

## Robert Willan's Dobbies and Their Kin

J. B. SMITH

Robert Willan was born in 1752 near Sedbergh, formerly in Yorkshire, now in Cumbria, studied medicine at Edinburgh from 1777 to 1780, and became a notable physician and dermatologist. On June 27th, 1811, a few months before his death in 1812, he read to the Society of Antiquaries of London a paper that had little or nothing to do with medicine. It was a list of dialect words no doubt harking back to his early days “in the mountainous district of the West Riding of Yorkshire”<sup>1</sup> that he left for Edinburgh as a young man of twenty. Although essentially a linguistic study, the list is of great interest to folklorists as well as to students of dialect. This fact cannot be more clearly illustrated than by his entry on the *dobby*, a mischievous sprite resembling Robin Goodfellow, whose first name he probably shares, since *dobby* could well be a variant of *Robin*.<sup>2</sup> Here now is Willan's description, parts of which I have reproduced in italics, for reasons explained below.

DOBBIES, *s.* Demons attached to particular houses or farms. The ideas respecting them, are the same as are held in Scotland, with respect to BROWNIES. Though naturally lazy, they are said to make, in cases of trouble and difficulty, incredible exertions for the advantage of the family; as to stack all the hay, or house the whole crop of corn in one night.

*The farmers horses are left to rest, and stags, or other wild animals, are supposed to fulfil the orders of the demon.*

Some of the Dobbies are contented to stay in out-houses with the cattle, but others will only dwell among human beings. The latter are thought to be fond of heat, but when the hearth cools, it is said, they frisk and racket about the house, greatly disturbing the inmates. If the family should remove with the expectation of finding a more peaceable mansion, their hopes would be frustrated, for we are informed that the Dobby, being attached to the persons, not to place, would remove also, and commence his revels in the new habitation.

*The Dobbies residing in lone granges, or barns, and near antiquated towers, bridges, &c. have a character imputed to them different from that of the house-demons. Benighted travellers are thought to be much endangered by passing their haunts; for as grave legends assure us, an angry sprite will sometimes jump behind a horseman, and compress him so tightly that he either perishes before he can reach his home, or falls into some lingering and direful malady.*<sup>3</sup>

There is much here that will seem so familiar to anyone acquainted with brownies and related spirits such as the doobby that it can be passed over without comment. Only two items do not fall into this category. These have been picked out in italics, since they seem to me to require further attention. The first italicised item is a statement to the effect that the horses belonging to a farm inhabited by a doobby are left to rest, while stags are supposed to fulfil the doobby's orders. This I take to mean that the stags are made to do the horses' work. At this

point there springs to mind a story, borrowed from the lives of Irish saints, that tells how stags were yoked to a plough belonging to St Neot, thus taking the place of his oxen, which had been stolen by thieves.<sup>4</sup> There can, however, be no connection. The theft of St Neot's oxen and their replacement by stags was a single event. What Willan seems on the other hand to be telling us is that domestic draught animals, in this instance horses, were habitually left to rest, with stags or other wild animals habitually carrying out the orders of the dobbie, whom Willan's admittedly laconic statement seems rather to present to us in the role of Master or Lord of the Animals, a figure rarely appearing in English folklore, but well known under a variety of regional names in communities with traditions reflecting hunting as a way of life, in past or present. The Master, or Mistress, of Animals knows each of the creatures over which he or she presides, indicates to the hunter which if any of these may be killed, and punishes any contravention,<sup>5</sup> as in the northern tale "The Brown Man of the Muirs", where the brown man, who is "small, but square and strong, dressed in clothes like withered bracken, with red, frizzled hair on his head, and great, rolling eyes, like an angry bull's", brings about the death of the hunter guilty of shooting a brace of grouse without permission.<sup>6</sup> Willan's dobbie in his role as Master of Animals is, to be sure, a less threatening figure than the Brown Man of the Muirs. What we may see as his willingness to put his stags in the place of horses is of a piece with his role as a friendly and co-operative household spirit.

As the solitary fairy described in Willan's final paragraph, the dobbie is, however, far from friendly, jumping up behind benighted horsemen and constricting their breath in such a way as to cause death or severe illness. Having glimpsed the spirit as Master of the Animals, we now see him in a role for which the relevant motif is AT F472, "*Huckauf*. A goblin which jumps on one's back".<sup>7</sup> Here *Huckauf* is a generic term on a par with Master of Animals. Alternative terms are *Aufhocker*, *Hockauf*, and *Huckup*. All four are German expressions conveying the idea of leaping up from behind.<sup>8</sup>

The adoption of *Huckauf* and its synonyms from German suggests the absence of a corresponding English expression, and this in turn might suggest the absence of the phenomenon itself. Here we come to a paradox. On the one hand a medieval manuscript dating back to the first part of the twelfth century does in fact provide us with a remarkably early account of *Aufhocker*-like activity. On the other hand, all then remains silent until, as we have seen, Willan in the early nineteenth century reports on the *dobbie* as an *Aufhocker*. From then on we do find relevant accounts here and there, but they are by no means thick on the ground.

Let us look at the evidence from England, starting with the twelfth century document referred to, which tells how a Brother Arkillus, a monk of Tynemouth still living at the time, was tormented in his sleep by a devil in the form of a black dwarf (*parvulum simulans Aithiopem*) who "clung heavily to his back". This affliction continued for a long time, until Arkillus dreamed one night that he had pulled the demon off, torn him in pieces, and hurled him into the fire. He awoke sore damaged by the experience, but rejoicing in his victory.<sup>9</sup>

Following this medieval account we have to wait nearly seven centuries for the next, which is Willan's. Here now is a review of later accounts. In Sussex, according to a report of 1836, St Leonard's Forest was haunted by a headless ghost, locally called Squire Paulett, that

lurked among the trees at dusk and would leap up behind a horseman, wind a skeletal arm around his neck, and hang on till he reached the end of the Forest.<sup>10</sup> For the west Midlands we have two reports, both from the pen of Charlotte Burne, writing in the late 1870s. First there was a creature nicknamed the Man-Monkey that sprang on to a horse pulling a cart on the approach to a bridge over the Birmingham and Liverpool Canal on the way from Ranton in Staffordshire to Woodcote in Shropshire. Note that the back of the horse itself, not that of the carter driving it, was mounted. Then there was the ghost of Madam Pigott of Chetwynd in Shropshire, which jumped down from a high wall and clung fiercely to the back of any passing rider at night.<sup>11</sup> In Surrey there was the Buckland Shag, described at the beginning of the twentieth century as “a monster like a huge ape”, reported one midnight to have leapt up behind a soldier on horseback, tightly grasping him round the body, only to relinquish its hold and vanish as the now frantically galloping horse carried its rider to where the lights of the village inn became visible.<sup>12</sup> Consider also the ghostly Lincolnshire *tatter-foal*, described in 1908 as “a shagg’d-looking hoss”, given to “cluzzening [grasping] hold of a body what is riding home half-screwed with bargain-drink, and pulling him out of the saddle”.<sup>13</sup> With Willan’s report we thus have a total of six modern ones from England, though it is of course possible that others have been overlooked or will yet come to light. From now on it will be convenient, as an alternative to the German term *Aufhocker* and its synonyms, to refer to demons leaping on to the backs of persons or horses as *back-riders*.

There are also marginal or dubious examples. Here are four. The first is an account of the *barghest*, a spectre accustomed to sitting on the top rail of a gate or fence, waiting to leap on to the shoulder of any belated passing wanderer. Many attempts, none really convincing, have been made to unravel the etymology of *barghest*. One hypothesis is that we have here *bar-ghaist*, “bar-ghost”, in which *bar* would refer to the said top rail of a gate or fence.<sup>14</sup> Ghosts are of course addicted to boundaries and the structures marking them, but here it sounds almost as if this particular spectre’s alleged habit of sitting on the bar of a gate or fence is a product of the etymology. Be that as it may, shoulder-riding is far from prominent among the *barghest*’s recorded activities,<sup>15</sup> and what we are told about its alleged gate-perching is so sketchy as to carry little weight.

Our second account, from Reeth in Swaledale, North Yorkshire, tells how late at night “something” comes out of the middle arch of Reeth Bridge, proceeds downstream for about a mile, following the road. It can take the form of a white cat with fiery eyes or the Devil with a chain, running alongside a cart or clinging to the back of it.<sup>16</sup> There is no mention of a *person* or horses being oppressed. Here we do admittedly appear to have a regular haunting, whereas in our third account, which is from Exmoor, we seem to have an isolated event, a memorate or personal account of an encounter with something paranormal rather than an established legend. On his way home at night, a toper who has been scoffing at a local “conjurer” or wise man comes across an enormous stone, which “something” – note the absence of any named spectre that would point to an established tradition – compels him to carry groaning home, until shortly before his arrival it at last falls from his shoulder.<sup>17</sup> The account tells us less about any belief in back-riders, which are surely spectres and not stones, than about the vindictive nature and supernatural powers attributed to conjurers in the West Country.

Our fourth marginal or dubious account is different from the three just discussed, not least because it is to be found in a work of literature. It is from the Washington Irving's *Bracebridge Hall*, a series of loosely connected sketches or essays first published in 1822 and set in Yorkshire. In a chapter entitled "Popular Superstitions" Irving gives a detailed description of dobbies, including those more gloomy and unsocial individuals that frequent lonely barns, ruins and old bridges. According to old people, Irving tells us, as a belated rider was one night passing a lonely spot of the sort described, "the Dobbie jumped up behind him, and grasped him so close round the body that he had no power to help himself, but expected to be squeezed to death". Luckily, his heels being free, the traveller manages to spur his horse, and is carried straight to the village inn. Here – presumably now free of his demonic burden – he is carefully tended and brought to his senses, the first sign of returning consciousness being his call for a bottom of brandy.<sup>18</sup> No doubt the bottom of brandy is Irving's addition. Otherwise his text, embellished and now relating to one particular event, is clearly indebted to Willan's, published a few years before, in 1811.<sup>19</sup>

In sum, then, we have a medieval account, six convincing modern accounts, starting with Willan's, and four marginal or dubious ones. The modern accounts have little in common with the medieval one, which apparently lacks later variants. Except for Irving's account, which I see as dependent on Willan's, all the modern accounts are independent of each other. What we do notice about the six modern accounts that I have dubbed "convincing" is that the victims of the various back-riders are horsemen, except in Charlotte Burne's first report, where the victim of the Man-Monkey is a horse. Pedestrians, it would seem, are immune to the visitations of back-riders.

As things stand, the paucity of relevant English accounts, none of which belongs to what one might call living tradition, is striking. Let us now look briefly at the French material that is to hand. A sample survey of relevant traditions brings to light only two, which have much in common with each other, but little with items from elsewhere. Both tell of back-riding sheep that get heavier and heavier the further they are carried. "You weigh on me like the devil!" says a ploughman from Creuse to a ram he is burdened with. "I *am* the devil!" replies the creature, as it makes off snickering. The same story was told in Franche-Comté. In Beauce, a peasant who hoists on to his shoulders a sheep he finds kneeling near a cross hears it say when he finally reaches his village: "Take me back to where you found me!"<sup>20</sup> This is hardly a convincing example, since it is a matter of the man taking a sheep rather than the sheep leaping on to the man. As with the story from Creuse and Franche-Comté, one is inclined to ask whether here we have folk memories of sheep-stealing that have taken on a supernatural dimension. Rather different is the tale of the spectral billy-goat of Finistère that torments those who are late for vigils and pilgrimages, barring their way, leaping on to their shoulders, enveloping them in reeking exhalations, and making them err through bush, briar and watery wastes.<sup>21</sup>

Proceeding now to the Romansh-speaking canton of Grisons in Switzerland, we find in the work of the folklorist Arnold Büchli (1885-1970) as many as fifteen reports of encounters with *Aufhocker*, a few of these identified merely as "something" leaping on to the victim's back, while others are local bogies, witches, the devil, or, in one instance, a spectral

dog.<sup>22</sup> In only one report is the victim a horseman and not a pedestrian. In this account we are told that a man from Villa was riding back up from Ilanz late at night. Halfway through the forest of Cumbel near the Pleun Fravgia there was a cry of “Huhu, huhu!” The man thought it was an owl, and, mocking it, he too cried, “Huhu, huhu!” At that, something jumped on his horse from behind. Terrified, he spurred the horse into a gallop, but it was not until four in the morning, as the church bell was pealing at daybreak, that he reached Villa, his horse covered in foam and sweat, and trembling in every limb. No sooner had the man entered his house than he fell in a swoon.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly familiar in outline, now with a crucifix rather than a church bell marking the limits of enchantment, is a tradition recounted in 1945 by an informant from Müstair, alias Münster, about a local demon called the *om da Pisch* (“man of Pisch”), who as a weather spirit can warn of heavy snowfalls, while as a household bogy he can cause havoc in the kitchen, turning everything topsy-turvy.<sup>24</sup> When a traveller was on his way out of the valley at night, the *om da Pisch* would leap on to his back, and would have to be carried from a bridge to the nearest crucifix. The informant’s father was one of those who experienced this.<sup>25</sup>

A third example from Grisons follows a for us less usual pattern, though the idea that baleful influences can cease at parish boundaries and as a result of religious intercession is familiar enough. Gion Clau Cappaul was an honest man who got into conflict with a less than honest neighbour. That man was a witch, able to make Cappaul carry him on his back to the parish boundaries of Schnaus and Ruschein. In his distress Cappaul went to a clergyman, who, however, said he was too young and inexperienced to help, but could recommend a priest with the necessary powers. On being consulted by Cappaul, this aged priest read something out of his book – Latin or whatever. A month later the bad man died, and Cappaul was no longer afflicted.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps the most remarkable of Bächli’s accounts comes from an inhabitant of Remüs, alias Ramosch, whose grandfather was said to be the strongest man in that place, and courageous as well. His wife was expecting a child, and he had to ride up to Manas at night, to fetch the midwife. She told him to return home to his wife as quickly as possible. In the meantime her husband would saddle the horse and she would perhaps catch up with him on the way back down. When the prospective father got to the spot where the track from Val Sinestra joined his road, a distant church clock was striking twelve. At that moment two women came out of the Sinestra track and jumped on to his back. Shake and shrug as he might, he could not get them off. He had to carry them until he reached his house. There they jumped down, saying: “Cha tü sapchasch; quest e noss’ ura! Id er scha tü esch ün ferm, schi no eschan amo pü fermas! (This you must know – that this hour belongs to us. You may be strong, but we are stronger.) And woe to you if you tell any of this to anyone. Things will go badly for you if you do!” He then went into his house, and when the midwife arrived he too had to take to his bed. He was of little help to his wife. And he never got up again. Soon afterwards he died. But before that he revealed what had happened to him that night.<sup>27</sup>

We now take a look at German accounts. These are very numerous, again most often with pedestrians in the role of victim. Among its 300 quite recently collected legends, a study

of Franconian folklore has as many as thirteen accounts of variously named or anonymous back-riders pouncing upon nocturnal travellers. In twelve of these accounts the travellers are pedestrians,<sup>28</sup> while in the other, much as in the Yorkshire one from Reeth, it is a horse-drawn vehicle that bears the brunt.<sup>29</sup>

A national survey conducted in Germany at a somewhat earlier date presents a similar picture. In 1933, a questionnaire that included requests for information about *Aufhocker* brought in 17,220 (sic) responses. This material was analysed by Gerda Grober-Glück, the results being published by her between 1966 and 1982.<sup>30</sup> Many of the reports she processes feature local or regional spirits with names suggesting roles that have no obvious connection with a propensity for leaping on to travellers' backs. They do, however, reveal striking patterns when mapped. Looking at names, for instance, we find *Werwolf* ("Werewolf") thickly concentrated in the Porta Westfalica region, around Cologne and along the lower Rhine into the Netherlands and Belgium, and brownie-like figures such as *Puk* ("Puck"), *Rotjacke* ("Red Jacket") and *Graumännchen* ("Grey Manikin") clustering in Pomerania, western Upper Saxony and Thuringia.<sup>31</sup>

Of all these demons, the one that is surely best known is the *Huckup* belonging to Hildesheim in Lower Saxony, where, with his victim, an apple scrumper upon whom he leaps, he takes on tangible form as a monument at the southern end of a pedestrian precinct in the town centre.<sup>32</sup> This well illustrates a striking difference between the English and German traditions. As we have seen, in the former it tends to be horsemen who are the victims of back-riders. In the latter, however, pedestrians are generally picked upon. About a hundred of the German accounts dealt with by Grober-Glück have the *Aufhocker* leaping on to carts or the horses drawing them, and in only two – a minute proportion – is it horsemen who are the victims.<sup>33</sup> In the German reports the *Aufhocker* will often appear in response to provocation or unseemly behaviour at some lonely, "spooky" spot, and it will vanish close to human habitation, consecrated ground, crossroads, or running water.<sup>34</sup>

Here now for the purposes of illustration and informal comparison with our English material are a few accounts from the German material and one from the Netherlands, starting with the southerly area of Franconia already mentioned.

One of the thirteen Franconian accounts already referred to consists in fact of several traditions clustering around the ghostly figure of *Öltoni* ("Oil Tony"), who got this nickname from the oil-mill for the extraction of plant oils at which he worked, and near which after murdering his wife in cold blood he was condemned after death to wander restlessly. He boxes the ears of travellers, and leads them astray, but in particular he has it in for such drunken revellers as are tempted to call out his name and taunt him. Once a Gottersdorf farmer was on his way home through the forest from Schneeberg and, having taken a drop too much, was so unwise as to shout: "Öltoni, you old bugger, come out if you can!" In a trice the demon was there and leapt on to the drunkard's back, remaining there until transported to the edge of the village. Some have it that the place at which he leaves his victims is the woodland shrine to the Trinity on the boundary between Gottersdorf and Schneeberg.<sup>35</sup>

Next for consideration are a few of the items dealt with by Grober-Glück, starting with a tradition from a location north of the Harz Mountains. In the spinning-room at Hötensleben, stories used to be told of how anyone walking down the village street at midnight would find the *Huckauf* on their back. It was a huge, terrifying creature, with a shaggy coat and glaring eyes. Those who felt its weight on their shoulders also felt its claws around their neck. Only when they got to the crossroads did the creature jump down, leaving its victims bathed in perspiration. Note that though the demon is given the generic name of *Huckauf* it is not without similarity – glaring eyes, claws round victim’s neck – to the *Werwolf* encountered farther to the west, as we shall see.<sup>36</sup>

The consequences of such visitations could be dire, as in the story of Old Walter, who worked at Wenzlow Mill near Ziesar, about half way between Brandenburg and Magdeburg. One dark autumn night next to the little bridge there, something heavy leapt on to his shoulders. Beside himself with fear, he tried without avail to shake it off. When he got home he was gasping for air and had to lie down. Soon afterwards he was dead. He had got it in the neck from the Headless Calf.<sup>37</sup>

Next we have an account from the area just to the south of Eindhoven in the south-east Netherlands, where, the story went, there were many werewolves between the settlements of Hamont and Dorplein. The informant’s father claimed to have encountered one on his way to work. “The creature suddenly jumped on his back and my father had to carry him almost all the way to the zinc plant. You could expose them, they said, when you put a knife between their ribs. Then you could see immediately who it was.”<sup>38</sup> Here, new merges with old, modern industry as represented by a zinc plant with archaisms verging on the idea that witch-like beings are rendered harmless by iron and the drawing of blood.

This account, presented in English by de Blécourt, is followed by another, from 1944, in which a timid and gullible boy walking a lonely road at evening is made to “carry the werewolf”. One of a party of lads hiding by the road leaps on his back, leading him to believe that it is indeed a werewolf he is carrying.<sup>39</sup> A comparable account, but one with a different outcome, was recorded in Obersandau, now in the western Czech Republic, where a local goblin called the Blackman leapt on to the back of a peasant on his way home after dusk, but, instead of being allowed to take leave at a place of his own choosing, was forcibly carried to the next farm. Here, whether he wanted it or not, he was subjected to a very thorough scrubbing, which revealed his true identity, that of his victim’s neighbour.<sup>40</sup>

Pranks such of these are symptoms of a firmly established set of beliefs, but the same is also true of sayings. This applies to the present complex as much as to any other. Consider for instance an Upper Saxon expression *Es hat/ist mir aufgehoct* (“I’ve been neck-ridden”), used by persons suffering from a stiff neck, or the Pomeranian formula *Lat dar keinen uphacken* (“Don’t get jumped on from behind”), addressed to someone returning home late at night.<sup>41</sup> We also note for example a saying used when horses cannot budge a cart: *Es steckt ein Werwolf im Rad* (“There’s a werewolf in the wheel”).<sup>42</sup> Such sayings often outlive the beliefs from which they grew, remaining as evidence for them.

With this in mind it will in conclusion be appropriate to ask whether there are English-language sayings testifying to some now forgotten belief in back-riders and related bogies. What first springs to mind is Winston Churchill's dictum about the black dog assailing his back in times of gloom. Here we have a striking metaphor for depression that has been much discussed, with many possible sources, from Horace's *comes atra* or "black companion" to the Black Dog of Bungay being suggested, none of them entirely convincing.<sup>43</sup> Somewhat different in emphasis and connotation is *to have a black dog on one's back* as a folk saying mainly applied to small children afflicted by cross temper or fits of the sulks.<sup>44</sup> Certainly a belief in black dogs is firmly rooted in English folklore, to the extent, for example, that they merit a section to themselves in Katharine Briggs's *Dictionary of British Folk-Tales*.<sup>45</sup> Even so, no black-dog legend I have come across has one of these baleful creatures actually leaping on to the back or shoulders of a nocturnal traveller. Thus while the black dog of our saying is a striking traditional metaphor for the idea of possession by a bad mood, and may certainly qualify as a nursery bogy, it does not appear to be rooted in a whole complex of beliefs comparable to that conjured up by the German term *Aufhocker* and its synonyms.

While *Aufhocker*, alias back-riders, can assume many shapes, not just that of a dog, the part of the victim's anatomy they afflict is less variable: it is generally his back or, less often, his shoulders, and it is these and relevant sayings that we need to focus on. Consider for instance *Get off my back!*, as addressed to a persistent nuisance, or *to have a monkey on one's back*, meaning "to be angry", or "to be addicted to narcotics", along with *to get the monkey off one's back* for "to break the drug habit". These trenchantly convey a sense of helplessness and vulnerability, but again without pointing to any obvious legendary background. My best guess is that behind these there lurks the Old Man of the Sea, who clung to Sinbad the Sailor's shoulders for many days and nights, and from whom Sinbad escaped only by making him drunk.<sup>46</sup>

Now consider words uttered by one of Henry Glassie's Ulster informants from Ballymenone: " 'Then the spring comes . . . and I throw Larry off – that's what they call laziness in this country: Larry. I throw Larry off me back and take up the spade.' " <sup>47</sup> This Larry or Lawrence also features in sayings from many parts of England and Wales, to the effect that *Lawrence has hold* of someone overcome with indolence, or that such a person *carries/has Lawrence on his back*, and so on.<sup>48</sup> As I have shown elsewhere, this Lawrence or Lazy Lawrence was the main character in a seventeenth-century humorous chapbook, very popular with the ordinary reading public for many decades, into the nineteenth century. The said Lazy Lawrence was the owner of a magic ring that enabled him to get the better of those around him by sending them to sleep.<sup>49</sup> My assumption is that those sayings according to which a lazy person has Lawrence on his back have a history similar to that of formulas like those discussed in my previous paragraph, in which a victim is mounted by an oppressive being reminiscent of the Old Man of the Sea.

Our search for legendary prototypes finally leads us to the past participle *ridden* in expressions such as *debt-ridden* or *guilt-ridden*. These are pale metaphors, with less blurred images such as *hag-ridden* in their ancestry. *Hag-ridden* literally means "oppressed as by the



hag or nightmare”. This does indeed reflect a body of belief. Nightmares are, however, front-riders, not back-riders.<sup>50</sup> At this point, then, we abandon our search, assuming in the absence of further evidence that in English language tradition there are few signs of a well-developed system of beliefs in back-riders comparable to that surrounding the German *Aufhocker*.

## Notes

1. Robert Willan, “A List of Ancient Words at Present Used in the Mountainous District of the West Riding of Yorkshire”, *Archaeologia or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity*, London, Society of Antiquaries of London, 17 (1814), 135-167, rpt. as “A Glossary of Words Used in the West Riding of Yorkshire”, ed. Walter W. Skeat, *Series B, Reprinted Glossaries*, London, English Dialect Society, 1892. My references are to the edition of 1814.
2. Katharine Briggs, *A Dictionary of Fairies*, London, Allen Lane, 1976, rpt London, Penguin, 1976, p. 102; Jacqueline Simpson, and Steve Roud, *A Dictionary of English Folklore*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 96, “Dobbs, dobbie, dobie”. Simpson and Roud attribute to Francis Grose the information that “a dobie was a wild moorland spirit who could control deer, and jumped upon travellers”. Reference to Joseph Wright, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, 1898-1905, rpt. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1970, 2, 107, suggests rather that this information, along with other parts of Willan’s account, was in fact transcribed from Willan and entered as MS addition C into a copy of Grose’s *A Provincial Glossary*, 2nd edn., London, 1790. On the relevant page of that work Grose himself merely tells us that *dobby* is a northern word meaning “spirit or apparition”.
3. Willan, p. 144.
4. Robert Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England*, 3rd edn, 1881, London, Chatto and Windus, 1930, p. 276; David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 2nd edn, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 313.
5. Lutz Röhrich, “Herr der Tiere”, in Kurt Ranke, ed., *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, 6, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1990, pp. 866-879, and references there.
6. Katharine M. Briggs, *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the English Language*, London, Routledge, 1970-71, rpt London, Routledge, 1991, B, 1, p. 187.
7. Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Bloomington and London, Indiana University Press, 1955, 3, p. 127, F472 “*Huckauf*. A goblin which jumps on one’s back”.
8. E. Hoffmann-Krayer, and Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli, eds, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, 1, Berlin and Leipzig, de Gruyter, 1927, “Aufhocker”, pp. 675-677; Richard Beitzl, *Wörterbuch der Volkskunde*, 3rd edn, Stuttgart, Kröner, 1974, p. 377, “Hockauf”.
9. George Lyman Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England*, New York, Russell and Russell, 1928, pp. 221 and 528-529.

10. Jennifer Westwood, and Jacqueline Simpson, *The Lore of the Land*, London, Penguin, 2005, p. 737.
11. Westwood and Simpson, pp. 675 and 617.
12. Westwood and Simpson, p. 712.
13. Briggs, 1976, p. 360.
14. Elizabeth Mary Wright, *Rustic Speech and Folk-Lore*, London, Oxford University Press, 1914, pp. 193-194; J. A. Simpson, and E. S. C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989, 1, p. 956.
15. Under *barghest*, “ghost, wraith, hobgoblin”, Joseph Wright has more than a score of citations, not one of which refers to the spectre as a back-rider. See Wright, 1898-1905, 1970, 1, p. 164.
16. Mrs Day, “Ghost at Bridges”, *Folk-Lore*, 27 (1916), 309.
17. John Lloyd Warden Page, *An Exploration of Exmoor*, London, Seeley, 1895, p. 310.
18. Washington Irving, *Bracebridge Hall*, rev. ed., London, Bell and Daldy, 1869, pp. 234-235; Willan, p. 144. The expression *bottom* here stands for a small quantity of wine or spirit in a tumbler ready to have water added to it. According to Wright, 1898-1905, 1970, 1, p. 353, who recorded it for south Lancashire and west Somerset, it was “common at all inns”.
19. For further examples of Irving’s apparent debt to Willan, compare his accounts of the Merry Night at 3, p. 35 and of the preparation of dumb-cakes on St Mark’s Eve at 3, p. 96 with Willan on the same subjects at pp. 152-153 and 166-167 respectively.
20. Paul Sébillot, *Le Folklore de France: la Faune*, 1904-06, rpt. Paris, Imago, 1984, p. 133.
21. Sébillot, pp. 133-134.
22. See *Aufhocker* in the index volume of Arnold Büchli, *Mythologische Landeskunde von Graubünden: Ein Bergvolk erzählt*, Disentis, Desertina, 1990-92, 4, p. 43.
23. Büchli, 2, p. 431, “Nachtschreck im Cumbelser Wald”.
24. Büchli, 3, p. 420. “L”om da Pisch”.
25. Büchli, 3, p. 412, “L”om da Pisch”.
26. Büchli, 2, p. 392, “Von einem Gegner behext”.
27. Büchli, 3, pp. 475-476, “Die starken Frauen”.
28. Peter Assion, *Weisse, Schwarze, Feurige: Neugesammelte Sagen aus dem Frankenland*, Karlsruhe, Badenia, 1972, nos. 6, 54a, 54b, 76, 77, 94, 177, 223, 224, 277, 298, 300.

29. Assion, no. 47.
30. Gerda Grober-Glück, “Aufhocker und Aufhocken”, in Matthias Zender et al., eds, *Atlas der deutschen Volkskunde. Neue Folge, Erläuterungen*, 2, Marburg, Elwert, 1966-82, pp. 127-223. For wording of questions, statistical details etc., see p. 128.
31. Grober-Glück, pp. 128-129; cf. Leander Petzoldt, *Deutsche Volkssagen*, 2nd edn, Munich, Beck, pp. 404-406.
32. For images and information see [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huckup\\_\(Hildesheim\)](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huckup_(Hildesheim)), as found on September 12, 2011.
33. Grober-Glück, pp. 139-140 and p. 140, map 23, where, incidentally, we find one instance of a cyclist (!) as victim.
34. Grober-Glück, pp. 141-145 and p. 141, map 24; cf. Hoffmann-Krayer and Bächtold-Stäubli, pp. 675-677.
35. Assion, pp. 88-90 and 214-215.
36. Grober-Glück, p. 221.
37. Grober-Glück, p. 221.
38. Willem de Blécourt, “ ‘I Would Have Eaten You Too’ : Werewolf Legends in the Flemish, Dutch and German Area”, *Folklore*, 118 (April, 2007), 31.
39. de Blécourt, 31-32.
40. Grober-Glück, p. 133.
41. Grober-Glück, pp. 132-133; J. B. Smith, “Things that Jump Up from Behind”, *FLS News*, 52 (June, 2007), 9-10.
42. Lutz Röhrich, *Das grosse Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten*, Freiburg, Herder, 1991-92, 3, pp. 1719-1720.
43. See, for instance:  
[www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/docs/McKinlay.pdf](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/docs/McKinlay.pdf)  
[www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/docs/Foley.pdf](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/docs/Foley.pdf)  
 consulted May 7th, 2012.
44. Wright, 1898-1905, 1970, 1, p. 280. When as a child I was *as radgy* (“cross-tempered”, Wright, 1898-1905, 1970, 5, p. 9) *as a bear*, my mother, born October 20th, 1901 at Buxton, Derbyshire, would chase me to the garden gate, all the time thwacking me from behind in order “to knock the black dog off my back”. The cure was invariably successful.
45. Briggs, 1970-71, 1991, B1, pp. 23-40.

46. Thus in P. R. Wilkinson, *Thesaurus of Traditional English Metaphors*, London and New York, Routledge, 1993, p. 391.
47. Henry Glassie, *Passing the Time in Ballymenone*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1995, p. 97.
48. Wright, 1898-1975, 1970, 3, p. 541; Wilkinson, p. 423.
49. J. B. Smith, "Towards the Demystification of Lawrence Lazy", *Folklore*, 107 (1996), 101-105.
50. See Simpson, and Roud, *A Dictionary of English Folklore*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, headwords *hag-riding*, p. 161 and *nightmares*, p. 259; Owen Davies, "Hag-Riding in Nineteenth-Century West Country England and Modern Newfoundland: An Examination of an Experience-Centred Witchcraft Tradition", *Folk Life*, 35 (1996-97), 36-53.