. In the 18th C a black dog was also a name given to counterfeit shilling, which says a lot for customers at a certain establishment.

Plume of Feathers: A plume of three ostrich feathers was first adopted by the Black Prince (1330 – 76) as part of his coat of arms and was anointed the Prince of Wales in 1346. Since then it has always been associated with the part of the badge of the title given to a monarch's oldest son.



Benett Arms, Semley & Tisbury: As with the Weymouth Arms this is named after the local landowning Benett family who bought the estate together with the nearby Pythouse in about 1707.

Royal Oak: This is reputed to be the third most common pub name after that of the Red Lion and the Crown, with nearly 500 bearing the name. This commemorates the Boscobel Oak, near Shifnal, Shropshire where Charles II and an aide hid from noon to dusk to evade Parliamentary troops when fleeing following defeat of his supporters at the battle of Worcester in 1651. Following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 Charles ordained that May 29th, his birthday, should be known as Royal Oak day. The oak has also been long noted as a special tree with particular significance within the old traditions of worship from it being special to Zeus through to Thor. Since at least the 16th C it has been the national tree of England where it is held in a degree of veneration for its stability, strength and lasting qualities.



Wyndham Arms: Another family title where much of the land around Dinton and stretching out from Salisbury was owned by this family.

Boot Inn: Traditionally this was the sign of the shoe or boot maker and may have acted as a side business to the main trade. Frequently signs for this establishment

portray a long military boot of a style popularised by the Duke of Wellington in the early 19th C and which covered the knee at the front, but was cut away at the back to allow the leg to flex properly when seated in a saddle. It is also connected with the legend of John Schorne a 13th C rector of Long Marston in Buckinghamshire who managed to capture the devil inside a boot, but what he then did with it after trapping the chap is not known for certain.

Other regular pubs we dance at include:-

The Compasses: These are drawing instruments closely associated with stone working and masons and not to be confused with a compass that is a navigational aide. In the case of the pub at Chicks Grove this is in an area of stone quarrying where Chilmark stone has been extracted since Roman times and is famously known for its use within Salisbury cathedral.



Red Lion: John of Gaunt now makes an appearance. He was one of the powerful men politically in the country during much of the 14th C who used it in his armorial crest, but so did the Earl of Bedford who is supposed to have awarded his badge while travelling almost as the AA now does with stars. A lion rampant is also one of the supporters for the royal crest and that is also a contender for the origin of the name.

Talbot Inn: Firstly this was a hunting dog that was the ancestor of the modern fox hound and would have been a popular creature in sporting circles. It is also part of the crest of the Talbot family who were powerful in the 15th C.

Horseshoe: This makes a very simple sign and is also one connected with luck and good favour. It is also indirectly connected with travellers and pubs bearing this name are often found adjacent to ancient route ways

Angel: This is a sign used since the middle ages as an indication of a hostel for travellers that were frequently run by some form of religious establishment.

Rose & Crown: sometimes this is referenced back to the unification of the realm following the end of the Wars of the Roses in the 15th C, but it became more popular from the early 17th C possibly with popularity of Elizabeth I where she may have been regarded as the rose in England's garden, even with her white leaded cheeks that would have been enough to kill any greenfly or black spot.

Somerset (Maiden Bradley) & Seymour Arms (Witham Friary): Further pubs named after the estate owner. They are twin pubs, although they do not now look it, as they were built to the same design on the land of the Dukes of Somerset (Seymour). The interior of the Seymour Arms

is protected by legislation as unaltered since its building in 1866.

Bath Arms (Horningsham & Crockerton): See Weymouth Arms.

Carriers: This is another tradesman's sign and probably arises in the 18th C with the improvement of many roads by Turnpike trusts when there started many regular transport services ranging from carriages purely for passengers and light goods on fast intercity routes and then heavy commercial wagons that took passengers as an additional load and served all the smaller communities around the countryside.

Ever since that day in 1393, O Best Beloved, all the pubs you will ever see, besides all those that you won't, have names.

Rambling Calvin "Greenfingers" Eales has been busy not digging!

1st Early Potato - Rocket

After chitting, the seed potatoes were sown early in March using the Charles Dowding no dig method which is basically lay the seed on the ground and cover with compost to form a ridge. I was a bit sceptical having grown potatoes by the traditional method for many years, however, the no dig prophet from Warminster convinced me it would work. As you can see from the image below results were good as this digging was round about mid- summer's day.

However, the eagle-eyed amongst you may spot the early signs of the blight on the green. This is a fungal problem and will spoil your crop so it should be cut off and burned straight away. The prophet has confirmed that it's probably going to be a bad blight year as there are already cases in Warminster so beware and be vigilant.



Can you guess who the "no-dig" prophet is?

- There has got to be song in there somewhere? Maybe "Damn that Blight"?
- What song is this from?
*And now, alas, the tide has changed.
My love she has gone from me.
And the winter's frost has touched my heart.
And left its **blight** upon me.*

- Can Dr. McGovern Patrick inform us of the relationship between blight and the Irish Potato famine and why this was a political act of a corrupt and evil regime?

Garden Pea

Meteor. Sown in modules February / March in the greenhouse. Planted out into a no dig plot with 50/60mm homemade compost on top.



Grown up hazel pea sticks about 4ft high, quite a good yield. I picked a good bucket full from a 5ft row.

Florence Fennel (or as the Squire calls it – Finocchio di Firenze) has done exceptionally well this year. I bought plants in modules on Salisbury market in late April and planted out straightaway in a no dig bed after applying 50/60 mm of last year’s home-made compost. It has a mild aniseed flavour and is good in a salad raw or braised in a cream sauce. On the left as they are picked but on the right trimmed as from a greengrocer – or were they?



From Mari Booker

Hi Mike,
 Bill Brown (double bass) - Bill was a cobbler from Westbury.
 Ioan Jenkins (fiddle) - Ioan was a headteacher from Warminster. He also played for White Horse Morris.
 Jack Kempster (accordion) - Jack owned a music shop in Swindon. This shop is now run by his son.



Patrick Shuldham Shaw (caller) - Pat was a musician, composer, dancer and folk music collector. This photograph was probably from 1953 or 1954 - somewhere in Wiltshire. I can remember going out with the hobby horse on the roof rack of our car on a Saturday for morris.

Later, dad would come home, put the hobby horse in our garage and collect Bill and transport him and his double bass to a dance.

Mike Perry’s Garden?

As the Squire prepares to hang up his editorial seals, our Northumberland correspondent has spotted that he



has already secured a TV franchise on QVC. Calvin is too busy ~~not~~ digging to have a TV show.

Peter “Knotty” Ash

Mike Perry writes:
 Peter “Knotty” Ash sadly passed away on Sunday 11th July 2021. He has left a huge hole in my heart and I know also in that of White Horse Morris. The photo really sums him up for me. As a young, newcomer to the side in the early 1980s, Knotty was a constant, a stalwart, a great friend, a wonderful singer, a Morris Dancer and the renovator and jockey for Hob Nob – what was there not to like?



Knotty was a larger than life character and tales of him abound. We will re-tell some of these at a later date as many of you will have your own personal memories. Please send your remembrances to me and I will compile them into a virtual book. In the meantime we know we will never forget this amazing man and every time we hear “*Farmer’s Boy*” or “*The Old Dun Cow*” we might weep a tear.

Farewell old friend from all the White Horse Morris Family. We will celebrate his life on 30 July and dance and sing in his memory.

The next Prancing Pony ? - when the foal is born?

- There is a pause in our dancing but we are looking at dates in August.
- The 70th anniversary party is at Sutton Veny Village Hall on September 11th.
- Practices are planned to start again on 1st September in Wylde Village Hall. Bring along all of the new recruits.