



Happy Ramblers in the sun. On the Thames, walking from Abingdon to Oxford

(Photo J Gordon)

This has been a busy year for the Vale of White Horse Ramblers. As well as our usual walks stretching from Lechlade to Henley, Lambourn to Hook Norton, we have had an AwayDay to the New Forest, and a weekend break on the Dorset coast. We have also walked the 21 mile Lambourn Valley Way (White Horse Hill to Newbury) and, by the time you read this, we should have one leg still to walk of the 66 mile Darcy Dalton Way which runs from Wayland Smithy up the western edge of Oxfordshire with a brief spell in Gloucestershire and then across the north and into Northamptonshire. What more could you want? No, I mean it, if we aren't providing the type of walk you like in the places you like, tell me.

This year we have also visited a brewery (Hook Norton), had our usual spring social with a walk and a cream tea, and an evening social event where we tried to play Aunt Sally. As people seem to like our Mince Pie Walks in December we tried bribing people with more food by providing a hot cross bun on a Wantage Walk at Easter.

And that's not all we do, the Vale Path Volunteers have done 13 path clearances, and many members are Parish Path Wardens monitoring the paths in their parishes, doing a bit of clipping and reporting issues to the county council. We have promoted the Ramblers and walking at the Abingdon Clubs and Societies Day, The White Horse Show and CountryFile Live at Blenheim. We'll be running the Navigation, Planning, and Leadership course again this autumn.

None of this would have happened without all the volunteers who help keep the group alive. They haven't just been leading and lopping. Getting our walks published in papers and magazines, putting up posters in village halls, writing minutes. These are all useful contributions too. I'd like to thank them all, and if you feel like joining them, get in touch.

John Gordon, Chairman



Jim giving orders, Graham with the new hedgetrimmer and a cleared path.

Photos (J Gordon, J Parke).

VALE PATH VOLUNTEERS

During this spring and summer the Vale Path Volunteers Path Maintenance Team has been very active in clearing some important paths in the Vale. So far no less than thirteen paths have been cleared by the Team. These include a section of the d'Arcy Dalton Way up Odstone Hill that links the Vale to the Ridgeway. There had been a prolific growth of nettles to the extent that the path was almost obscured by these plants. Other important paths tackled by the team included the one which runs parallel to the Ginge Brook from West Hendred to East Ginge. This path is an important route that leads eventually to the Ridgeway.

The team has also undertaken repeat clearance on a number of paths. These included the path which follows a stretch of the Thames backwater near Duxford where Himalayan Balsam continues to be a problem. Other repeat sites were Hardwell Wood, Hardwell Lane, Wallingford, Wantage and Abingdon. The team also cleared paths for the first time at Wootton, Cumnor, Marcham and East Hanney. The team celebrated its 80th path clearance session at Duxford in July.

The purchase of a petrol-engined long-pole hedge cutter in November 2018 has widened the scope of the team's work as it is able to slice its way effortlessly through the tough side-growing encroaching vegetation of hedgerows, only leaving any thicker branches to be cut through by loppers or bow-saws. Previously such work had to be done by hand.

In total the team has spent 270 person hours and cleared the equivalent of 5.4 kilometres of pathway so far this year on these sessions.

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

Jim Parke – VPV Coordinator. jmh.parke@btinternet.com

Our Led Walks Programme

Winter 2019 Walks Programme

This winter's programme is one of our largest yet. All our regular walks on Thursdays from Abingdon, Wantage and Faringdon/West Vale are included in the programme as are walks jointly with West Oxfordshire on the first Tuesday of the month. West Oxfordshire offer joint walks with the Vale on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. We have 8 Mince Pie walks in December across the Vale and West Oxfordshire. There are a variety of medium length and longer walks at weekends. The Abingdon Strolls continue on the 1st Thursday of the month so you should be able to find a walk to suit you. Many thanks to our wonderful volunteer leaders for the hard work they put in to create a vibrant and varied programme.

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 this October, 9,10,12, 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. Please give it a go.

Contact *Peter Skuse, Walks Organiser, tel. 01235 533757 or email: peter.skuse11@gmail.com*



The nine who completed both days of the Lambourn Valley Way, at the end in Newbury (Photo G Gordon)

CONQUERING THE VALE WAY

You have probably read here about the Vale Way, a 27 mile trail through the Vale of White Horse from Abingdon to Longcot. This was planned by Vale members, waymarked, officially opened in 2015 and is now shown on the online versions of OS maps.

The trail usually features in part in most walks programmes in recent years but this summer David Godfrey, Oxfordshire Ramblers Footpath Secretary decided to walk it all in a day. So, on Saturday, 13th July he set off on what was a 29 mile walk, including getting to the start and end from bus stops. A few people joined him along the way but only Nik Bergson walked it all. David and Nik are shown opposite in Wantage almost halfway.

David is famous in the Ramblers not only for his encyclopaedic knowledge of Oxfordshire rights-of-way but also for the distances he walks. It is common for him to walk considerable distances to reach the start of a walk and then walk home again at the end. Not for him the comforts of a car or public transport if he can help it.. So, well done David, an impressive achievement.



David and Nik in Wantage on the Vale Way (Photo J Gordon)

TONY VINCENT RIP



Vale Rambler Tony Vincent passed away earlier this year. Tony who had walked the whole of the GB coastline, was walking in the Isle of Wight at the time. He was far too young to leave us.

At his funeral Ramblers was one of the charities mentioned. We have learned from Central Office that donations of £422.50 were received.

PARISH PATH WARDENS WORKSHOP

A workshop has been arranged for Friday March 20th 2020 at South Leigh Village Hall. If you are a PPW and haven't already been to one of these workshops then I recommend you put the date in your diary. If you'd like to know about what a Parish Path Warden does then come along too. Booking details will be circulated in the new year.

Dates for your Diary

October 9/10/12	Navigation Course, Abingdon
November 9th	Vale Group AGM, Grove
January 25th 2020	Oxfordshire Area AGM



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.

Vale Walks - Pocket Programme

OCTOBER

Tue 1st	10:30	5 miles	Bampton, St Mary's Church
Thu 3rd	10:30	3.5 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Thu 3rd	10:30	5.9 miles	Faringdon, Market Place
Sat 5th	10:00	10.6 miles	Duxford, park opp dairy farm
Tue 8th	10:30	7.7 miles	Bishopstone, Royal Oak PH
Thu 10th	10:30	6.5 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Tue 15th	10:30	5.5 miles	South Leigh, the church
Thu 17th	10:30	5 miles	Wantage, Market Place
Sun 20th	09:30	13 miles	Sparsholt Firs, B4001
Thu 24th	10:30	9 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Sat 26th	10:00	9 miles	West Hendred, opp The Hare
Tue 29th	10:00	6 miles	Grove, Millbrook Square
Thu 31st	10:30	7.7 miles	Chilton, village hall

NOVEMBER

Sat 2nd	10:00	7 miles	Dorchester, Bridge End car park
Tue 5th	10:00	5.5 miles	Combe, sports ground car park
Thu 7th	10:30	5 miles	Faringdon, Market Place
Thu 7th	10:30	3.5 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Sat 9th	10:00	4 miles	Grove, Old Village Hall, Main St
Sat 9th	13:30	AGM	Grove, Old Village Hall, Main St
Tue 12th	10:00	6 miles	Ashbury Hill, B4000/Ridgeway
Thu 14th	10:20	5.5 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Sat 16th	10:00	7 miles	Buckland, village hall
Tue 19th	10:30	6.5 miles	Witney, Market Place
Thu 21st	10:30	5.5 miles	Wantage, Market Place
Sat 23rd	10:00	11.5 miles	Ardington, Home Farm
Tue 26th	10:00	6.3 miles	Gozzard's Ford, layby
Thu 28th	10:30	8 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Sat 30th	10:00	7 miles	Wickham, Primary School

DECEMBER

Tue 3rd	10:30	5.5 miles	Witney, Market Place
Thu 5th	10:30	3.5 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Thu 5th	10:30	5.5 miles	Southmoor, Waggon and Horses
Tue 10th	10:30	5.5 miles	Uffington, the village hall
Thu 12th	10:30	6.5 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Sat 14th	10:00	8 miles	Bury Down car park Ridgeway
Tue 17th	10:30	5 miles	Eynsham, Clover Place car park
Thu 19th	10:30	6 miles	Wantage, Market Place

Sat 28th	10:00	5 miles	Sunningwell, village hall
Tue 31st	10:30	6.1 miles	Grove, Millbrook Square

JANUARY

Thu 2nd	10:30	5.4 miles	Buckland, village hall
Thu 2nd	10:30	3.5 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Sat 4th	10:00	8 miles	Ardington, Christopher's Wood
Tue 7th	10:30	5 miles	Northmoor, Red Lion
Thu 9th	10:30	4.5 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Sat 11th	10:00	9 miles	Stow-on-the-Wold,
Tue 14th	10:00	5.1 miles	Old Marston, Victoria Arms
Thu 16th	10:30	5.5 miles	Wantage, Market Place
Sat 18th	10:00	9.5 miles	Streatley, Ridgeway car park
Tue 21st	10:30	5 miles	Northmoor, Red Lion car park
Thu 23rd	10:30	7.5 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Thu 30th	10:30	6.5 miles	East Hanney, War Memorial Hall

FEBRUARY

Sat 1st	10:00	10 miles	Chilton, near Garden Centre.
Tue 4th	10:00	5.3 miles	Stanton Harcourt, Harcourt Arms
Thu 6th	10:30	6 miles	Faringdon, Market Place
Thu 6th	10:30	3.5 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Tue 11th	10:00	6.5 miles	Yattendon, West Berks Brewery
Thu 13th	10:30	4.25 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Sat 15th	10:00	8 miles	Wantage B4494/Ridgeway
Tue 18th	10:30	6 miles	Eynsham, Clover Place car park
Thu 20th	10:30	5.5 miles	Wantage, Market Place
Tue 25th	10:30	5 miles	Kingston Lisle, Blowing Stone PH
Thu 27th	10:30	7.5 miles	Abingdon, Market Place

MARCH

Tue 3rd	10:30	6.2 miles	Standlake, The Black Horse PH
Thu 5th	10:30	6 miles	Buckland, village hall car park
Thu 5th	10:30	3.5 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Thu 12th	10:30	5.5 miles	Abingdon, Market Place
Sat 14th	10:00	11.5 miles	Clifton Hampden, Barley Mow
Tue 17th	10:30	5.5 miles	Church Hanborough, the church
Thu 19th	10:30	5.5 miles	Wantage, Market Place
Sat 21st	10:00	9.5 miles	Longworth, the Blue Boar Pub
Tue 24th	10:00	6.7 miles	Warborough, green near the pub
Thu 26th	10:30	8 miles	Abingdon, Market Place

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, Graham Cross

Navigation, Walk Planning & Leadership Course

There are still a few places available on the 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 or 07968 710869 for more information or to book a place.