



# **History of the Modern Restorations of the Broad Town White Horse 1950 to 2025**

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# History of the Modern Restorations of the Broad Town White Horse 1950 to 2025

This is a short history of the Broad Town white horse and its modern restorations and ongoing maintenance as found in printed records or remembered by those involved and recorded on audio files.

## Post War 1950 to 1980

The white horse had been covered during the war to avoid it being used as a navigation landmark by planes. It was uncovered by 1947 [Ref 1] but was rather scrawny and overgrown in places by weeds.

The first mention of the white horse in the Parish Council Minutes [Ref 2] is in April 1950 when the Parish Council was requested by the Clerk of Wiltshire County Council to consider what land or buildings they want preserved under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947 Development Plan. After some lengthy discussion Mr Grigson moved that Broad Town Cliffs and White Horse be preserved under this Plan, this was seconded by Mr Matthews and carried. Mr Grigson also stated that he would like to see the White Horse cleaned and that he would give £5 towards the work.

When in March 1969 [Ref 2], Wiltshire Council once again asked the Parish Council for local suggestions to be included in a survey of countryside treasures which was taking place there is no record of the white horse being mentioned whereas a resting stone, two milestones and some houses were proposed.

The next record of the white horse in Parish Council minutes [Ref 2] occurs in March 1971 when Mr Tapp asked if the white horse on the hill could be cleaned. A year later in March 1972, according to the minutes, the white horse was inspected by the “men’s club” with a view to cleaning it, but they found it was a much larger job than first anticipated, as it not only needed cleaning but filling in and so work was suspended.

Local recollections from current older residents of Broad Town (taken in 2025) are that the white horse was discernible in the 1970s and local families sometimes had picnics on or near the white horse [Ref 3]. But the condition of the horse was deteriorating rapidly as there were no active restoration activities ongoing [Ref 4].

## Major Restoration 1982 and Subsequent Years 1982 to 1990

This was about to change as according to Jeff Clewley (Broad Town Parish Councillor) “a young school girl from Broad Town called Alison Shapland” [Ref 5] (born 1970 [Ref 6]) wrote to the Parish Council asking “if anything could be done to recover the white horse as members of her family had been talking about it”.

The exact date for her letter is not known but it was most likely in 1982 when she would have been in the senior year at Broad Town Primary School. Alison Shapland’s father recollected that the letter was written when she was likely in the last year of attendance at Broad Town Church

of England Primary School which would have been 1982/3 which is corroborated by Rupert Bastin (born 1969) stating that he attended the same school until 1981 and that Alison was one or two years behind [Ref 3]. The date is also inferred from Jeff Clewley stating that it was in the early 1980s [Ref 5] and the Parish Council Minutes which do not specifically mention Alison's letter but do record the actions taken.

As a result of Alison's letter, the Parish Council minutes note that Parish Council chairman Tony Parker and Mr Bourton were to visit the horse on Wednesday 14 July 1982 after the PC meeting (held Monday 12 July 1982). According to the letter written in 2008 [Ref 5] another councillor Jeff Clewley also inspected the horse together with Tony Parker. Apparently only "some of the body could then be seen but most of the legs, head and tail had eroded in and could not be seen at all" [Ref 5]. The Parish Council then organised a first weekend volunteer activity to "cut and clear the long grass that covered the whole site" [Ref 5]. The following weekend the volunteers pegged out the shape of the horse as best they could. They had an old photograph and those on the hill site also relied on CB radio assistance by volunteers (including Alison Shapland) from fields near the school where the horse could be seen in perspective [Ref 5]. Over a series of weekends during that summer, the volunteers dug and cleared spoil [Ref 5]. It seems that the horse at this point was effectively created by removing turf and exposing the chalk bedrock. This is confirmed by Tony Parker's letter in August 1989 [Ref 7] in which he explains that a few years ago "the chalk was exposed but has since discoloured".

The front leg and tail were the parts of the horse that this recutting was most uncertain about [Ref 5] – ie. the exact shape of the leg and whether the tail should have been a bob tail rather than a flowing tail (according to an elderly resident).

The Parish Council Minutes in Sept 1982 [Ref 2] note that more still needed to be done but by November work was to be left until the next spring. By August 1983, the horse had been sprayed with weedkiller and a working party was organised for Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> August 1983 [Ref 2]. In June 1984, the Parish Council decided not to accept the offer of help from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers as the parish council were continuing with renovations [Ref 2].

The dates for this recutting and extended restoration of the white horse are confirmed in [Ref 4], dated 1989, in which Tony Parker states that the horse was restored 5 years earlier.

Over the next few years maintenance of the white horse seems to have been sporadic [Ref 5] and efforts at the Parish Council focussed on getting funding and access to extra chalk to use on the white horse. Several alternative funding routes were followed but with little success [Ref 2].

By March 1986 it was noted [Ref 2] that the white horse was in need of attention. In March 1987 Parish Council minutes [Ref 2] state that the horse was being maintained and it seemed that this was with the help of Wootton Bassett Scouts – as recorded in the May 1988 Parish Council minutes [Ref 2].

By 1989 the horse "needs a bit more attention" [Ref 4]. No restoration activity seems to have been performed in 1989 or 1990 as according to Tony Parker writing in July 1990 [Ref 8] "the cleaning up of the Broad Town white horse is still being talked about but no action, at any rate visible to the naked eye, yet" as apparently "the workings of the Broad Town Parish Council grind slow". Tony mentioned [Ref 7] that bringing in fresh chalk was a potential method being considered for the next restoration attempt "fresh chalk may be brought in ... that is what there is talk of doing with the Broad Town White Horse when it is restored next time".

By November 1990 Tony was optimistic that something would soon be done: “nothing as yet has happened to the white horse but the Committee which runs the annual Broad Town Show has donated £100 from the profits of this year’s show for the renovation of the white horse – so watch out for developments” [Ref 9]. Jim Brierley [Ref 10] also confirmed that the horse could not be well seen in 1990.

## Formation of the Broad Town White Horse Restoration Group 1991

Jim recalls how he joined several like-minded people (John Wray, Phil Hughes and some others) a few years after he moved to Broad Town (moved in 1987) to plan the horse restoration [Ref 10]. Public sources confirm that the Broad Town White Horse Restoration Society/Group was established in 1991 [Ref 11] and [Ref 12]. Gordan Little is mentioned as the Head of the Committee which maintains the white horse [Ref 13], in 1992. John Wray became the Treasurer [Ref 14] and then the Chairman a few years later. Jim Brierley became the Secretary [Ref 10].

## Major Restoration 1991 and Years 1992 to 1994

On the weekend of 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June 1991 the awaited restoration of the white horse was undertaken. This is the date according to Tony Parker writing on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 1991 [Ref 15] “the Broad Town white horse has been done. A working party of energetic young men (which didn’t include me - being neither energetic nor young) spent last weekend on it and it now looks sparkling. Looking at it from a distance you can almost imagine it galloping away. So it is all ready for inspection by the experts which should be carried out before the ravages of nature begin to green it over again.” The Minutes of the Parish Council on 12 June 1991 [Ref 2] confirm this, noting that “for White Horse Restoration... an expression of thanks is to go in the Newsletter, also letters to Mr R. Horton and staff and to Mr G. Little”. (Robert Horton being the farmer upon whose land the white horse is situated). In December 1991 Tony again confirmed that the horse “had been refurbished” in 1991 in a short note [Ref 16].

This was followed up in a letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> May 1992 [Ref 17] in which Tony sends some photographs to Pattie Lawler including one of the white horse taken from a helicopter – “A man who lives at the other end of the village has a helicopter ... He took a couple of our friends up for a trip round the village and they took quite a few pictures. One of these was of the white horse .... Unfortunately it was a rather misty day with a bit of frost on the ground so the pictures are not as clear as they should be.” A copy of what appears to be that specific photograph was provided by Pattie Lawler to the Broad Town History website – see below.



Fig 1: Aerial photograph of Broad Town white horse 1992

Given that Tony sent the photograph at the start of May, and that he would have had to firstly obtain the photograph from his friends after they would have sent off the negatives to be developed (this was before digital photography) then the photo's attribution by Pattie Lawler to early spring seems credible, and is backed up by Tony stating that there was frost on the ground – so perhaps March 1992.

Interestingly the photograph clearly shows a series of stakes along the lower edge of horse's body and legs. So the restoration/refurbishment of the white horse immediately preceding the photograph must have been responsible for placing these stakes. The only restoration mentioned in the written record which ties up with these dates is that of 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June 1991. A date of 1991 for the restoration was also given in the notes accompanying the rolling slidedeck and talk by Bob Clarke [Ref 18] presented at the Wiltshire Museum's White Horses and Hill Figures exhibition between 27<sup>th</sup> March 2010 to 27<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

This restoration involving the placement of stakes is a notable event in the white horse history as it marks the departure from the previous restoration method – ie a departure from removing the turf and top soil to expose the bedrock.

A set of two photographs exist which show a number of people on a grass/weed covered white horse with rakes, picks and long metal stakes. They are digging out an outline linear trench at the bottom of what appears to be the horse's body.



Figs. 2 and 3: Restoration initial stages 1991



Figs. 4 and 5: Restoration later stages 1991

Then there are two additional photographs which show the horse surface devoid of grass/weed. A small JCB type digger can be seen at the top of the hill emptying its load onto the slope immediately above the horse. People are using shovels and rakes to cover the surface (starting from the bottom up) with what appears to be chalk rubble. The stakes can be seen vertically in their position on the hillside along the previously excavated linear trench. The chalk rubble is piling up against the stakes (and the chicken wire between the stakes).

It is noted that the exact date of these photographs was uncertain when they were provided to the BTWHRG project, but it was believed to be in the period 1989 to 1992. The research above confirms a date of June 1991.

Information about how the restoration was done has been provided by John Wray [Ref 14] audio 2025 and [Ref 19] letter 1996 and Jim Brierley [Ref 10] audio 2025. The horse's body was cleared and the lower outline and leg positions re-established. Angle iron stakes were inserted into the hillside and chicken wire netting secured between the stakes [Ref 14], [Ref 10], [Ref 19]. Lorries [Ref 14] delivered 180 tons (163.8 metric tonnes) of chalk rubble [Ref 19] to the top of the escarpment just above the horse's location. One of the volunteers Phil Hughes owned a local plant and tool hire business (A1 Handy Hire) and he provided the tools, wire, machinery needed including a mini-digger which were apparently air lifted by Phil in his helicopter to the top of the escarpment [Ref 10]. The chalk was then manipulated by the digger and by hand onto the horse's surface and piled up to provide a "good thickness" [Ref 14] which was held back in place

and stopped from rolling down the steep slope by the stakes and chicken wire. This was then covered by 2 tons (1.8 metric tonnes) of hydrated lime to give a smoother white surface [Ref 19].

The materials needed were funded from donations by the Village Show Committee [Ref 14] and the whole operation was made easier by the good relationship with the landowner local farmer Robert Horton, also given that John Wray's wife was his farm administrator [Ref 14].

We note that Horton's farm maintains an ongoing good relationship (now over 34 years) with the Broad Town White Horse Restoration Group and act as the agents to order hydrated lime for restorations up to the present day and deliver it to the escarpment above the horse.

Parish Council minutes in April 1992 note that work on the white horse continues and that it had recently been limed and was now a prominent land mark [Ref 2].

In 1992, the year following the horse's restoration, Broad Town entered the Wiltshire Village Ventures competition [Ref 20]. As part of this a mural was painted by local artist Hazel Talbot [Ref 21] (who lived in Broadacres, Broad Town) in the village hall on the back wall of the stage – showing a rural Broad Town scene with the white horse in the background. The white horse itself was part of the village entry. It seems that the Village show/fete was held in late September/early October coinciding with the visit of judges for the Village Ventures competition. At this event, Gordon Little had persuaded Mrs Mary Hacker (who lived in Chiseldon) to attend and bring with her two diagrams of the Broad Town white horse which she had inherited from her great-grandfather Mr. William Simmonds. She displayed these at the show. Broad Town was later declared the winner of the Village Ventures competition out of the 90 entries and received a trophy and prize money from which £75 of the £500 winnings were donated to the BTWHRG funds together with £250 from the profits of the show itself [Ref 20].

Also visiting England from the USA at this time was Pattie Lawler who came to see Tony and Gwen Parker [Ref 17] and [Ref 20]. Pattie had a strong interest in hill figures and had been communicating with Tony since 1989. Pattie had missed meeting Mrs Hacker at the show but when she heard about the horse diagrams she obtained Mrs Hacker's telephone number (from Gordon Little via Tony Parker) and rang her to arrange for Pattie to visit Mrs Hacker and view the diagrams the following day [Ref 20], [Ref 22] and [Ref 13]. Pattie took the photographs which are reproduced below.



Fig 6: Broad Town Project\white horse\Dr Mark How [Ref 23] from Pattie Lawler from Mrs Hacker (Note that several years later Pattie wrote to a relative of Mrs Hacker in which she recollects that she visited the Parkers in 1993 and missed the Show [Ref 24]. It seems possible that this date has been mis-remembered by one year as otherwise the events recorded by multiple people at the time do not fit).

Investigation into these images including the originals (which are under the care of Mrs Hacker's descendants) is being undertaken under a separate personal research project by Garry Gibbons which is looking at the horse's origins.

Although not definitive proof that a scouring did not continue in 1992, there is no mention of a further restoration scouring or liming occurring in any of the correspondence between Tony Parker and Pattie Lawler in 1992 or the first half of 1993. Indeed, in a letter dated 18 June 1993 [Ref 25], Tony states that the horse "could do with a bit of freshening up ... not quite looking at its best", although he does also say that a project to "give it a face lift" was planned but was delayed due to it being the "wettest May in seven years" and this has continued into June. The Parish Council records [Ref 2] note that weeding was done in 1994 and funds for liming were obtained in 1995 from the Village Show.

## Regular Scourings and Liming 1995 to 2007

Following that the Broad Town White Horse Restoration Group has undertaken regular scourings and liming of the horse thereafter. This became a regular weeding on the horse followed by spreading new lime on the surface using bags of 25kg slaked lime delivered to the site by Horton's. At times weedkiller was sprayed on the horse before the event to make weed removal easier. The date for the scouring and liming was decided by the small committee (subject to weather conditions). Volunteers to do the activity were recruited through notices placed in the local Broad Town parish newsletter. Typically 10 to 20 people volunteered with some regulars and others taking part some years and not other years. [Ref 14], [Ref 10], [Ref 26] and [Ref 27].

According to Jim Brierley, maintenance of the white horse started to be scheduled to take place in April and September/October of each year [Ref 10]. This pattern seems to have been instigated when John Wray took over as chairman of the BTWHRG (mid 1990s, [Ref 28]). An article in the Broad Town newsletter in October 1999 [Ref 29] thanks volunteers that "recently cleaned and whitened" the horse and gives contact details for John Wray and Jim Brierley for anyone wishing to participate next time. Whilst weeding would have been performed both times, it is unlikely that lime was applied twice a year.

At the annual Parish meeting in March 1996 it was stated that in the previous year Wootton Bassett Senior School became involved [Ref 2] as part of their 6<sup>th</sup> Form Challenge with the topic of enhancing the locality. It was agreed that the school would install a stile at the bottom right of the slope under the horse leading from the White Horse Way path onto the escarpment. A series of wooden steps were pegged into the slope leading from that stile up the right hand side of the field and to a viewing area cleared above the horse [Ref 10].

During late summer 1996, over 1 ton of lime was added to the horse and signposts were requested to indicate the path to the horse from the main road [Ref 2]. Scouring may have continued annually although written records [Ref 2] are only available confirming weeding and/or liming in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2005 and 2007.



Figs. 7 and 8: Photographs of the 2007 restoration work before and after liming

## Regular Scourings and Liming 2008 to 2016

Bob Clarke participated in liming in 2008 (under Wray and Brierley) and was soon persuaded to join the BTWHRG organising committee [Ref 26]. Bob Clarke had moved to Broad Town in 1997, joined the Village Show Committee and for the next decade he was involved in many village activities but not the white horse. Bob took over the white horse fund raising and lime ordering from Jim who remained as secretary until 2019 [Ref 10]. In 2010 Bob took over chairmanship of the BTWHRG when John Wray moved away from Broad Town [Ref 10], [Ref 28]. Bob remembers that the lime was being applied in September. This meant that by the next spring the winter weather had ravaged the surface turning it grey/brown. Bob changed the liming to occur in April/May instead [Ref 26], [Ref 28], [Ref 30]. This provided a whiter horse over most of the year and Andrew Law recollects that this often coincided with showing off an impressive white horse overlooking the Broad Town Road leg of the White Horse Challenge cycle event which took place mid-April each year [Ref 31].

By this time the ear of the horse had disappeared but a remnant was found although it was not recut. The eye also needed recutting every now and again, with the shape altering slightly each time, as is the nature with maintaining such objects [Ref 26].

As the local archaeologist, Bob was persuaded to provide a rolling screen display and give a talk [Ref 18] about the maintenance of Broad Town white horse at the Wiltshire Museum's White Horses and Hill Figures exhibition held between 27<sup>th</sup> March 2010 to 27<sup>th</sup> February 2011 [Ref 32]. Bob remembers that the next liming event attracted a much bigger team of volunteers and up to 60 people participated in the tea and cake afterwards which was held at his home.



Figs 9 and 10: Weeding and Liming in 2011

There was an old information board on the wall of Broad Town Church of England Primary School. This did not feature the white horse but had a sepia image of an old cottage in the village. Bob gave a talk at the school and encouraged the children to draw pictures of the white horse and its history. Bob then organised for a new information board to be made in 2011 which combined cartoon images made by the children with photographs of restoration maintenance activities [Ref 26]. The board was designed 2011 and installed 2012 [Ref 33]. This board remains on the school wall in 2025 although there are plans to create a new board involving the children in 2026/27.

Apparently 2012 was a frustrating year as scouring and liming was interrupted by poor weather. Thus the next event in April 2013 was arranged to take double the usual time in order to repair and present the horse in a good state [Ref 34].



Fig 11: School Board

In December 2013 a landslip happened below and to the right of the white horse on the same area of the escarpment [Ref 35]. This was to have ramifications.

Access via the stile entry and the wooden steps was removed – the steps have since decayed and are difficult to trace.

However liming continued almost as normal in 2014. As the weather intervened again the event was delayed until June 2014 [Ref 35].

But concerns were raised regarding the liability if a volunteer was injured during a restoration event. This was highlighted by the county council warning that the slope may be unsafe due to the landslip in 2013 [Ref 27]. So no liming was planned for spring 2015. Andrew Law, Bob Clarke and Rupert Bastin inspected the horse in June 2015 finding that it had weeds over it, the outline was obscured and shrubs were constraining the view. Given the potential risks especially when manhandling lime bags, the idea was raised to test weedkiller as an alternative to further liming [Ref 27], [Ref 36]. This worked to some extent but was not completely satisfactory.

An emergency meeting was called in the village hall to explore options. At around this point Andrew Law and Simon Billis came to the fore of the BTWHRG. Andrew had been participating in the liming since 2007. Simon took over BTWHRG operations and Andrew did the planning with Bob Clarke retaining responsibility for finances [Ref 27], [Ref 37]. Investigations were made to check whether the Parish Council insurances would cover the liming [Ref 36], [Ref 38] but did not lead to a conclusion.

Some weed killing and weeding but no liming was undertaken in Autumn 2015. Scouring and liming resumed in 2016 in time for the White Horse Challenge cycle event in late April [Ref 37], [Ref 39] and this was repeated in April 2017 [Ref 40], both with a much reduced team given the concerns and insurance difficulties.



Figs 12 and 13: Reduced team maintaining the horse 2016

## Recent Scouring and Liming 2017 to 2025, Landslip and Project 2025

As part of demonstrating greater risk control, in 2017 the Broad Town White Horse Restoration Group Terms of Reference were formally established [Ref 41]. The first three points of the ToRs are worth detailing:

1. The White Horse Preservation Society exists to ensure one of Wiltshire's famous white horses, and a symbol of Broad Town's identity, prevails for the enjoyment of villagers, visitors and future generations. The current team has been operating since 1991.
2. The aim of the Society is to ensure the continued existence of the hill figure by undertaking a number of preservation activities on an annual basis.
3. The Society also aims to involve as many of the local community as is physically and safely as possible in a wide range of supporting roles.

The remaining ToRs deal with the methods of operating the group.

The first of several applications for funding was made in 2017 to The Good Energy Fund which was approved in January 2018. [Ref 42]. With insurance in place the liming was able to be reopened to wider community participation. Liming was planned for April but due to poor weather it only happened in May [Ref 43].

In 2019 the first reference to the use of power tools (ie petrol strimmers) was recorded. These were used the day prior to the liming to clear the grass from around the perimeter of the horse. The liming then proceeded as planned the following day [Ref 44]. Despite the desire to show off the horse for the cycle event in April, experience had shown that April was often too wet to access the horse. A weeding and liming event in May was thus undertaken and established henceforth as the best time to schedule the liming.

Due to the Covid pandemic no white horse activities were carried out in 2020.

In 2021 Andrew Law took over chairmanship of the BTWHRG and organisation of the maintenance events with ongoing support by Bob Clarke to organise lime delivery and finances [Ref 27]. Maintenance was done in June. The group was sponsored by the local Broad Town Brewery which included refreshments for the hard working volunteers as well as paying for lime in 2021, 2022 & 2023 [Ref 45], [Ref 46], [Ref 47].

Annual strimming and liming continued in May 2022 [Ref 46] and end of April 2023 [Ref 47] which was planned at that date to be ahead of the King's Coronation.

Excitingly in 2024 the annual restoration activities (strimming, weeding and liming), which were carried out in May, attracted the interest of the BBC. The volunteers "were pleased to be joined by Emma Campbell and Helen Mark who are producing an episode of Radio4's Open Country on the Wiltshire Chalk carving. They had already visited Fovant, Westbury and Alton Barnes and appreciated the chance to see us in action. The programme airs on 6 June so tune in" [Ref 48].



Figs 14 and 15: Restoration Work in 2023 and BBC interviewing Rupert Bastin 2024

On more mundane matters, Bob Clarke withdrew from the BTWHRG in 2024 [Ref 49], [Ref 48] handing over the secretarial and finance activities to Derek Greer. Derek had been involved in the liming since 2019. Funding for liming was obtained from the Bluefield Solar Fund. The BTWHRG moved from being a separate organisation with its own bank account to become a volunteer group working under the broad auspices of the Broad Town Parish Council which has also enabled it to utilise the existing parish council insurances to save costs.

2024 was also notable for a more concerning event. On 25/26 September 2024 a landslip occurred immediately below the rear leg of the white horse. [Ref 50]. The landslip is towards the foot of the slope on the steepest angle, directly above the fence at the side of the white horse trail path below the slope. The landslip actually flowed over the path, blocking it and covered the white horse sign. The overflow has subsequently been "flattened" to some extent enabling the path to go over the silt/mud of the bottom of the slip.

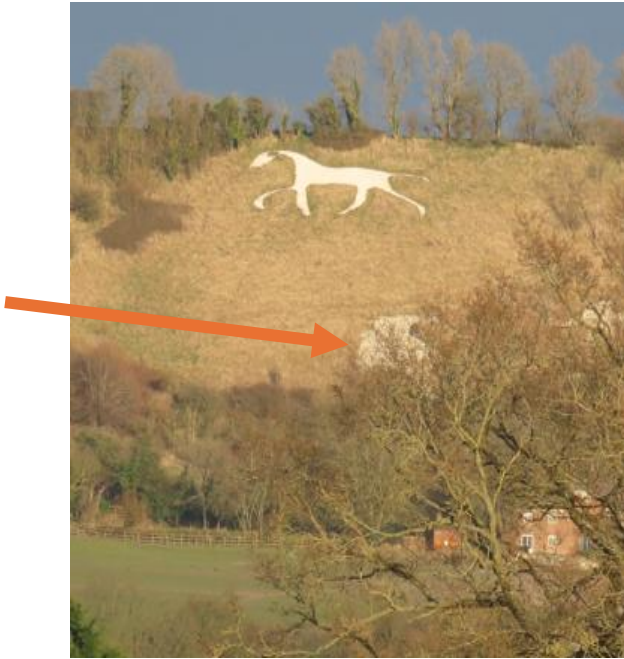


Fig 16: White Horse and 2024 landslip

Serendipitously, the Wiltshire Museum had organised a conference “White Horses, Badges and Giants : Hill Figures of Southern England” on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November [Ref 51]. Andrew Law and Derek Greer attended this and appealed for advice from those present as to how to address the potential of further damage. Three of the presenters – Garry Gibbons, Mike Allen and Brian Edwards indicated an interest to help. Garry and Mike made an investigative visit to the Broad Town white horse site accompanied by Derek and Andrew the following week. Over the course of the next few months the team (with help from Judy Conybeare who administers the Broad Town history website) formulated a project to record the current horse, assess its condition and investigate the known history. In brief the plan [Ref 52] was to undertake three tasks in 2025:

Task 1. A topographic survey including a GPS survey and a photogrammetric modelling of the figure by a UAV.

Task 2. An assessment of land slip risk and hill figure condition including an augur survey.

Task 3. A historic review of the Broad Town Chalk Horse including a collection of oral testimony of community members.

Funding was applied for and obtained from Bluefield Solar Fund, North Wessex Down Trust and North Wessex Downs National Landscape. These activities have been performed over the period June to November 2025 [Ref 53] and the outputs will be recorded on the Broad Town History website [Ref 54] and at several county archives.

White Horse maintenance activities also continued in 2025, with the main event taking place on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2025 with 18 volunteers taking part [Ref 52]. A wider section of the local community (approximately 100 people from Broad Town and beyond) came on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2025 to the Broad Town village hall to hear a series of talks (given by Garry Gibbons, Mike Allen, Andrew Law and Derek Greer) about Wiltshire white horses, hill figure archaeology, the Broad Town white horse history & restorations and the project to survey, assess and review the Broad Town white horse.



Fig 17: Broad Town White Horse Restoration Group volunteers in May 2025

This is not the end of the Broad Town white horse story nor its associated Restoration Group, but simply the end of its history up to the present in November 2025.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the many people who wrote the letters, news articles, reports, other documents and recorded audio memories which have been used to collate this short history. Thanks are also due to those who painstakingly dug through the records to pull them out and make them available. Any errors in interpretation of the evidence is mine.

Last and by no means least thanks are due to the people who instigated the modern interest in the Broad Town white horse - Alison Shapland, Pattie Lawler; those who put effort into organising the restorations - Jeff Clewley, Gordon Little, John Wray, Jim Brierley, Bob Clarke, Andrew Law, Derek Greer; and the many volunteers who throughout the years turned up to do the work!

## References

- [Ref 1] Historic England aerial photographic archive picture reference EAW004160 dated 1947
- [Ref 2] Note: ALL MENTIONS OF BROAD TOWN WHITE HORSE in the PARISH COUNCIL RECORDS compiled by A. Law and D. Greer 2026 using Broad Town Parish Council Minutes accessed at Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre (references REF 2952/1 – Dec 1894 to Sep 1930, REF 2952/2 – Oct 1930 to June 1972, REF 2952/3 – Sep 1972 to Mar 1987, REF 2952/4 – Mar 1987 to Mar 1999, REF 2952/4 – Mar 1987 to Mar 1999, REF 2952/7 – Jan 2003 to Dec 2006, REF 2952/8 – Jan 2007 to Dec 2010, REF 2952/9 – Jan 2011 to Dec 2014).
- [Ref 3] Audio record BTWHRG 5 Rupert Bastin, taken 8 Oct 2025
- [Ref 4] 1989\_07\_02\_letter.jpg from Tony Parker to Pattie Lawler
- [Ref 5] Letter dated 30/4/2008 from Jeff Clewley to Bob Clarke
- [Ref 6] Date of Birth record accessed electronically via <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/>
- [Ref 7] 1989\_08\_12\_letter.jpg from Tony Parker to Pattie Lawler
- [Ref 8] 1990\_07\_23\_letter.jpg from Tony Parker to Pattie Lawler
- [Ref 9] 1990\_11\_10\_letter.jpg from Tony Parker to Pattie Lawler
- [Ref 10] Audio record BTWHRG 3 Jim Brierley, taken 30 Sept 2025
- [Ref 11] The Wiltshire Gazette and Herald website <https://www.gazetteandherald.co.uk/leisure/outabout/tourism/thingstoseeanddo/broadtownwh/> accessed on 15/11/2025.
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- [Ref 13] 1992\_10\_09\_letter.jpg from Pattie Lawler to Mr Newman
- [Ref 14] Audio record BTWHRG 6 John Wray, taken 28 Oct 2025
- [Ref 15] 1991\_06\_11\_letter.jpg from Tony Parker to Pattie Lawler
- [Ref 16] 1991\_12\_19\_note.jpg from Tony Parker to Pattie Lawler
- [Ref 17] 1992\_05\_24\_letter from Tony Parker to Pattie Lawler
- [Ref 18] Slides “Broad Town White Horse : Maintaining 19<sup>th</sup> Century Hill Figures in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” prepared by Dr Bob Clarke, archaeologist.
- [Ref 19] Extract of Letter from John Wray to Kate Bergamar dated 20 Oct 1996, quoted in Discovering Hill Figures 4<sup>th</sup> edition, pages 63 and 64, Kate Bergamar, published 1997, transferred to digital print on demand 2010, ISBN-13: 978 0 74780 345 4
- [Ref 20] 1992\_11\_30\_letter from Tony Parker to Pattie Lawler
- [Ref 21] Private communication from Nigel Crocker on 29/11/2025.
- [Ref 22] 1992\_10\_03\_journal entry written by Pattie Lawler

[Ref 23] Hill Figures website curated by Dr Mark Hows <https://www.hillfigures.co.uk/> accessed 20/11/2025

[Ref 24] 1997\_05\_30\_1\_letter.png from Pattie Lawler to Shirley Meehan

[Ref 25] 1993\_06\_18\_2\_letter.png from Tony parker to Pattie Lawler

[Ref 26] Audio record BTWHRG 4 Bob Clarke, taken 3 Oct 2025

[Ref 27] Audio record BTWHRG 2 Andrew Law, taken 28 Sep 2025

[Ref 28] 2010\_btnews\_june.pdf Article thanking villagers for horse liming in the previous month and thanking John Wray for 25yrs as chairman of BTWHRG, noting that Bob Clarke will replace him.

[Ref 29] 1999\_btnews\_October.jpg Small article in Broad Town News October 1999.

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