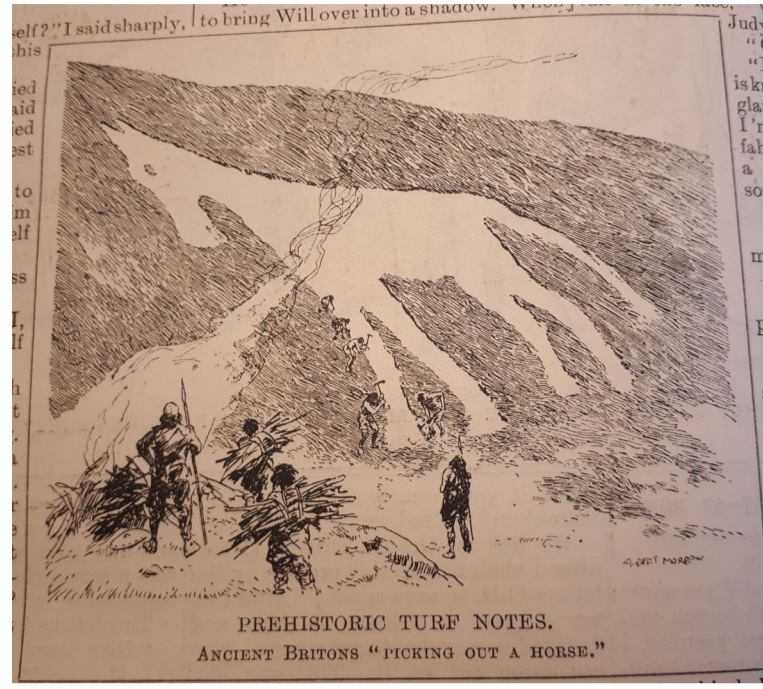


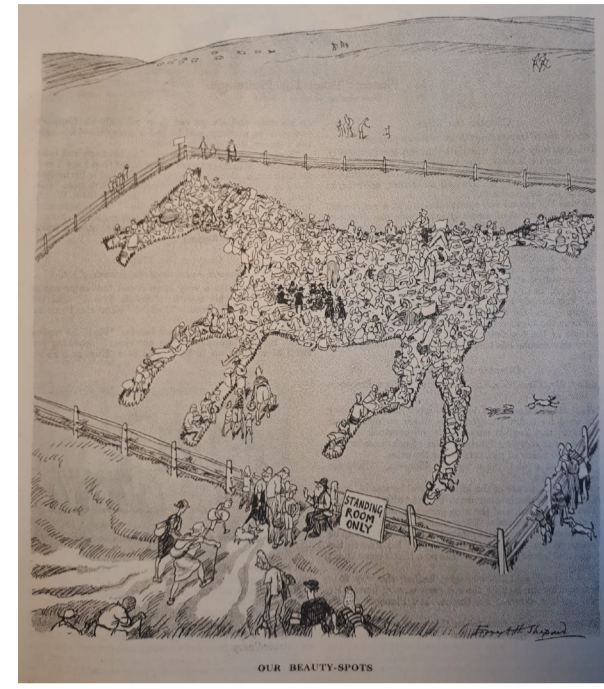
# "The Long Man will never wake!": Hill figures in Punch cartoons, 1925-1990

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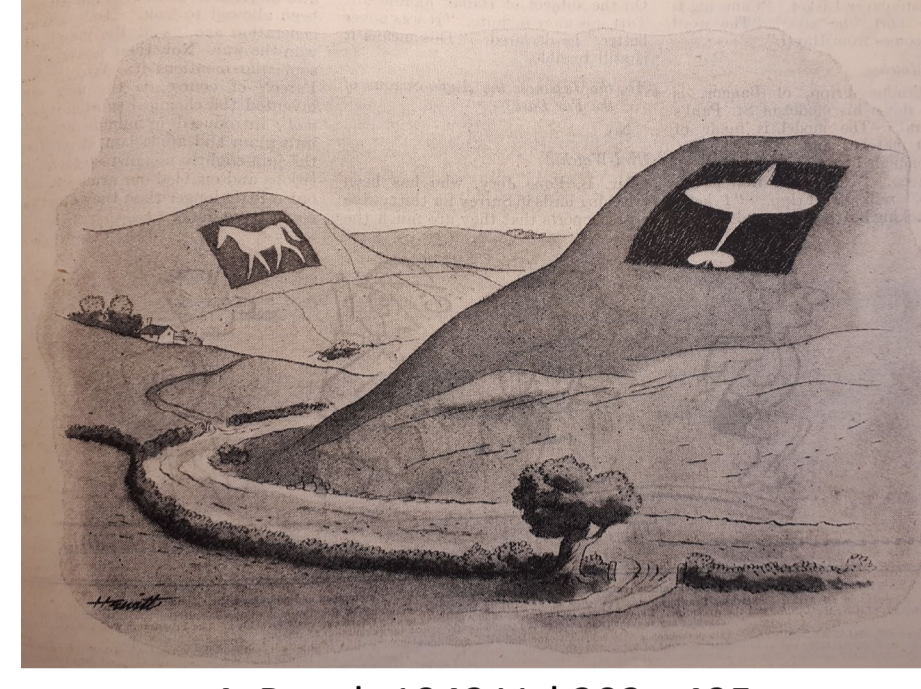
1. Punch 1925 Vol 169 p354



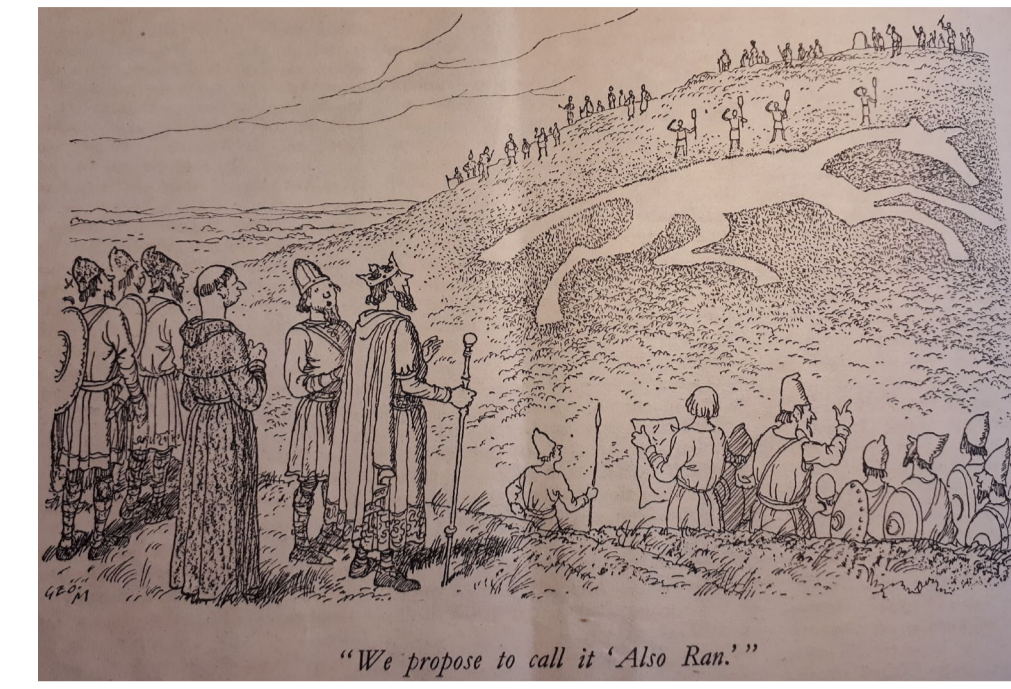
2. Punch 1938 Vol 195 Summer



3. Punch 1939 Vol 196 p694



4. Punch 1942 Vol 202 p495



5. Punch 1946 Vol 210 p506



6. Punch 1948 Vol 215 p242



16. Punch 1989 Vol 296 17th Feb p17

**Hill Figures** Hill figures are well regarded, if misunderstood, features of predominantly southern British chalk downlands. While the Uffington White Horse [Fig A] has been dated to 1000 BCE, most of the other 57 extant UK hill figures [e.g. Figs B, C, D] were constructed in the last 300 years<sup>1,2,3</sup>. Given their predominantly rural placings, relatively few people have actually seen hill figures. Nonetheless, they seem to form timeless symbols of place and belonging in the public imagination, with two in the top ten UK public art sites in a 2021 poll<sup>4</sup>.



A. Uffington White Horse



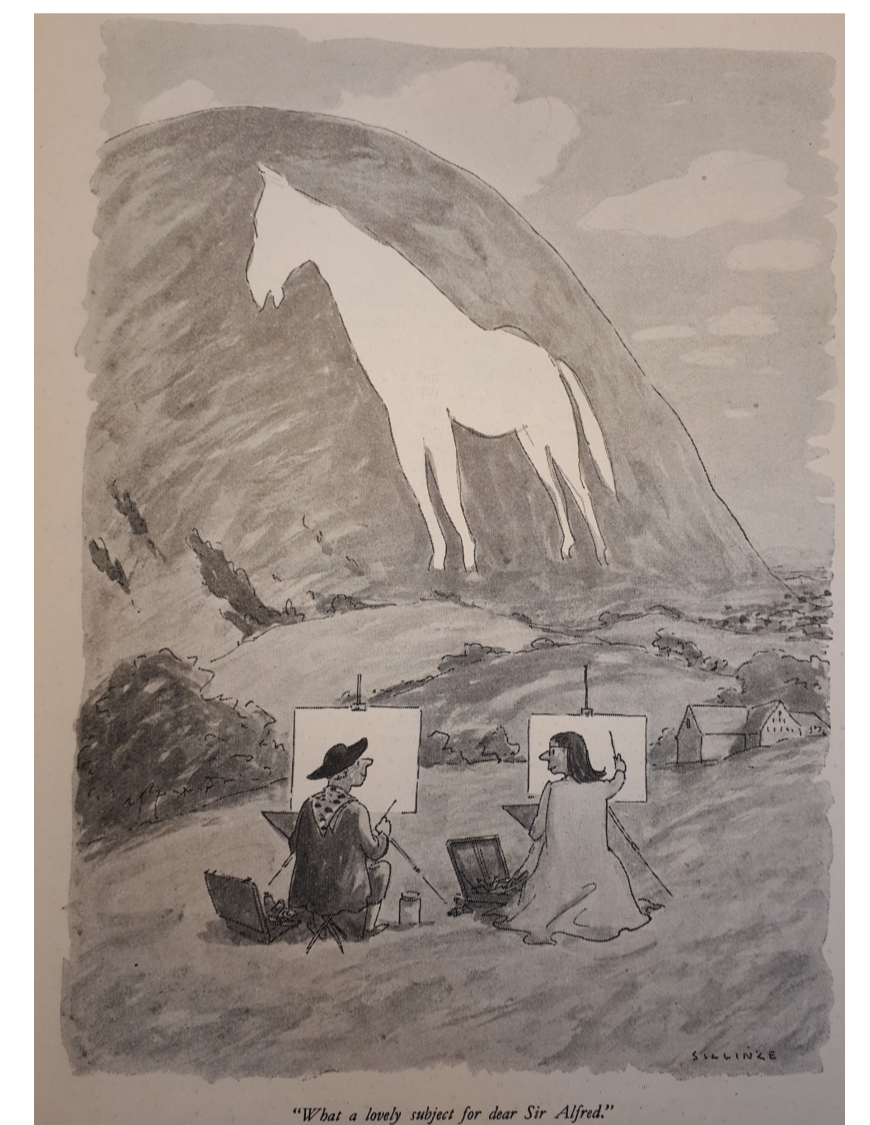
B. Westbury White Horse



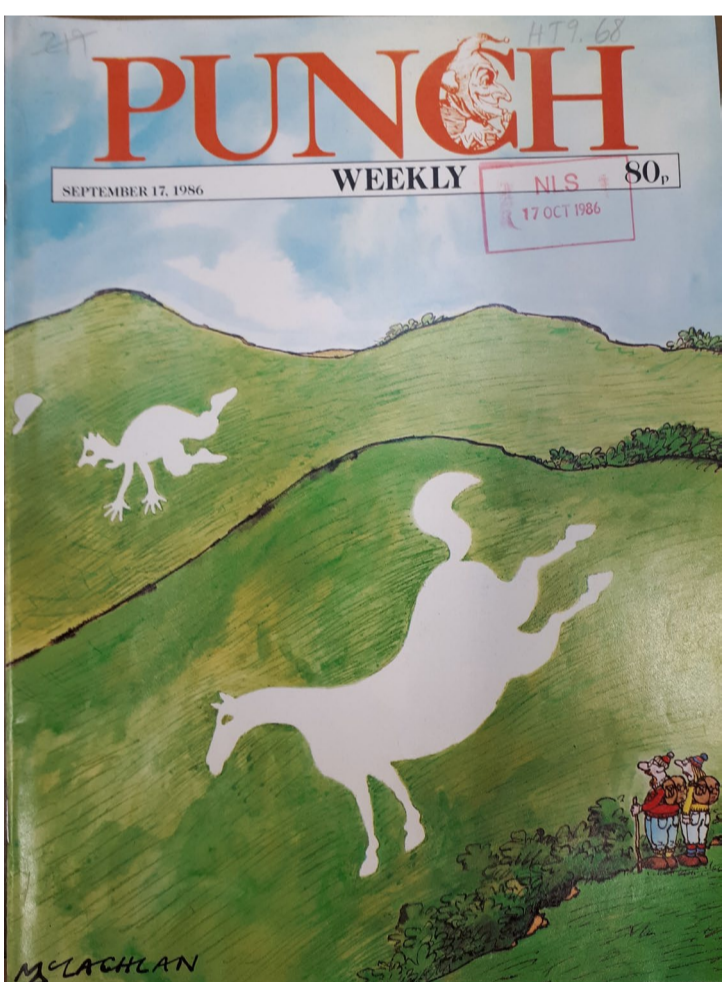
C. Osmington White Horse



D. Long Man of Wilmington



7. Punch 1950 Vol 219 p11



15. Punch 1986 Vol 291 17th Sept Cover

**Hill Figures in Cartoons** In wider research into popular perceptions of prehistory, twenty cartoons from Punch involving hill figures were found, from 1925 to 1990. Sixteen are shown here. Thirteen involve "white horses" [e.g. Figs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15], of which six are set in an inappropriate past to which their construction is attributed [e.g. Figs 1, 5, 6, 8, 13, 14]. While four cartoons show the Long Man of Wilmington [e.g. Figs 10, 12, 16], the sexualised Cerne Abbas Giant is not directly represented.

**Reading the Cartoons** The cartoons riff on modern concerns, particularly as sites for day trippers and artists [e.g. Figs 2, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15] and advertising [e.g. Figs 1, 5, 6, 8, 13]. Several evoke a whimsical Englishness, for example in wartime defiance [Fig 4], and against rural development [Fig 16]. The purported humour of many cartoons depends on a supposed lack of understanding of why, or by whom, hill figures were constructed, explicit in Figs 3 and 10. While the cartoonists often used real hill figures as models, the cartoons' effects do not depend on verisimilitude. Like other prehistoric cartoons, hill figure cartoons may help reproduce popular misconceptions.

**References**

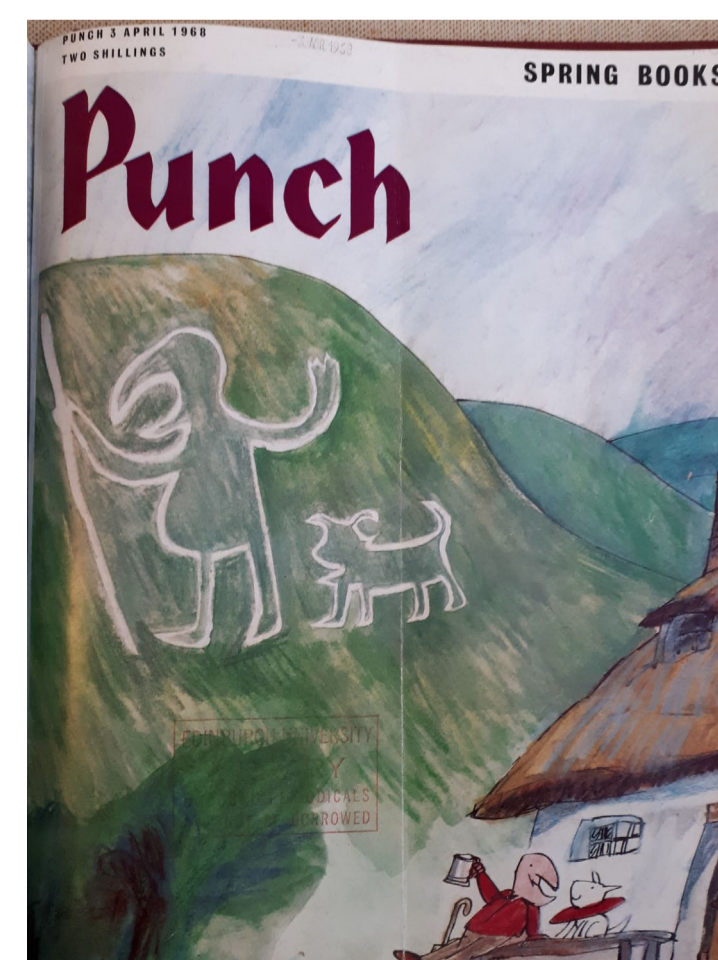
1. M. Hows, *Hillfigures Home Page*, <http://www.hows.org.uk/personal/hillfigs/>
2. M. Marples, *White Horses And Other Hill Figures* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed), Alan Sutton 1981.
3. W. C. Plenderleath, *The white horses of the west of England : with notices of some other ancient turf-monuments*, Allen & Storr, 1892.
4. Sky Arts reveals the UK's favourite public art ahead of brand new series, Landmark, 23/8/21, <https://www.skygroup.sky/article/sky-arts-reveals-the-uk-s-favourite-public-art-ahead-of-brand-new-series-landmark>



14. Punch 1985 Vol 289 10<sup>th</sup> July p7



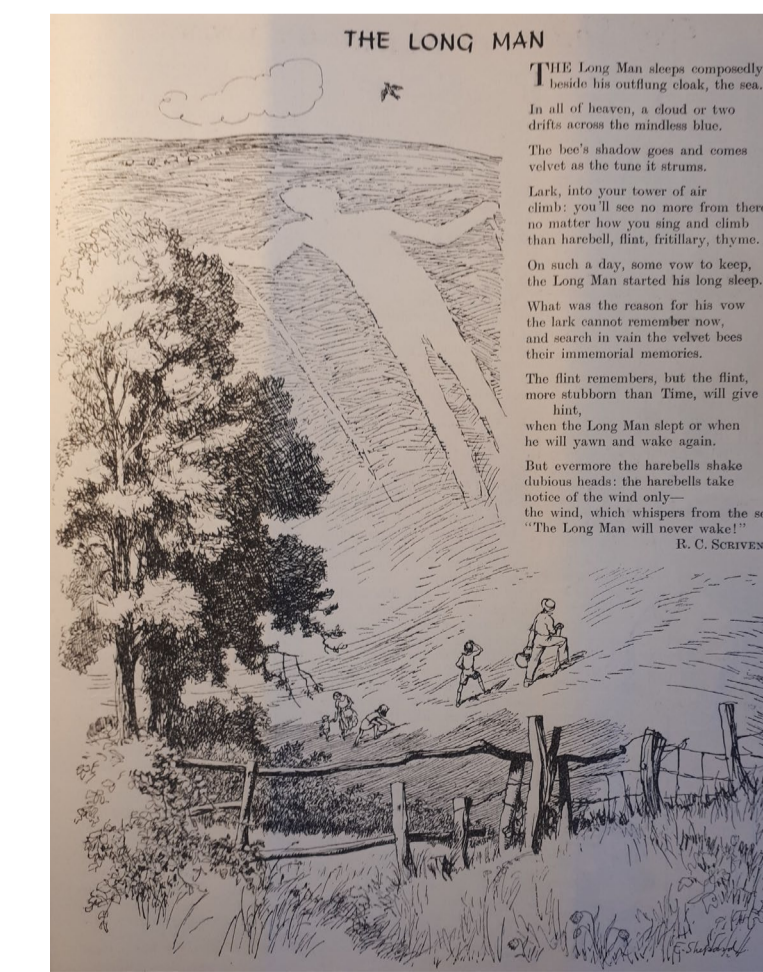
13. Punch 1980 Vol 279 p386



12. Punch 1968 Vol 254 Cover



11. Punch 1955 Vol 228 p444



10. Punch 1953 Vol 225 p149



9. Punch 1951 Vol 221 Summer

**Photographs**

- A. <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/48/Uffington-White-Horse-sat.jpg/408px-Uffington-White-Horse-sat.jpg>
- B. [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/0/06/Paragliding\\_above\\_Westbury\\_White\\_Horse\\_-\\_geograph.org.uk\\_-\\_539764.jpg/330px-Paragliding\\_above\\_Westbury\\_White\\_Horse\\_-\\_geograph.org.uk\\_-\\_539764.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/0/06/Paragliding_above_Westbury_White_Horse_-_geograph.org.uk_-_539764.jpg/330px-Paragliding_above_Westbury_White_Horse_-_geograph.org.uk_-_539764.jpg)
- C. [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/db/Osmington\\_White\\_Horse\\_2013-09-05.jpg/330px-Osmington\\_White\\_Horse\\_2013-09-05.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/db/Osmington_White_Horse_2013-09-05.jpg/330px-Osmington_White_Horse_2013-09-05.jpg)
- D. [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/38/Long\\_Man\\_of\\_Wilmington.jpg/330px-Long\\_Man\\_of\\_Wilmington.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/38/Long_Man_of_Wilmington.jpg/330px-Long_Man_of_Wilmington.jpg)