BOB

Todays' tale involves, Bob our first snake, questions of size and gender and a Blackadder episode. But first a bit of background.

Bob is a Florida kingsnakes and you may not be surprised to learn that they are found throughout the Florida peninsula! They are not venomous. They do however, have a disturbing habit of rattling their tail like a rattle snake when they're grumpy. And, they'll cover you with disgusting smelling musk from a pair of glands in the base of the tail if you insist on picking them up when they're grumpy. Having been 'musked' a few times over the years, I can attest to the fact that it really does smell disgusting. It's even worse that Porka (our western hog nosed snake). When this happens, I'm usually chased into the bathroom and not allowed out until I've showered and disinfected myself.

It started small

Our youngest had wanted a snake since he was a foetus and the debate had raged for a number of years with the conclusion being that, IF, and Chris was clear it was a very big IF, there was ever to be a snake in the house it had to be a small one.
As those of you with children will know such a statement is likely to be interpreted by a child as permission to get whatever snake they fancy!

We, our youngest and I, had gone to see a mate of ours Carl about getting an insect. No prizes for guessing what then happened. As we were looking at what was available Dyl wandered off with Carl and on their return, I was presented with a container with a snake the size of a pencil in it. As you can see it really was the size of a pencil.

What followed was quite frankly a blag. I was ambushed and then hoodwinked. At least that's my story and I'm sticking to it!

I don't suppose it helped that I'd always been fascinated by snakes and used to go out catching grass snakes and adders as a kid.

Long story short, I caved in. It has to be said that Chris wasn't convinced that the snake would stay as small as a pencil and oh how right she was 😊

Naming Bob

First a name. Before we left Carls' I was so focused on how on earth we were going to get this past Chris that I forgot to check on basics like what gender the snake was. A quick phone call to Carl confirmed he didn't know and couldn't tell without seeing it again. So, without trekking back we'd no way of knowing and I wasn't convinced that Chris would let us back in the house if we left.

The decision was taken by Dyl. In the way kids do, he found a tenuous rationale for a name which would cover both female and male. Bob!

He assured us that this would be right for both and offered up his reason. We'd been watching the Blackadder series and in one episode Blackadder employed a companion called Bob. As it turned out in the episode Bob was not a boy but a girl. So, the snake had a name Bob 😊

When we did find out, it turns out Bob is female.

She didn't stop growing

As time moved on and Bob settled in, she began to grow. Actually, she grew quite

quickly. As you can see, she was soon of a size where she was eating what they call 'X large mice' weighing in at 40 grams and 8" long (3" less

without the tail). Our freezer continues to be a place of nightmares for guests!

Fully gown as she is now Bob is about 5 feet long and when they are that big and take prey the size of an X large mouse Florida Kingsnakes strike and constrict them. The strike is impressive but the rate at which they wrap the prey up in their coils is awe inspiring. That is unless, like Chris, you're not amazed by, interested in or, fond of snakes! For Chris it was just scary.

The first time Chris saw her grab and constrict a mouse, we were nearly looking to re-home her – Bob that is not Chris 😊

She can stay – with a lock
Bob is now 11 years old, and we have reached an uneasy agreement on the conditions under which she can stay.

A lock must be on her vivarium at all times. When she's out so her vivarium can be cleaned, the room door must be securely shut. Chris will have nothing to do with Bob, all husbandry is down to Dylan and I, – in fact this translates to all husbandry is down to me!