



A reminder of summer walking beside the Thames.

(Photo J Gordon)

I've had a good year of walking with the Vale Group. I hope you have too. As well as the variety of walks, short and long, near and far, put together by Peter and our walk leaders, we participate in a number of other ventures. Among those are monitoring local paths, path maintenance, leading Health Walks and volunteering on our two local National Trails: The Thames Path and The Ridgeway. I think we have an active and varied group who do more than just walk. I hope you will join with me in thanking all our volunteers. Please also think about joining them.

On Saturday 2nd May we will hold our Spring Social in Stanford-in-the-Vale. After a walk near the village, we will have a free cream tea in the village hall followed by a talk on the history of the village by a local historian. This is usually a good event with the chance to chat to your fellow walkers in a more relaxed setting than usual. I hope you can join us.

If you haven't already seen it I recommend you read the January edition of Dave Cavanagh's Oxfordshire Area newsletter Talking Walking. It contains a host of excellent photos taken last year by Oxfordshire Ramblers groups. You can find it at <https://www.ramblers-oxon.org.uk/magazine.html> or just click the word magazine in the top bar of the Oxfordshire Ramblers home page.

I think most of us have enjoyed a walk on the Ridgeway at some time. There is a charitable association called Friends of the Ridgeway who try to preserve The Ridgeway's special environment, enable quiet enjoyment of its landscape, wildlife and special features, and promote greater awareness of its value to the whole community. There is a Vale of White Horse sub-group which meets in Faringdon most months on the third Thursday evening. They have some interesting talks so I would recommend it. <https://www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk/>

We will be running the Navigation, Planning and leadership course again this autumn. You don't need to have ambitions to lead walks; it will help you when walking on your own as well as understanding what those leading the walks you do are up to. Of course, if you are a walks leader, a refresher might be useful. Details on the back page.

John Gordon, Chairman



Where would you like to walk today?

(Photos J Gordon)



VPV installing a waymark post at Cote Hill

(Photo D Cavanagh)

Summer 2020 Walks Programme

Our wonderful walk leaders have, yet again, created our biggest programme yet. Two new leaders have joined our team of leaders helping us to offer 3 walks per week for most of the summer. Together with all of our regular walks on Tuesdays and Thursdays there are long walks most weekends, two trails, an awayday, a guided history walk, a walk to the area picnic at Henley, a spring social walk, an evening walk and a couple of longer walks on different midweek days. Our AwayDay this year is to Avebury with a walk up onto the downs before lunch in Avebury followed by a shorter walk through the monuments.

The first of our trails, from April to July, is to walk from Wantage to Winchester in seven legs. This is our "King Alfred's Way" linking the statues of King Alfred through glorious countryside on mostly existing trails including parts of the pretty Test and Clarendon ways. On arriving in Winchester there will be a short guided tour of the city by Tony Lewis. Nik Bergson will be leading us along a circular trail in the Cotswolds, The Wychwood Way, over three legs in August. With walks from 3.5 to 13 miles there should be something for everyone to enjoy a fantastic summer of walking.

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

Useful Links

Report a path problem <http://bit.ly/OCCPathProblem>
 Vale Ramblers <https://www.ramblers-oxon.org.uk/vwh.html>
 Ridgeway <https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/ridgeway>

Ramblers national web <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/>
 Lost ways <https://dontloseyourway.ramblers.org.uk/>
 Thames Path <https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/thames-path>

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

Dates for your Diary

Sat 2nd May	Spring Social, Stanford-in-the-Vale
Sun 28th June	Area Picnic, Henley
Sat 11th July	Vale Awayday, Avebury
Sun 23rd Aug	London Blind Ramblers, Chilton
Sun 30th, Mon 31st Aug	White Horse Show, Uffington
Sept 30th October 1st, 3rd	Navigation Course, Abingdon



VPV working at Forest Hill to clear a path and install waymark posts. (Photos J Parke)

Vale Path Volunteers

The Vale Path Volunteers path maintenance team has had its busiest year yet. The team completed 21 work sessions throughout the Vale, cleared an estimated 8.3 kilometres of path and spent 425 hours on site. The two powerful brushcutters and the long-pole hedge cutter have proved their worth in slicing through thick brambles and other vegetation and clearing overgrowing hedgerow at height. Since its formation in 2012, the team has undertaken a total of 92 work sessions.

Avril Anson and Nick Tomaszewski joined us this year- bringing the team to a total of 16 members, normal turnout being between 5 and 10 at any one session. However, on 28th January 2019 a record was set with no less than 15 members attending to clear paths in north Abingdon and the neighbouring parish of St. Helen. Of the 21 sessions, 12 were undertaken on paths which had been cleared by the team in previous years.

The team continues to receive excellent support from Arthur McEwan-James, Field Officer South-west of the Countryside Access Team. When necessary, Arthur liaises with landowners before the team undertake path clearance on their land. He also suggests paths for the team to work on and has himself spent the occasional work session with us. This year saw a new development of the team's activity when Arthur asked if the VPV would be willing to install waymarks on a new permissive path at Cote Hill in the parish of Marcham. Three VPV members volunteered their services and the photograph shows the group with one of the newly installed posts. More recently, in February this year the VPV combined with the Thames and Wheatley path maintenance team to install waymarks on the definitive path in the parish of Forest Hill, which is one of Arthur's parishes. There were 15 volunteers from the two teams. In addition to installing 5 waymarks the teams also cleared a stretch of badly overgrown woodland through which the definitive route runs.

If, on any ramble, you consider that a path needs the attention of the VPV or spot a fallen waymark post 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

Finding Lost Paths

You'll have seen a lot in the press and elsewhere recently about Lost Ways. Well, we are now within six years of a deadline set back in 2001 to claim back paths that were mistakenly missed off the Definitive Map. This isn't about defining new paths that you would like to see, or claiming paths that locals have been walking for 25 years. It is reclaiming paths that used to be public ways but have been missed off the map. For that we need historical evidence. There are many ways to find that parish records, County archives, enclosure acts but Ramblers has come up with an easy way for you to play a part. They have developed a web tool that displays the current OS map alongside old maps. They are asking you to check squares on the map to see if you can spot any old tracks/roads/paths that haven't made it onto the current map. In this way they hope that the maps of all England and Wales can be scrutinised. You can check the map anywhere although I expect you will be most interested in your own locality or where you holiday. Go to the web site at <https://dontloseyourway.ramblers.org.uk/> and take part.



Vale Group has its own Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/valewhitehorseramblers/> or search for us with @valewhitehorseramblers If you Like or Follow this page you will get updates and news.

Vale Walks - Pocket Programme

APRIL

Thu 2nd 10:30 6.7 mi Southmoor, Waggon and Horses PH.
 Thu 2nd 10:30 3.5 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Sat 4th 09:30 10 mi Ridgeway, car park S of East Hendred
 Thu 9th 10:30 6.5 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Sat 11th 09:30 11.3 mi Great Shefford, Primary School
 Tue 14th 10:00 5.6 mi Uffington, village hall car park.
 Thu 16th 10:30 6 mi Wantage, Market Place
 Sat 18th 09:30 13 mi Lambourn, car park off High Street.
 Tue 21st 10:30 5.5 mi Ducklington, the church
 Thu 23rd 10:30 7.5 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Sat 25th 09:30 9.3 mi Newbury, Northcroft Lane car park.
 Tue 28th 10:00 5.2 mi Kingston Lisle, Blowing Stone PH.
 Thu 30th 10:30 6 mi Bampton, St Mary's Church.

MAY

Sat 2nd 14:00 4 mi Stanford in the Vale, village hall.
 Tue 5th 10:00 6 mi Combe, sports ground Park Rd
 Thu 7th 10:30 3.5 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Thu 7th 10:30 6 mi Faringdon, Market Place,
 Sat 9th 09:30 10.5 mi Walbury Hill, car park.
 Tue 12th 10:30 7.7 mi Bishopstone, Royal Oak PH.
 Thu 14th 10:30 4.5 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Tue 19th 10:30 5.5 mi Cumnor, Old School car park
 Thu 21st 10:30 6 mi Wantage, Market Place
 Sat 23rd 09:30 13 mi Ridgeway, car park S of East Hendred
 Tue 26th 10:00 7 mi Blewbury, recreation ground car park,
 Thu 28th 10:30 7 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Sat 30th 09:30 12 mi St Mary Bourne, Stoke Lane, B3048

JUNE

Tue 2nd 10:30 5.5 mi Begbroke, The Royal Sun PH.
 Thu 4th 10:30 8 mi Faringdon, Market Place,
 Thu 4th 10:30 3.5 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Sat 6th 09:30 12 mi Ridgeway, south of East Hendred
 Tue 9th 10:00 6 mi Ardington, Christopher's Wood
 Thu 11th 10:20 5.5 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Sat 13th 09:30 10.5 mi East Hagbourne, Main Road, nr Kingsholme Cl.
 Tue 16th 19:00 6 mi Eynsham, Clover Place car park
 Wed 17th 19:00 3.8 mi Oxford, the Town Hall.
 Thu 18th 10:00 6 mi Wantage, Market Place
 Sat 20th 09:30 9.75 mi Wherwell, car park near school.
 Tue 23rd 10:00 6.1 mi Stoke Row, Cherry Tree Inn.
 Thu 25th 10:30 9 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Sat 27th 10:00 5 mi Wytham Woods, car park at Wytham end of woods (the Sawmill).
 Sun 28th 10:30 6.8 mi Shiplake, railway station.
 Tue 30th 10:00 6 mi Grove, Millbrook Square.

JULY

Thu 2nd 10:30 3.5 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Thu 2nd 10:30 6.5 mi Buckland, village hall
 Sat 4th 09:30 12.5 mi Farley Mount, car park.
 Tue 7th 10:30 7.3 mi Kelmscott, Plough Inn.
 Thu 9th 10:30 5.25 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Sat 11th 09:30 12 mi Avebury, NT car park
 Tue 14th 10:00 5.5 mi Cuddesdon, village hall.
 Thu 16th 10:30 6 mi Wantage, Market Place
 Sat 18th 09:30 9 mi South Winchester P&R
 Tue 21st 10:30 5 mi Northmoor, Red Lion PH
 Thu 23rd 10:30 10.25 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Sat 25th 09:30 13 mi Compton, High Street.
 Tue 28th 10:00 6.7 mi Shrivenham, High St, Barrington Arms
 Thu 30th 10:00 9 mi Hailey, King William IV PH.

AUGUST

Sat 1st 09:30 11.8 mi Chadlington, Eastend.
 Tue 4th 10:00 5 mi Bampton, St Mary's Church.Park
 Thu 6th 10:30 6 mi Southmoor, Waggon & Horses PH.
 Thu 6th 10:30 3.5 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Sat 8th 10:00 10 mi Whitehorse Hill NT car park.
 Tue 11th 10:30 6.5 mi Radley, nr CE Primary school.
 Thu 13th 10:30 6.5 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Sat 15th 09:30 11.2 mi Ramsden, High Street.
 Tue 18th 10:30 5.5 mi Eynsham,, Clover Place car park
 Thu 20th 10:30 6 mi Wantage, Market Place
 Sat 22nd 09:30 13 mi Middle Assendon nr the Rainbow.
 Sun 23rd 11:00 5 mi Chilton, near Garden Centre.
 Tue 25th 10:00 6.8 mi Uffington, village hall car park.
 Thu 27th 10:30 8 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Sat 29th 09:30 12.2 mi Stonesfield, Churchfields.

SEPTEMBER

Tue 1st 10:00 6.4 mi Glympton, near the shop.
 Thu 3rd 10:30 6.5 mi Buckland, village hall.
 Thu 3rd 10:30 3.5 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Sat 5th 10:00 7 mi Jarn Mound, Boars Hill.
 Thu 10th 10:30 4.25 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Thu 10th 10:30 11 mi Wantage, Market Place,
 Sat 12th 10:15. 10.5 mi Kingham Station (by train or car).
 Tue 15th 10:30 6 mi Burford, car park past the church
 Thu 17th 10:00 5.5 mi Wantage, Market Place
 Sat 19th 09:30 10.75 mi Jarn Mound, Boars Hill.
 Thu 24th 10:30 7.5 mi Abingdon, Market Place
 Fri 25th 10:00 5.5 mi Ashbury Hill, B4000/Ridgeway
 Sat 26th 10:00 9 mi Fawley

Navigation, Walk Planning & Leadership Course

In Autumn we will again be running the Navigation, Planning and Leadership course for Oxfordshire. It will be held in Abingdon on 30th September, 1st and 3rd 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.