



*At the side of the Thames on one of our popular joint walks with West Oxfordshire Group*

*(Photos C Bass)*

## Our Led Walks Programme

### ***Summer 2019 Walks Programme***

Once again, our wonderful volunteer walk leaders have created our largest programme yet. We welcome two new leaders to the team. Including the joint programmes of walks with neighbouring West Oxfordshire group there are three walks a week most weeks for you to enjoy. Whether it is an easy grade short Stroll up to a more challenging thirteen-mile hike or a guided history walk there should be something to suit all tastes. There is a walk every Thursday, most weekends and most Tuesdays including all our regular walks. Our awayday this year starts at Lyndhurst and on through the glorious New Forest. Following the popularity of our walking of recreational trails in recent summers we will again be walking more trails. This time we will be walking The d'Arcy Dalton Way from April to September in six sections and in August we will be walking the lovely Lambourn Valley Way in two sections. There will also be an evening walk in Oxford, a walk from Hook Norton followed by a tour of its famous brewery, many longer walks at weekends, two longer leisurely paced walks and walks from Grove on Tuesdays. Have a great summer of walking.

### ***Request for leaders***

I know we regularly ask for new leaders but to sustain a vibrant programme we need volunteer leaders. There is a leadership course every October where the aspects of leading walks are explained and demonstrate how easy a task leading can be. Or you can just watch and ask a leader at any time. If you can only lead one walk it would be a tremendous help. Perhaps you would be happier leading with a friend. We have a number of pre-planned routes so the task becomes easier and you would be fully supported if required.

Please give it a go. Contact *Peter Skuse, Walks Organiser*, tel. 01235 533757 or email: [peter.skuse11@gmail.com](mailto:peter.skuse11@gmail.com)





*Volunteers at the end of a productive day.*

*(Photos A Boyd)*

## VALE PATH VOLUNTEERS

The VPV has had a busy time in the Autumn and Winter of 2018/2019, with ten work sessions throughout the Vale; including Faringdon, West Hendred, Longcot, Wantage, West Challow and Childrey, Baulking, Kingston Bagpuize and Abingdon. The team was also asked by Arthur McEwan-James, the County Council's Field Officer, to clear a path in Dorchester-on-Thames. For this session the team was joined by members from the Oxford City path maintenance group who wanted the work experience. The work the team can undertake has been greatly enhanced by the purchase in November of a long-pole petrol-engined hedge cutter, funded with a grant from Oxfordshire Area Ramblers. This machine can slice through vegetation growing at the side of footpaths up to a height of nearly 4 metres, particularly useful when clearing bridlepaths. Two of our members, Graham Cross and Andrew Glenday, share in the operation of this very versatile machine.

The team was sad to see the resignation of Bill Rooker in the Autumn but welcomed new members, Malcolm Collins, Anne Partridge, Nik Bergson, Mike Landy, Tony Vincent, and Ian Smith to its ranks. The most recent session, in north Abingdon, saw the largest turnout of the team with no fewer than 15 stalwarts attending. Some of the paths cleared are those which the team has attended to before and, because of this, the later clearance work has been considerably less. Since its formation in 2012 the team has undertaken 70 work sessions.

If, on any ramble, the walk leader considers that a path needs the attention of the VPV please get in touch with me. Also if any member would like to join the VPV team contact me.

*Jim Parke – VPV Coordinator. [jmh.parke@btinternet.com](mailto:jmh.parke@btinternet.com)*

On the right you can see the pole hedge-cutter in action  
(photo JM Parke) .



Vale Group has its own Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/valewhitehorseramblers/> or search for us with @valewhitehorseramblers

If you are a Facebook user please 'like' or 'Follow' this page and you will get notified about new items posted.

*As well as this paper newsletter, the Vale Group and Oxfordshire Area circulate news items by email. This includes notice of extra walks and cancellations. Sign up to our email list by mailing [valeramblers@gmail.com](mailto:valeramblers@gmail.com)*





## The Chairman's Ramblings

I heard an interesting lecture this winter about Oak Dieback. Seemingly there has been a rise in pathogens like this reaching the UK in recent years. Climate change is one cause, as are increases in food and plant imports but the point the speaker made relevant to us was to always clean your boots between walks so that we don't spread such pathogens around the countryside.

At the Oxfordshire Area AGM at Wytham in January, our own Jim Parke was elected Chair of the Oxfordshire Area Council. Thus he succeeds Dave Cavanagh who has been chair for three years. The Vale is really making a contribution to rambling county-wide. As well as being on our Vale Committee for many years, Jim has been the driving force behind both the Vale Path Volunteers and the county-wide Parish Path Warden Scheme where volunteers walk the paths in a parish, check signs, report problems and do minor snipping. He has also been chair of the Oxford Fieldpaths Society so Oxfordshire is lucky that someone of Jim's experience and skills has volunteered. We wish him well in this new role.

We are planning to produce a leaflet to help publicise the Vale Way. When this is ready we plan to hold a special walk to publicise it. Hopefully this could include a stop at the re-opened Hare in West Hendred where Peter Skuse and Stuart Hughes had the idea for a trail through The Vale of White Horse.

David Godfrey, long-serving Oxfordshire Area Footpath Secretary, is planning to walk The Vale Way in one day on Saturday 13th July. Including walking to/from the start/end this will be a 29 mile walk! If you are feeling super fit, put the date in your diary. As he is walking through the heart of the Vale it only seems polite for some of us to join him, if only for part of the route. There are several places where bus routes cross The Vale Way Milton, Steventon, West Hendred, Wantage, Stanford-in-the-Vale, Faringdon, so many opportunities to join and leave. I'll publicise this again with distance and times in an email newsletter nearer the time.

You probably know that all Oxfordshire Ramblers walks are listed in Walks Finder on the national Ramblers web site <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking.aspx> As well as the Oxfordshire Ramblers web But did you know you can also download them to your phone/tablet via a Google Calendar? I find this invaluable as a reminder of start place and leader contact details on the day of a walk. If you visit <http://www.ramblers-oxon.org.uk/patrick/calendar.html> and click on the + at the bottom right of the calendar the Oxfordshire walks calendar will be visible in the google calendar app on your phone. You don't have to keep them visible all the time. Just untick the calendar in the sidebar and the events will be hidden until you want to see them again. You can also find the calendar under 'Walking' in the top bar of the area web.

On Saturday 13th April, we will be holding our usual Spring Social, at West Hendred. There will be a walk led by Tony Lewis starting at 2pm. On return there will be a complementary cream tea served in the hall followed by a talk on the d'Arcy Dalton Way. Peter Skuse will tell us all about it as preparation for our walking the route this summer. Even if you don't intend to join these walks, come along for a social afternoon to get ready for your summer walking.

*John Gordon, Chairman.*

*Preaching to the converted. Bob Evans in Besslesleigh on one of his very successful History Walks.*

*(Photos JS Hughes)*



| Dates for your Diary          |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Sat 13th April                | Spring Social, West Hendred    |
| Sat 6th July                  | Awayday in New Forest          |
| Sun 23rd June                 | Area Picnic, Wallingford       |
| Sat 27th April                | First leg of d'Arcy Dalton Way |
| Tues 13th,<br>Sat 17th August | Lambourn Valley Way            |
| October 9/10/12               | Navigation Course, Abingdon    |
| January 25th 2020             | Oxfordshire Area AGM           |

# Vale Walks - Pocket Programme

## APRIL

|          |       |         |                                     |
|----------|-------|---------|-------------------------------------|
| Tue 2nd  | 10:00 | 8 mi    | Clanfield, War Memorial             |
| Thu 4th  | 10:30 | 3.5 mi  | Abingdon, Market Place              |
| Thu 4th  | 10:30 | 6 mi    | Cumnor, Old School car park         |
| Sat 6th  | 10:00 | 9 mi    | Fawley                              |
| Tue 9th  | 10:00 | 6.2 mi  | Hailey, King William IV PH          |
| Thu 11   | 10:30 | 6.5 mi  | Abingdon, Market Place              |
| Sat 13th | 14:00 | 4.5 mi  | West Hendred, Village Hall Walk     |
| Thu 18   | 10:30 | 5.5 mi  | Wantage Market Place                |
| Sat 20th | 09:30 | 10.5 mi | East Hagbourne, Kingsholme Close    |
| Tue 23   | 10:00 | 7.5 mi  | Stanford in the Vale, Church Green, |
| Thu 25th | 10:30 | 7 mi    | Abingdon, Market Place              |
| Sat 27th | 09:30 | 12 mi   | Eaton Hastings, Layby on A417       |
| Tue 30th | 10:00 | 6 mi    | Grove, Millbrook Square             |

## MAY

|          |       |         |                                      |
|----------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| Thu 2nd  | 10:30 | 3.5 mi  | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Thu 2nd  | 10:30 | 6 mi    | Faringdon, Market Place,             |
| Sat 4th  | 10:00 | 9.2 mi  | Great Shefford, Spring Meadow        |
| Tue 7th  | 10:30 | 7.3 mi  | Kelmscott, Plough Inn                |
| Thu 9th  | 10:30 | 4.5 mi  | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Tue 14th | 10:00 | 5 mi    | Goring, village car park             |
| Thu 16th | 10:30 | 5.5 mi  | Wantage Market Place                 |
| Sat 18th | 09:30 | 13 mi   | B4425, The Beeches, near Burford     |
| Thu 23rd | 10:30 | 7.5 mi  | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Sat 25th | 09:30 | 13.5 mi | Ashbury Hill, B4000 at Ridgeway      |
| Tue 28th | 10:30 | 5 mi    | Uffington, the village hall car park |
| Thu 30th | 10:30 | 6 mi    | East Hanney, War Memorial Hall       |

## JUNE

|          |       |         |                                      |
|----------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| Sat 1st  | 09:30 | 13 mi   | Ardington, Home Farm car park        |
| Tue 4th  | 10:30 | 5.4 mi  | Stanton Harcourt, Harcourt Arms PH   |
| Thu 6th  | 10:30 | 3.5 mi  | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Thu 6th  | 10:30 | 6.4 mi  | Besselsleigh, The Greyhound car park |
| Tue 11th | 10:00 | 6.5 mi  | Hook Norton Brewery visitor car park |
| Thu 13th | 10:20 | 5.5 mi  | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Sat 15th | 09:30 | 13 mi   | Compton, High Street                 |
| Thu 20th | 10:30 | 7.5 mi  | Wantage Market Place                 |
| Sun 23rd | 10:30 | 6 mi    | Benson, Marina                       |
| Tue 25th | 19:00 | 3 mi    | Oxford, the Town Hall                |
| Thu 27th | 10:30 | 9 mi    | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Sat 29th | 09:30 | 9.75 mi | Lyneham, High Street                 |

## JULY

|          |       |         |                                      |
|----------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| Tue 2nd  | 10:30 | 7 mi    | Long Hanborough, George & Dragon     |
| Thu 4th  | 10:30 | 6.5 mi  | Buckland, village hall car park      |
| Thu 4th  | 10:30 | 3.5 mi  | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Sat 6th  | 10:00 | 12 mi   | Lyndhurst, Bolton's Bench car park   |
| Tue 9th  | 10:30 | 8 mi    | Blewbury, recreation ground car park |
| Thu 11th | 10:30 | 5.25 mi | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Sat 13th | 10:00 | 11 mi   | Kidlington, car park behind Tesco's  |
| Thu 18th | 10:30 | 6 mi    | Wantage Market Place                 |
| Sat 20th | 09:30 | 13 mi   | Middle Assendon                      |
| Tue 23rd | 10:00 | 7.5 mi  | Ridgeway, Skutchamer Knob            |
| Thu 25th | 10:30 | 10.3 mi | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Sat 27th | 09:30 | 11 mi   | Great Rollright, Tyte End            |
| Tue 30th | 10:00 | 5 mi    | Grove, Millbrook Square              |

## AUGUST

|          |       |         |                                      |
|----------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| Thu 1st  | 10:30 | 3.5 mi  | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Thu 1st  | 10:30 | 6 mi    | Southmoor, Waggon and Horses         |
| Tue 6th  | 10:30 | 5.5 mi  | Begbroke, The Royal sun PH           |
| Thu 8th  | 10:30 | 6.5 mi  | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Sat 10th | 09:30 | 13 mi   | Bury Down car park                   |
| Tue 13th | 09:30 | 11 mi   | Great Shefford, Spring Meadow        |
| Thu 15th | 10:00 | 5.4 mi  | Wantage Market Place                 |
| Sat 17th | 09:30 | 12 mi   | Newbury, Northcroft Lane West        |
| Sun 18th | 11:00 | 5 mi    | Chilton, Garden Centre, park nearby  |
| Thu 22nd | 10:30 | 8 mi    | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Sat 24th | 09:30 | 13 mi   | Lambourn, car park off High Street   |
| Tue 27th | 10:30 | 5.5 mi  | Uffington, the village hall car park |
| Thu 29th | 10:30 | 10 mi   | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Sat 31st | 09:30 | 10.8 mi | Shenington, Rattlecombe Road         |

## SEPTEMBER

|          |       |        |                                      |
|----------|-------|--------|--------------------------------------|
| Tue 3rd  | 10:30 | 7.6 mi | Standlake, The Black Horse           |
| Thu 5th  | 10:30 | 3.5 mi | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Thu 5th  | 10:30 | 7.5 mi | Faringdon, Market Place              |
| Sat 7th  | 10:00 | 5 mi   | Marcham, east entrance to churchyard |
| Tue 10th | 10:00 | 7.6 mi | Clifton Hampden, Barley Mow          |
| Thu 12th | 10:30 | 4.3 mi | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Sat 14th | 10:00 | 9 mi   | Peasemore, North of church           |
| Thu 19th | 10:30 | 5.5 mi | Wantage Market Place                 |
| Sat 21st | 09:30 | 13 mi  | Ridgeway, Skutchamer Knob            |
| Thu 26th | 10:30 | 8 mi   | Abingdon, Market Place               |
| Sat 28th | 09:30 | 12 mi  | Wormleighton Reservoir               |

### To report a footpath problem to the council

<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/report-issue-public-right-way>

### Your Vale Group Committee

|                   |                                             |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Chairman          | John Gordon                                 |
| General Secretary | Vacancy                                     |
| Treasurer         | Joan Wyatt                                  |
| Membership        | Pat Lonergan,                               |
| Walks             | Peter Skuse                                 |
| Footpaths         | Jim Parke                                   |
| Publicity         | Dave Cavanagh                               |
| Countryside       | Vacancy                                     |
| Ordinary Members  | Bob Evans, Christine Tunna,<br>Graham Cross |

### Navigation, Walk Planning & Leadership Course

We will be holding another Navigation, Planning and Leadership course this autumn. It will be held in Abingdon on 9/10/12 October. It is classroom-based on the Wednesday and Thursday evenings with a practical session outdoors on Saturday. Come along to learn about map-reading and/or tips on leading a walk.

Contact [valeramblers@gmail.com](mailto:valeramblers@gmail.com) or 07968 710869 for more information or to book a place.