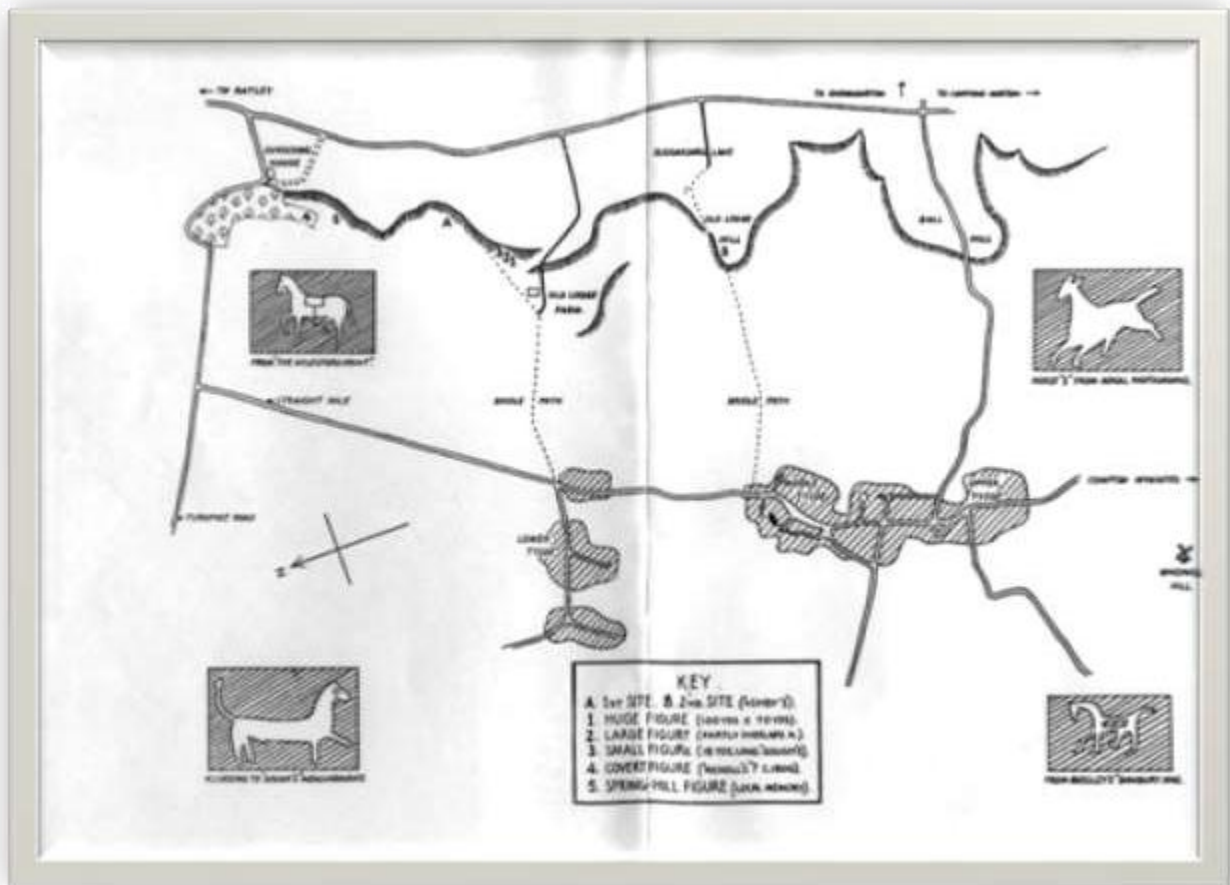


The Red Horses of Tysoe

In all there have been five Red Horses cut into the hills above Tysoe. There has been much speculation about the reasons for the horses. The earliest ones could have been for religious or ritual purposes. One legend says that the fifteenth century horse was created by the Earl of Warwick as a monument to his horse that he killed during the Battle of Towston in 1461 to indicate to his men that he would not desert them. Or they could simply have been created to compete with other hill figures.

Sites of the Horses



Red Horse I

The first horse was discovered by Kenneth Carrdus and Graham Miller in the 1960s. They used ground and aerial surveys to locate the horse on The Hangings. The horse was first referenced in 1607 but could have been cut much earlier. It probably did not survive the seventeenth century. The horse was huge: 285 x 195 feet.



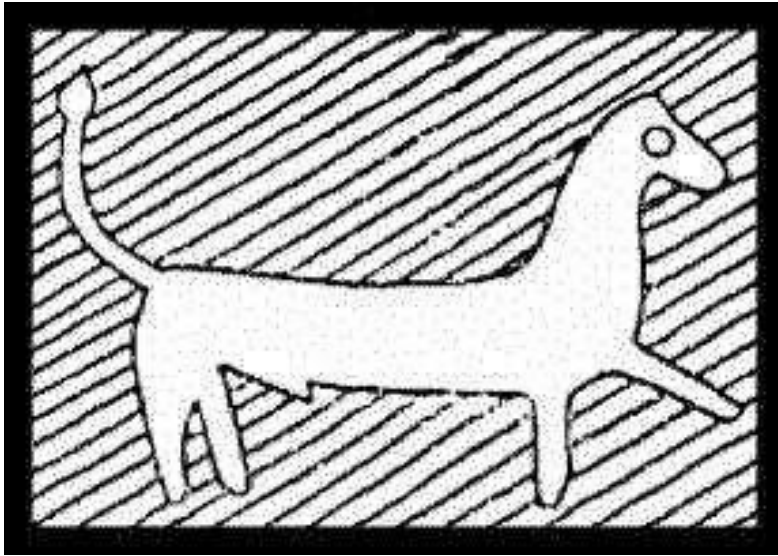
*Depiction of the
Red Horse by
Carrdus and
Miller*

Red Horse II

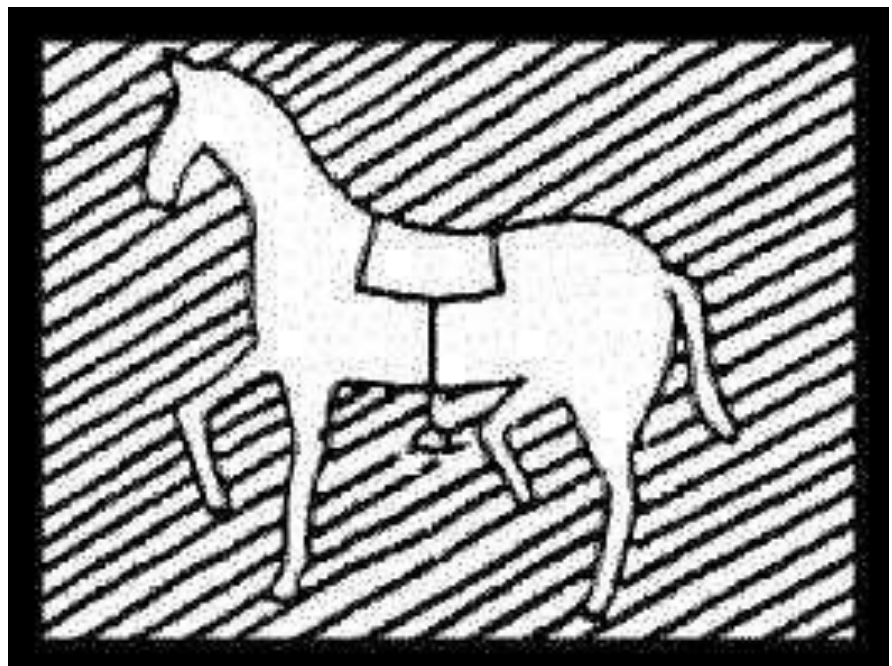
The second horse was smaller than the first and partially covers the first horse. This and the third horse were also discovered by Carrdus and Miller. The earliest written evidence for the existence of the horses comes from the cartographer John Speed who refers to the Vale of the Red Horse. Camden's *Brittania* notes: 'and a great part of the very Vale is thereupon termed the Vale of the Red Horse, of the shape of a horse cut out in a red hill by the country people, hard by Pillerton.'

Red Horse III

The third horse was much smaller than versions 1 and 2 at approximately 55 feet long. The horse was ploughed up in 1800. A couple of contemporary pictures of the horse survive.



Gough's depiction of the Red Horse, 1772



Aylesford print of the Red Horse, 1798

Red Horse IV

The third horse was ploughed up by the owner of Sunrising Inn in 1800.

However, he quickly found that he was losing money and created a new version about 17 feet long. It was deliberately destroyed in 1910.

Red Horse V

The last horse was created around 1914 on Spring Hill but did not survive beyond the First World War. All the sites of the past Red Horses have now been covered in woodland and it seems that they are lost forever.