



The Prancing Pony

The Official Newsletter of White Horse Morris

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A Happy Easter to all White Horse People



White Horse Morris continues to stay away from the crowds – normally it's the other way around. This week's *Prancing Pony* contains a clever quiz from Kate Brooks, reminiscences about HobNob from Knotty and Calvin, more essential advice from 1913 this time aimed at the men, and an extended piece from Helen about various Easter folk customs. Thanks to everyone for your contributions, and please keep them coming.

Knotty and HobNob – the early years

Although I am no longer dancing (retired hurt), I am still almost as keen as I ever was. In 1965, I lived in Westbury and worked in a shop with my father. I heard music coming from up the road and went to investigate. I saw all these men leaping around and making a lot of noise in a car park up the road, so, having nothing else to do I stopped and watched and became fascinated by what was going on. I talked to some of the chaps who were there and met a character called Bill Bush, and in typical Bush style I was caught hook, line, and sinker.

Come the next winter practice session he was there at my door to take me to my first Morris practice. That was in the George Hotel in Codford and that was that.

Time went on and I was cured of my two left feet (but it did take a long time) and I was allowed to dance out. A couple of years went by and I was invited to come on the "South Devon Tour". This I later discovered was a mark of great favour from Bill Bush,



I had become a protégé of his whether I liked it or not. It was here that I first met Hob Nob and first impressions were not good. He was a very rough and tatty beast and not

held in great favour by anybody except Pip Potter who although a lovely guy was a bit rough and tatty himself. Being the junior member of the group I was put into Hob Nob and I soon found out that if you worked him hard and interacted with the crowd you could get a wonderful reaction from them and I became more and more attached to him. This is all I can do at the moment, but there may be another instalment at another time.

Knotty

From Foal to Fantasy?

Is Hob Nob male, female, gender neutral, declaring as

Calvin Eales also recalls some early days with Hobnob. "Hobnob lived in Manor Road, Mere in the sixties with Pip and Di Potter. I seem to recall Pip doing some refurb then, although, maybe, it was around balancing issues and adding weight to the rear end. At the time I can remember travelling from Mere to Warminster over Mere Down in Pip's Renault Rancho, not many around these days, any way the Horse was in the back and Pip never got out of second gear I'll never ever forget it."



Calvin

Caption competition



The winner of The Caption Competition was John Wippell whose triple entry impressed the judges. (The prize can be claimed directly from The Bell. Terms and conditions apply).

"Does my bottom / baldric / ego look big in this?"

New Caption Competition

The Bell at Wylye has a new landlord and s/he is already building up his client base! The message on the chalkboard reads, *"There are still some customers we can serve."*

Captions needed!



A Day in the Life of Mike the Squire

Inspired by John "Banjo" Wippell, crafted by Kate.

Insert the names below to make sense of it.

Mike decided to go to his favourite Italian restaurant to enjoy their special lunchtime '_____' deal, an oven-baked folded pizza and a glass of wine, a bargain for just ten _____. He usu_____ went there with his friend, Sid, but he'd opted not to come along that day as he was feeling a bit under the w_____. Mike enjoyed his pizza, and followed it with a trip to the new Israeli street food joint for a _____ fruit dessert. (Having just returned from a gastronomic _____ day to _____ ntry he was supposed to be cutting back on desserts but he'd temporarily forgotten this.)

Mike strolled happily along Market Place, past St Laurence's _____. After a fruitful trip to Morrisons to _____ some carrots and a packet of _____ ps he popped over to the park, where he spent a happy half hour making _____ chains for his friends, marred only by the presence of a r_____ little dog humping his leg. Mike managed to get rid of it by barking loudly. The dog looked terrified and its owner came over to glare at Mike. "Sorry, I didn't mean to (c) _____", Mike stammered. But she wasn't _____ tening.

Mike decided it was time to head home for a rejuvenating _____. On the way home he bumped into his friend, Stan, who had a very _____ sense of humour and told a hilarious joke which cannot be repeated here as it's far too rude and would contravene the White Horse Morris constitution. Stan was on his way to hospital for a hip replacement. "Did you know I had my (w) _____ s done last year?" asked Mike. "I was back Morris dancing within weeks and the keyhole surgery left me with barely a _____. "Well, best get my skates on, I'm heading home for a snooze". And he _____ bade _____ to his friend.

Mike had been asked to a _____ at the Swanage Folk Festival that evening, but he arrived in time for a brief stroll up on the _____ s before his duties began. As he walked from the bus stop who should he see _____ along the river - his friend Marjorie from Warminster! "_____ you could go canoeing closer to home?" Mike called out. "Yes, but Warminster Lake's like _____ earth when those chaps are out with their model boats, I can't com _____ with them, and let's not even mention all the flot _____ and jetsam they leave."

The Folk Festival went well, although Mike's fellow judges may have questioned the decision to give him sole control of the _____. Oh well, they'll know for next time. Eyebrows were also raised at Mike's decision to _____ spectacularly large _____ ble hat, which made it hard for the folk behind to see the

proceedings. "Well, over there that fe _____ wearing a bloody sombre _____?" grumbled Mike, when challenged.

Once he was back home, having watched an old episode of the Paul Daniels Magic Show (with the lovely Debbie _____), Mike decided it was time for bed. He put on his long-_____s, said goodnight to Val and thought what a lovely day!

[Knotty, Judy, Kate, Bob, Rosie, Shirley, Donna, Heather, Kip, Rowan, Liz, Mike, Calvin, Chris, Pete, Bob, Nic(ola), Dave, Sharon, Tony, Mark, Ali, Julie, Maggie, Liz, Andy, Helen, Cliff, Daisy, Holly, Sarah, Sam, John, (Emily) Farewell, (Reuben) Chappell]

"Don'ts for Husbands"- More Useful Advice from 1913, this time for men

- IF YOU are a husband, don't scoff at your wife if she is so bold as to want to drive the car. Do not keep all your jokes for your male colleagues. Try allowing your wife to share your rib-tickling wise-cracks.
- Husbands should not forget to pay their wives compliments about their appearance.
- Don't hesitate to mention the fact when you think that your wife looks exceptionally nice. Your thinking so can give her no pleasure unless you tell your thought."
- Don't say your wife wastes time in reading, even if she only reads fiction.
- Don't sharpen pencils all over the house. It does not improve either the carpets or the servants' tempers to find pencil sharpenings all over the floors.
- Don't try to regulate every detail of your wife's life. Even a wife is an individual, and must be allowed some scope.
- Don't try to "drive" your wife. You will find it much easier to "lead" her.
- Don't sneer at your wife's cookery or bridge-playing or singing.
- Don't increase the work of the house by leaving all your things lying about in different places. If you are not tidy by nature, at least be thoughtful for others.



Name That Dance Quiz last week – Answers

- (1) Ring O'Bells (2) The Quaker (3) Skirmish (4) Sherriff's Ride (5) Valentines (6) Maid of the Mill (7) Bonny Green Garters (8) Fiddler Lock (9) Sidestep (10) Lumps of Plum Pudding (11) Bakewell (12) Cuckoo's Nest (13) Monks' March (14) Bean Setting (15) Postman's Knock (16) Sarf Australia

Easter and Folk

Like most Christian festivals, Easter has its roots in the Pagan celebration of the Spring or Vernal equinox. Known as Ostara or Eostra it is marked between the 20th and 23rd of March and is one of two points in the year when the hours of daylight and darkness are equal.

In the first century the establishment of a date to mark the Christian festival of Easter caused disagreement within the Church. Eventually in 664 the Synod of Whitby fixed the method of determining the date as the First Sunday after the full moon after the Vernal equinox. This calculation still applies. Many of the customs and traditions we associate with Easter have a strong connection to the 'old ways'.

As the Earth begins to awaken and nature bursts into life, the egg is a symbol of rebirth and renewal. When winter meat stocks were dwindling, eggs from one's own brood of hens were a much-needed food until the Spring produce could be harvested. The giving of eggs, now the chocolate variety, was a much appreciated gift.



The tradition of egg rolling or pace egging on Good Friday is still enjoyed in many parts of the country notably Bury and Preston in Lancashire, Penrith, Derby and Penshaw Hill in Tyne and Wear. At one time eggs were wrapped in onion skins to give them a mottled appearance. In these more modern times they are more likely to be elaborately decorated before being rolled down the steepest hill in the neighbourhood. The remnants of the eggs are either left where they stop to be enjoyed by wildlife, taken home to be eaten on Easter Sunday or distributed to 'pace-egg'ers who parade the streets singing and performing Mummings plays. The word "pace" is derived from the Latin for Easter, pascha, which gives us Pâques in French.

The humble Hot Cross Bun was originally baked as a pagan offering and adopted by the Church as a symbolic food for Good Friday. A Hot Cross Bun baked and served on Good Friday is believed to have medicinal properties and also will not spoil or grow mouldy. Taking one (or a pack of 4- 99p at Asda) on a sea journey is also said to protect the crew from harm.

For many Morris sides Easter sees the start of their dance out season. Easter Saturday is the highlight of the year for the Britannia Coconut Dancers of Bacup. A troupe of clog dancers, they dance approximately seven miles (with refreshment stops) around the

Lancashire town of Bacup.

Their name refers to the wooden "nuts", made from bobbin tops, that are attached to their waists, knees and wrists that they use as percussion instruments as they dance! And we thought Lichfield Heys were tricky? It is thought their dance was brought to England by the Moors who settled in Cornwall to work as miners and then migrated North to work in the sunny uplands of Lancashire. Look them up on their website www.coconutters.co.uk or on YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uB-DdfPSX0A>



So this Easter will be a different Easter for all of us but hold on to the fact that for Mother Nature it is business as usual - the daylight hours are increasing and Earth is bursting with life. Enjoy the chocolate, hot cross buns and the sun.

Helen Sanderson

Free Easter Egg Kit!

(chocolate and other materials not included)



On This Day (9th April)

1483 Edward V (aged 12) succeeds his father Edward IV as king of England

1806 Isambard Kingdom Brunel, engineer and builder of the Great Western Railway, Box Tunnel and the Clifton Suspension Bridge was born in Portsmouth

1985 Easy Lover at No.1 (P.Collins and P.Bailey)

2003 Saddam statue topples with regime

2005 Prince Charles marries Camilla Parker-Bowles

Rambling Sid Rumpo

..... invites readers to submit entries for his funny veg photo competition, and suggests the following for inspiration.

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/7WHJHxhf566YgBSK7>

Please send items for inclusion in the next Prancing Pony to Mike "Reuters" Perry by Monday 13 April.

- Of particular interest would be any articles for the "Why I like Morris" series. There must be someone that likes it, surely?
- For the older guard, please send your memories of WH in yesteryear. A chance to reminisce.

Now wash your hands..... thoroughly