

Friends of the Ridgeway

January 2022

40th anniversary issue





WINTER 2022

www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk



@FriendsOfTheRidgeway

Welcome

Editor Dave Cavanagh

davecavanagh1000@gmail.com



Articles were written by the editor unless credited otherwise.

If you have an idea for an article on some aspect, including your own experience, of the Ridgeway or its environs, or on another section of the Great Chalk Way, do discuss it with the editor davecavanagh1000@gmail.com

Got some great photos on the Ridgeway or nearby countryside, villages and events? Do share them with us: email them to the editor.

Cover photo: Dave Cavanagh

METAMORPHOSIS

In Lain's Barn, near Wantage, a transformation occurred at a meeting on the 21st February 1982. Attendees arrived as the Ridgeway Conservation Conference and departed as Friends of the Ridgeway (FoR), as it would be known later in the year. A steering committee was set-up, which met several times that year. They drew up a draft constitution for the FoR which was discussed, modified and accepted at the first General Meeting of the FoR in March of the following year, again in Lain's Barn, at which officers

were elected. Some 150 attended, such was the passion to get to grips with the major objective of the society: exclusion of motor vehicles from the Ridgeway, with a related aim of getting a statutory procedure for designating and protecting historic greenways. This year, 2022, is the 40th anniversary of the formation of FoR. In this and the succeeding three issues of the newsletter we'll look at how FoR developed, at the ebb and flow of the mission to regain peace and safety on the Ridgeway, and at our work in the here and now.

THE WEIGHT OF HISTORY

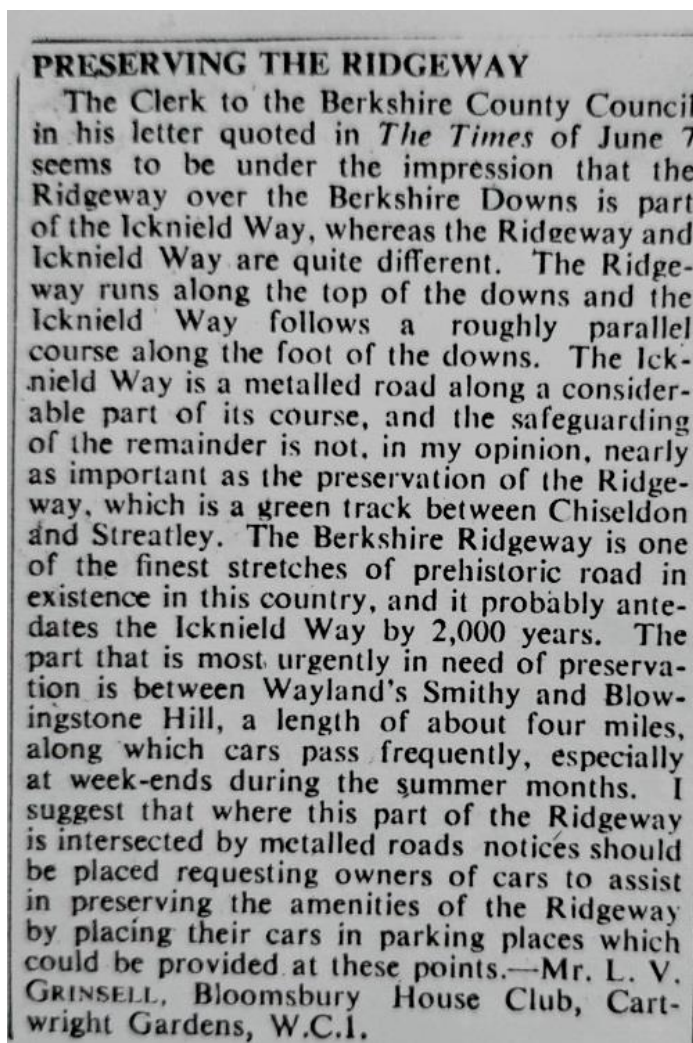
A few months ago Anthony Burdall, our former chair, bequeathed me – as the newish secretary of FoR – several tons of the association's archives, dating back to the early 1980s. Well, maybe not tons, but still it weighed quite a lot. Anthony looked relieved as he handed them over. As I stacked them up I realised why; I wasn't going to be popular occupying valuable floor space in the house with that lot. So I put it in the garage. Yes, I know, that is not the best place to store archives,

but it was summer. Gradually I looked at every sheet of paper. A substantial number were routine minutes of committee meetings and AGMs, necessary documents at the time but no longer needed. Mingled amongst them, however, were gems: documents that charted the skirmishes and battles that added up to a war against non-essential motor vehicles on the Ridgeway, especially in the Wessex section. I was left in awe of those members of our society who had worked so hard – for 25 years – to achieve this aim to a substantial degree.

MAKING THE CASE

It is clear from the record that action in Parliament, in both the Commons and the Lords, was crucial in achieving the objectives of our society. Another battle ground was in the media. Our albums of press cuttings from national and local newspapers, covering the period from 1982 to the early 2000s, vividly illustrate what was at stake, the push-back from some sections of the public, and the tortuous but remorseless path to success. The handover

to me of the FoR archives came at an opportune moment, effectively on the eve of our 40th anniversary. On the basis that a picture is worth a thousand words, I shall draw heavily on the press cuttings to illustrate our story. In this issue we'll look at the first 10 years or so of the FoR, essentially the 1980s. I am indebted to the piece written by Nigel Forward for the 25th Anniversary of the Ridgeway Friend journal.



This letter to *The Times* in June 1938 is the FoR's earliest record calling for a stop to motor vehicles on the Ridgeway.

An attempt by Oxfordshire County Council to impose a Traffic Regulation Order to exclude motor vehicles from a three-mile stretch of the Ridgeway around Uffington was rejected after a public enquiry in 1976. The recreational use and damage to the Ridgeway then rapidly increased.

Your opportunity to convince the Government to ban unnecessary motor vehicles from the Ridgeway and other unsurfaced byways

IN 2018 the government commissioned an independent review into whether the protections for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) were still fit for purpose. The Landscape Review, led by Julian Glover and colleagues, was published a year later. The government

responded to the review and has now called upon the general public to comment on some aspects that would require legislation for implementation. Four of the questions are directly relevant to FoR's aim of prohibiting unnecessary motor vehicles from the Ridgeway:

14. Should we give National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority and local highway authorities additional powers to restrict recreational motor vehicle use on unsealed routes? YES/NO/UNSURE

15. For which reasons should National Park Authorities, the Broads Authority and local authorities exercise this power?

- Environmental protection
- Prevention of damage
- Nuisance
- Amenity
- Other [PLEASE STATE]

16. Should we legislate to restrict the use of motor vehicles on unsealed unclassified roads for recreational use, subject to appropriate exemptions? Yes – everywhere/ Yes – in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty only/Yes – in National Parks only/No/Unsure

17. What exemptions do you think would be required to protect the rights and enjoyment of other users e.g., residents, businesses etc? OPEN

THE PART OF THE RIDGEWAY most blighted by unnecessary motorised traffic is that in the North Wessex Downs AONB, from its western end at Avebury to the Thames at Streatley. The long-running campaign of FoR and others to rid the Ridgeway of unnecessary motor vehicles has been successful – up to a point. In Wiltshire there

is still a stretch, to the east of the M4, that is open to all traffic all year round. In both Wiltshire and Berkshire there are also stretches of the Ridgeway that are open to all traffic for about six months of the year (in essence, summer). So, questions 14-17 are highly relevant to our concerns.

You can see from question 16 that one can advise the government to restrict the use of motor vehicles on 'unsealed unclassified roads' (e.g. byways) *wherever they are*. That would be a benefit to the great majority of the public, all year round.

Continued ...

FoR recognises that some motor vehicles must be permitted on the Ridgeway, and other byways, e.g. farmers, land managers, emergency services and vehicles requiring access for repairs and maintenance. Question 17 in the government's survey addresses this. If you do respond to the online survey you might wish to incorporate our examples in your response to question 17.



AS YOU CAN SEE, the questions require only short answers. You can answer them via this link to the questionnaire:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/future-landscapes-strategy/government-response-to-the-landscapes-review/>

Although the webpage states 'Please see our response before answering the questions', we would recommend that you just pitch in and click on the 'Online Survey' link in the green box (at the webpage above) to answer the questions, especially questions 14-17. The closing date for responses is 9 April 2022.

Government response to the Landscapes Review

Overview

Implementing some aspects of our response to the review will require changes to legislation, subject to securing parliamentary time. We are seeking public views on support for these proposed legislative changes, and their potential effects on different groups and interests. We are also interested to hear any wider views on other aspects of our response to the review.

Please see our [response](#) before answering the questions.

Closes 9 Apr 2022

Opened 15 Jan 2022

Contact

Landscapesconsultation@defra.gov.uk

Give us your views

[Online Survey >](#)

Related

 [Consultation on the Government response to the Landscapes Review.pdf](#)
360.4 KB (PDF document)

 [Landscapes review \(National Parks and AONBs\): government response](#)

THIS IS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY to encourage the government to complete the job that FoR has been campaigning for since its inception. The FoR executive committee will make a response on behalf of our

association but we would urge all members to make their own response, to emphasise to the government the magnitude of the demand for restricting unnecessary motor vehicles on our byways.

MOTOR-CYCLIST KNOCKED OVER A RAMBLER

A READING motor-cyclist involved in an accident with a walker on the Ridgeway rode away in distress and fear after being berated by the rambler's Court has heard.

It was on Armistice Sunday when all was not peace and tranquillity on the ancient road across the Downs at Sparsholt. It was the day that motor-cyclists held an informal rally.

One of the riders, said Miss Jane Corr, prosecuting at Wantage Magistrates' Court was Michael Joseph Clarke, of Monks Court, Southcote Road, Reading, who was involved in a collision with one of the walkers who suffered an injured leg. Clarke, she said,

rode away without giving his name or address but was traced because a walker took the index number of his machine.

Mr Terry Ryland, defending, said that although the accident had occurred in November, the Police had not served papers until April and he suggested that this was because of the uncertainty over the status of the ancient way.

He had also spent some time researching the status of The Ridgeway, but now accepted that it was a public highway for which the requirements of the road traffic act applied.

However, Clarke had believed genuinely that it was a

green road for which he did not need a licence, insurance or test certificate, because it was not a public road. He held a car licence and had taken his machine to The Ridgeway on a trailer because he knew he could not ride it on a public road. He had used it on The Ridgeway in innocence, not to fly in the face of the law.

Mr Ryland said that after the accident, Clarke, who did not attend Court, was berated by several angry people. He was in considerable distress and some fear when he rode away after making certain that the injured walker was not badly hurt.

The Police offered no evidence on the summons alleging

Clarke drove carelessly and the case was dismissed. Clarke was fined £50 for failing to stop after an accident, £50 for failing to give his name and address, £50 for having no insurance, £10 for having no driving licence for a motor-cycle, £10 for having no test certificate and ordered to pay £5 costs — a total of £175.

Clarke admitted all the offences through Mr Ryland, who asked for 28 days for payment of the fines and costs.

Pony

Walker's Ridgeway agony sparks call for traffic ban

GAVAN Sellars, the Swindon businessman injured by a hit-and-run motor-cyclist on the Ridgeway footpath, is to sue.

Police are still trying to trace the biker who destroyed a quiet Sunday ramble. And following the incident, there has been a call for traffic to be banned from the Ridgeway.

Mr Sellars, 32, of Kingsdown Lane, Blunsdon, a sales manager with Raychem, is seeking damages.

An emergency operation was needed to save his leg which was broken — but a



Gavan Sellars — traffic should be banned.



The scar Mr Sellars bears following his ordeal.

going too fast to stop. "At that point, when I was actually off the track, he hit me."

The rider refused to give his name and address when asked to by Mr Sellars' friends — and rode off.

Mr Sellars, a keen walker and skier, is now praying he won't be left with a limp. Mr Sellars feels traffic should be banned from the Ridgeway and has written to the Wiltshire Ramblers' Association, whose members heard of his ordeal at their annual meeting at Easter.

And Mr Alan Mattingly, the association's national general secretary, agreed with him. "How many more accidents must there be before the Countryside Commis-

Motor vehicles on the Ridgeway severely damaged the surface, destroyed peace and tranquillity, and were potentially dangerous. Items from the Reading Chronicle (left) and Wiltshire Gazette and Herald (above) about a man who was knocked down and injured by a motor cyclist on the Ridgeway at Sparsholt.

Fear growing for ancient pathway

MOTOR manufacturers turning out cheaper and a wider range of four-wheel-drive vehicles could be adding to the traffic threats to the Ridgeway and other beauty spots.

The four-wheel-drive problem was a major concern at the annual meeting of the Friends of the Ridgeway at Lains Barn, Wantage, held on Sunday.

The secretary Mr Nigel Forward, welcomed the moves made by Berkshire County Council to ban all

this year would be vital for the Friends in their efforts to preserve the Ridgeway as a leisure area for pedestrians. They would need all the support they could get for the public inquiry into the traffic regulations proposed because of the very strong car and motor cycle lobbies.

meeting, would be trying to resolve the problem through the co-operation of the farmers and the land-owners.

A fear was that not only were the hedges and bushes being mutilated, but if they were lost then the character of the Ridgeway would be damaged and the number of birds, butterflies and other forms of wildlife would also be reduced. There was, said Mr Mendoza, a marked difference in the amount of



The Mercedes company pausing near Uffington Castle just before stopping for lunch at the Rose and Crown, Ashbury.

Ridgeway convoy angers the Friends

A CONVOY of ten German prestige four-wheel drive cars angered conservationists at the weekend.

The caravan of Mercedes cross country vehicles on Saturday drove along the Ridgeway from Streatley, near Reading, to Avebury.

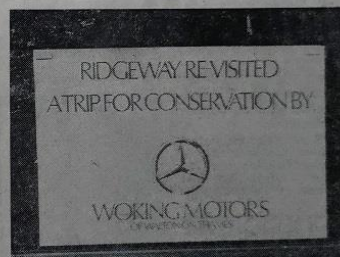
It was a promotional stunt by a garage, Woking Motors of Walton-on-Thames. People paid £75 for the trip which included a hotel stop and tea at Avebury Manor.

less considerate company's prodigy," he said. But a director of Woking Motors Mr John Halse, defended the idea.

The vehicles, he said, set off at ten minute intervals in order to minimise damage to the track. On board were influential landowners interested in conservation who were being given a chance to appreciate the Ridgeway.

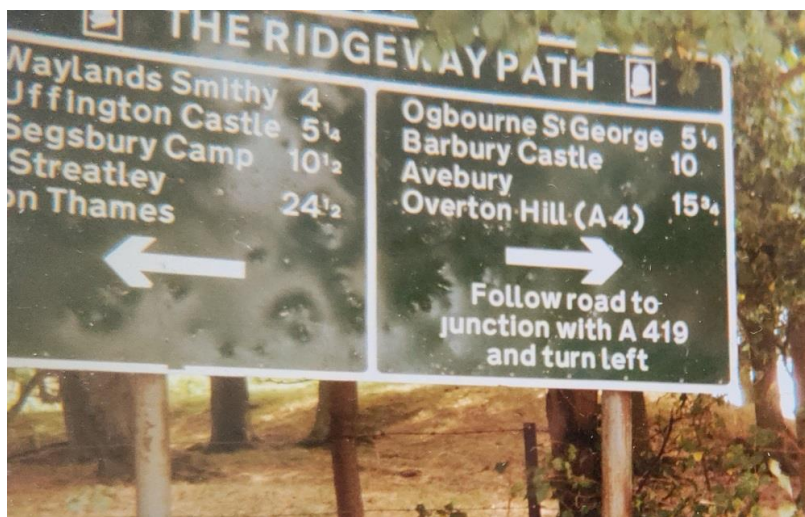
Highlights problems

Mr Halse said the trip was



ABOVE: a notice advertising Saturday's trip. BELOW: a notice explaining the voluntary code for Ridgeway vehicles

Four-wheel-drive vehicles became an increasing menace on the Ridgeway.



It seems unbelievable now but this road sign was on the Ridgeway. This photo was taken by a Ridgeway Volunteer in 1994.

The beginning and the end ...

... is the photo theme for this issue. Apart from the two images below the others are from the Ridgeway and Ancient Tracks of Britain Facebook page.

Uffington Castle. Photo Andy Foley, National Trust Ranger.



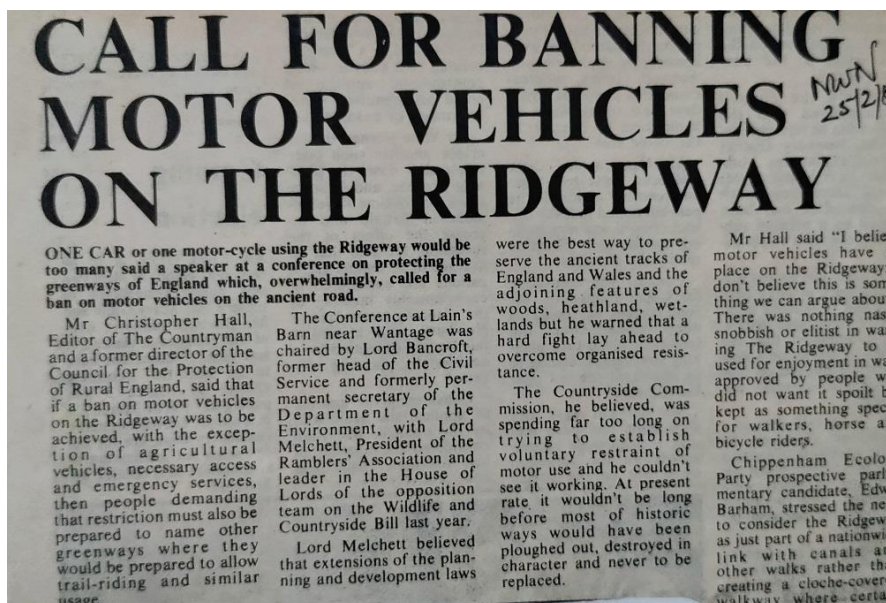
White Horse Hill, Uffington. From the Ridgeway National Trail Facebook page.

FoRunner

It was at the special meeting of the Ridgeway Conservation Conference (RCC) in February 1982 that the Friends of the Ridgeway emerged. The RCC was founded and driven by Denis Grant King, a Wiltshire archaeologist, at about the time that the Ridgeway was recognised as a National Trail (officially opened in 1973). The objectives of the RCC were to “preserve and enhance the Wessex Ridgeway [essentially the stretch of the Ridgeway from Avebury to Streatley] ... for walkers, horse-riders and pedal cyclists” and associated natural and archaeological features “against physical damage” and “against the intrusion of motor

traffic and motor sports”. “To campaign using all legitimate means to achieve the above objectives.”

Denis attended a number of meetings in the House of Commons in the hope of amending the Wildlife & Countryside Bill, enacted in 1981, to provide some statutory protection for ‘ancient un-metalled highways’ or ‘greenways’. That objective was, unfortunately, years away from being achieved. At the time of the special meeting of the RCC at Lain’s Barn in 1982 it had been felt by others that a new organisational structure and direction of policy was required if the objectives were ever to be achieved.



Prominent amongst the pioneers of the FoR were Nigel Forward, who became the Secretary of FoR for 15 years, Lord Bancroft (previously Head of the Civil Service), Maurice Mendoza (then recently retired as Director of Ancient Monuments) and Joan Pye (a former colleague of Nigel Forward) who was keenly interested in the Ridgeway and who served the FoR for many years. Key people at the RCC meeting were from organisations that gave strong support to the FoR’s aims – the Ramblers Association (Alan Mattingley, Director of RA), Council for the Protection of Rural England (Alan Jones, Assistant Secretary), and the Youth Hostels Association (Gerald McGuire). Keynote speakers were Lord Melchett (President of the RA) and Chris Hall (then editor of ‘The Countryman’, a former director of CPRE and subsequently Chair of Oxfordshire Ramblers and currently active in the Open Spaces Society).

“When asked how he’d sculpted his bust of Ernest Bevin, Jacob Epstein said he’d taken a block of marble, and chipped away anything that didn’t look like Bevin.” – Danny Finklestein.

Progress on the Ridgeway Riding Route in the Chilterns

Following years of erosion, surface improvements were completed in September at Bacombe Hill near Wendover in Buckinghamshire to make the National Trail footpath and parallel bridleway safer and more enjoyable to use. The bridleway will form part of the proposed Ridgeway Riding Route that will in future guide people through the Chiltern Hills from Goring-on-Thames in

Oxfordshire to Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire. This project is one of the Additional Mitigation Projects funded by the AONB Review Panel set up under the HS2 project. More information is available on the [News](#) page of the Ridgeway National Trail website (articles in September 2021 and April 2020).

Bacombe bridleway Local Bucks Access Forum visit in September 2021



Barbury Castle.
Photo
Steve
Bessent



Race to the Stones

9-10 July 2022

<https://www.thresholdtrailseries.com>

The 100km Race to the Stones from Lewknor to Avebury follows the Ridgeway, passing such places as Wayland's Smithy, Uffington White Horse and Barbury Castle before reaching the iconic ancient Stone Circle at Avebury. Walk, jog or run.

The Friends of the Ridgeway (FoR) are now a Participating Charity for the 2022 Race to the Stones and we hope you will consider taking part and nominating the FoR as your charity. All funds raised will be used solely to preserve the spirit of the Ridgeway and maintain the trail within the World Heritage Site at Avebury.

Location: Lewknor, Oxon, OX49 5RR – Rutland Farm, Avebury, SN8 1RH

Distance: 100km

Registration: £50 (non stop) / £70 (weekender, inc. camping)

Minimum fundraising: £450

From sign up to the finish line, Threshold Sports say they will support you every step of the way. "We aim to cater for all abilities on the event. As a guide, the minimum speed to complete your respective distance is approximately 4km/h or 2.5 mph. With a completion rate of over 90% this is the perfect 1st ultra."

"This is a challenge for all, inclusive of all ages [though the minimum age at the start of the race is 18 years], experience and fitness levels. Whether you're a seasoned runner, patient plodder or weekend walker – choose to camp over the weekend or take on 100km in one go."

What's included?

Training programme tailored to all levels
Fully signposted route, with regular rest stops
Hot meals, showers, drinks and sports nutrition
Bag transport to the finish
Medical support at pit stops and en route
Finisher's medal

To Enter

In your search engine type in "Race to the Stones 2022". Use the "Enter Now" button. On the next screen scroll down until you find the Charity Participating for either the non-stop or weekender option. Enter the number of entrants and continue. Next screen enter email address. Complete your details. Continue to the next screen and complete the details. As you complete your registration for the event under "**Fundraising**" there is a drop down menu which lists in alphabetical order all the participating charities. Please select the Friends of the Ridgeway.



Photos Threshold Sports

Friends of the Ridgeway to look after the interests of walkers

THE Friends of the Ridgeway Society recently held their inaugural meeting, approved their constitution and elected their first president, officers and committee.

The Friends of the Ridgeway came into existence last July in a provisional form, in response to public demand for a body to look after the interests of pedestrians, pedal cyclists and horse riders on the North Wessex Ridgeway (particularly the stretch between Streatley and Avebury) and to bring pressure on the Countryside Commission for the restriction of motor traffic on this historic greenway so far

heritage conservation. Other officers elected were the chairman, Mr Maurice Mendoza, until recently Director of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings, Department of Environment, and the secretary, Mr Nigel Forward, who recently retired as Under Secretary, Department of Employment. The office of treasurer will be held by the chairman for the immediate future. Four other committee members were elected, three of whom live close to the Ridgeway area.

The meeting discussed and approved the following Resolution, to be forwarded to the Countryside Commission:

meeting with the chairman held in the House of Lords on November 15, 1979, to apply the Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1967, to exclude motor traffic in order to ensure peaceful conditions for users of this route and to protect or enhance the natural amenities prevailing on it.

During the afternoon, an illustrated lecture was given by Professor B Cunliffe, Professor of European Archaeology at University of Oxford, on the Ridgeway as an ancient trade route.

Professor Cunliffe traced the growth of economic activities of the first settlers in Britain from around 4000 BC to the Roman invasion of 43 AD and outlined some of the possible functions of the great prehistoric monuments of West Kennet,

Friends of the Ridgeway elects officers

THE Friends of the Ridgeway came into existence officially when a members' meeting at Lains Barn, near Wantage, approved a constitution and elected officers.

The meeting, chaired by Lord Bancroft, former head of the civil service is without an appointed treasurer and has one vacancy on the committee, however.

Major Dick Brown, of Wantage, chairman of the Oxfordshire Ramblers' Association, and the county's expeditions officer for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, failed to persuade other members to amend the draft aims so that the organisation would not appear to be inflexible and entrenched against motorised users of the ancient highway, except emergency and agricultural vehicles.

Because he felt there was an arguable case for other users, he wanted the phrase saying the aim was to promote the public benefit in the countryside by securing the preservation of the North Wessex Ridgeway as a grassy track "for walkers, horse-riders and pedal

King calling on the Countryside Commission to exclude motor traffic from the Ridgeway. When a member wanted special provision for the disabled, Mrs Jean Morrison, who had moved the resolution, said "I am disabled and I would rather not go up there than spoil it."

Mr Patrick Cormack, an MP interested in conservation, is to be the movement's first president. Mr Maurice Mendoza, of London, former director of ancient monuments and historic buildings for the Department of the Environment, is the chairman and will be acting as treasurer. Mr Nigel Forward, a retired civil servant, from London, is continuing as secretary. Elected on to the committee were the four other members of the steering committee — Miss Joan Pye, of Newbury, Mr John Gaze, of Berkhamsted,

It was on 6th March 1983 that the organisation had its first General Meeting under its new name, Friends of the Ridgeway. Officers were elected and the objectives clarified, resulting in a constitution that was recognised by the Charity Commission in 1985.

Notwithstanding the headline above, FoR had the interests of all non-motorized users of the Ridgeway at heart from its inception.

'The Friends of the Ridgeway is a society established for the public benefit in the countryside for the following purposes:

- (i) to secure the conservation of the Ridgeway long distance path [the current National Trail] and its preservation as a grassy track for walkers and where appropriate, especially on the part west of the Thames, for horse-riders and pedal cyclists; as a natural habitat for flora and fauna; and as a feature of outstanding historic and scenic importance; promoting measures particular to the Ridgeway and measures of more general application as appropriate.
- (ii) to encourage public interest in the history, natural history and geography of the Ridgeway and its associated antiquities; and
- (iii) to encourage high standards of planning, architecture and landscape architecture in the neighbourhood of the Ridgeway.

Ramblers demand Ridgeway bike ban

The Ramblers Association is demanding an unconditional and total ban on trail riders using the Ridgeway.

The associations monthly magazine — The Rucksack — appeals to the Countryside Commissioners to "spurn any idea of compromise" when they make recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, who will decide later this year whether to ban motorcycles from the Ridgeway.

It says: "It is true that some members of trail riding clubs drive relatively quiet machines at relatively low speeds.

Although the constitution has undergone two iterations since then, being much shortened, the objectives of the FoR today largely continue to reflect the first version, above. We'll look at our objectives in more detail in a later issue of the newsletter.

In 1980 the Countryside Commission asked the Ministry of Transport to make a Traffic Regulation Order barring all non-essential vehicles from the un-metalled sections of the Trail. Unfortunately this proposal was opposed by some motoring organisations and the application was set aside. Instead, a Voluntary Code of Behaviour was devised and operated by these organisations but this fell far short of what was required.

Environmentalists fail to win ban on Ridgeway traffic

THE Countryside Commission has rejected appeals from environmental groups for a ban on traffic on the historic Ridgeway. At a meeting last Thursday in Cheltenham it was unanimously agreed to defer a final decision until next autumn.

Walkers have been campaigning for a number of years to get motorcyclists banned from using the track. However, the Ridgeway is classified as "a byway open to all traffic" and in 1979, rather than ask the Government to impose a Traffic Regulation Order, the Countryside Commission agreed to try compromise measures.

Motorcyclists said that

glimmer of hope in the voluntary restraint idea and want to give it a full and proper test. Nobody pretends that it's not a difficult decision. There isn't one simple answer."

Strengthening the voluntary code will involve the Countryside Commission talking to clubs and asking them to continue their co-operation. There will also be discussion with the police authority to see if

9th December 1982

In December 1982 the Countryside Commission rejects appeals for ban on non-essential motorised traffic on the Ridgeway.

E NEWS 3

Ridgeway decision postponed

The Countryside Commission yesterday rejected appeals from environmental groups for a ban on traffic on the 45-mile Ridgeway path (our Environment Correspondent writes). The commission decided to postpone a decision until after next year's tourist season.

The commission, a quango with the duty of safeguarding landscape quality, had to mediate between the competing demands of walkers and of motor cyclists and farmers. The Ridgeway is in fact a long-distance footpath, but it is classed officially as a road.

The disputed section starts above the Thames at Streatley, Berkshire, and continues along the ridge of the Vale of White Horse to Avebury in Wiltshire.

● A warning that new controls were needed to stem the deterioration of the Norfolk Broads was given in a report by the Broads Authority yesterday. It said that freshwater life in the Broads had been reduced drastically by the pumping of urban sewage and of slurry and fertilizers from farms.

What Future for Broadland?
(Broads Authority, Thorpe Lodge, Yarmouth Road, Norwich: £2)

3rd December 1982 The Times

'Keep traffic off Ridgeway' call wins backing

TRAFFIC should be banned from the Ridgeway on certain days, says the Countryside Commission.

The commission, meeting at the weekend, recommended the three county councils involved to ban traffic on Sundays and public holidays from May until the end of October. Farm and emergency vehicles would be exempt.

The ancient trackway passes through Wiltshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire and has been a battleground between walkers, horse riders and motorcyclists.

Although Wiltshire County Council committees have previously voted against a ban on cars and motorcycles, the council's latest decision was to express no opinion but reserve its position until the Countryside Commission's decision was known.

It is now up to the county councils to decide whether to impose traffic orders or possibly hold public inquiries into the commission's proposals.

Mr Bill Riley who, with his wife Anne, represents Trail Riders Fellowship and other motorcycling interests on rights of way issues, said he was surprised by the commission's recommendations.

"What is proposed is exactly what happens now under our agreed voluntary code. "The code has worked very well but to make it formal and legal would mean erecting a mass of traffic signs. I can only think this is being done to please the Ramblers."

He said public inquiries were unusual but supposed that if there were a mass of objections it might be felt to be necessary.

Impact

"There was a public inquiry when Oxfordshire tried to impose a ban on their section but the inspector came out on the side of the traffic and the traffic orders were never made."

Mr and Mrs Riley, who are

13/4/84 N.T.

ANCIENT ROUTE TRAFFIC BAN?

12 December 1984

In December 1984 the Countryside Commission calls for a ban on traffic on the Ridgeway on certain days – Sundays and public holidays from May until end of October. Each county council through which the Trail passed would decide whether to impose a Traffic Regulation Order to achieve this, or have public enquiries into the Commission's proposal.

A successful Harley Street surgeon went to a bank to apply for a credit card. The assistant gave him a form to complete. "But you haven't filled in your income details," she told him. Well, it varies considerably," he replied. "Why don't we put in £20,000, which should cover it?" she suggested. "But it varies," he insisted. "Some days it's more, and some days less."



Barbury Castle. Photo by Atul Shelke on his first Ridgeway walk.



At Hackpen Hill. Photo Marcus Good.

Wiltshire



On the Ridgeway at Overton Hill looking to sunrise at the autumn equinox. Photo Steve Smith.



West Kennet Avenue, Avebury, in mid-December. Photo Marcus Good.

The research and development work of Chris Woodham, University of Oxford Department of Plant Sciences, aided by Ridgeway National Trail volunteers and local farmers, is bearing fruit along the Ridgeway on Bury Down, near the A34 in Oxfordshire. The aim of the research is to see if changing the management of vegetation along the Trail would improve biodiversity. Starting in 2018, Chris and volunteers prepared a variety of

5 x 10 metre plots on the verge to see which approaches would be the most successful at encouraging a flower-rich environment. The ‘winner’ was those plots where the grass and top layer of soil was removed and then sown with wildflower seeds. Removal of the top soil and grass cuttings creates a lower fertility environment that favours plants that are native to the chalkland of the Ridgeway.

Improving the blooming Ridgeway



As reported in the [News](#) section of the Ridgeway National Trail website last November the highlight has been the double impact of sowing seeds of kidney vetch in 2018 – not only has it brought a splash of yellow but it has also attracted the small blue butterfly.

Local farmers in the Scutchamer Knob section of the Trail (above Wantage and the Letcombes) have taken the trials to a new level, scaling up to 0.3 hectares. Read more about it on the Trails [website](#).

The people who took part on the day on which all these photos were taken were:

- Professor Lindsay Turnbull of Oxford University – in the yellow T-shirt
- Oxford Blues Metal Detecting Club – to find the tent pegs marking the plot corners – the grass was so long!
- National Trails volunteers with leader Lucy Duerdoth



Photos Sarah Wright of The Ridgeway Partnership

In addition to championing the Ridgeway, FoR is very supportive of efforts to improve access to it. Last year Uffington Parish Council made a major contribution in this regard by replacing 13 stiles with kissing gates along Uffington footpath 19 and two adjacent footpaths. FP19 leads from the village up to the Ridgeway via Britchcombe Farm and Uffington Wood, meeting the Trail on the east side of White Horse Hill. The newly gated stretch links with the southern part of FP19 where stiles were replaced with gates by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) some years ago and which forms part of an OCC circular walk.

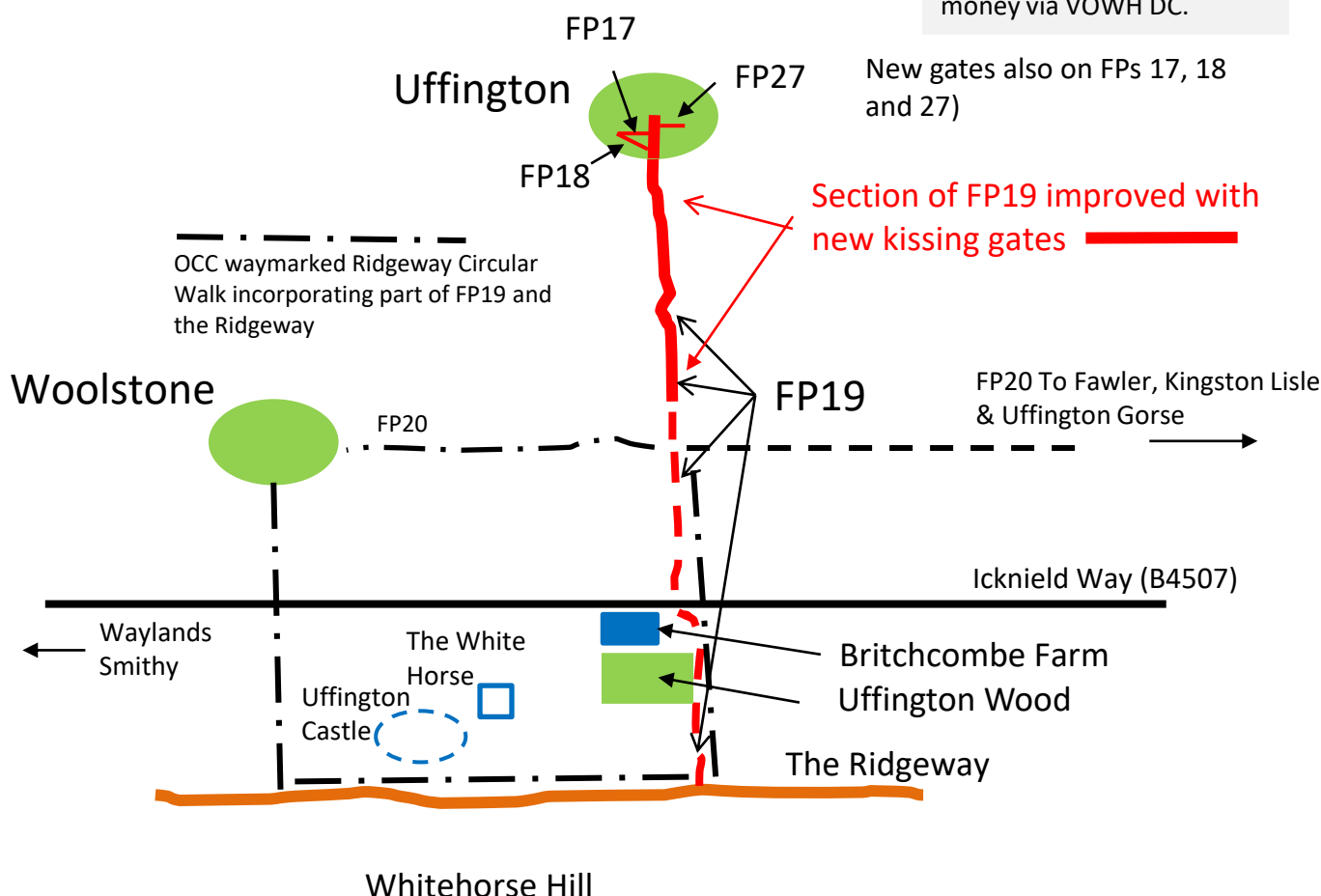
Having reached the Ridgeway one can walk east along the Trail then back via Fowler, or west along the Ridgeway to the Uffington White Horse, Castle, Dragon Hill and Manger, then back via Woolston or the Sower Hill/Broad Way road.

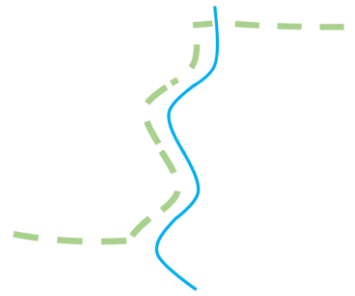
Uffington has a large car park with a grocery store adjacent to the village hall (Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall), The Fox and Hounds pub on the High Street, the Tom Brown's School Museum (open Saturdays and Sundays April to October

<https://www.facebook.com/UffingtonMuseum>) and the wonderful St. Mary's Church.

Improved access to White Horse Hill, Uffington

Funding was provided by Uffington Parish Council, Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (<https://www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk/>), White Horse Show Trust, Oxfordshire County Council Countryside Access Team, and S106 money via VOWH DC.





Mind the Gap

‘There’s no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing’. This is an aphorism to which you might subscribe, though most of us will have had second thoughts at one time or another after ignoring a grim weather forecast. This photo of hardy members of the Vale of White Horse Ramblers group was taken somewhere on the Downs above the Vale. That said, you’ll just have to take my word for that.

Rain

It rained and rained and rained and rained
The average fall was well maintained
And when the tracks were simply bogs
It started raining cats and dogs

After a drought of half an hour
We had a most refreshing shower
And then the most curious thing of all
A gentle rain began to fall

Next day was also fairly dry
Save for the deluge from the sky
Which wetted the party to the skin
And after that the rain set in.

Anon.



Photo John Gordon



The Great Chalk Way

Tim Lewis

In 2009 the FoR re-wrote its constitution: “The Charity’s objects are the preservation ... of all the natural aspects and features of the ancient ridgeway trackways along the chalk downs of Southern England, including the Ridgeway National Trail and any extension thereof ...” The ‘extensions’ that the trustees had in mind were from the western and eastern ends of the Ridgeway to the Dorset Coast and Norfolk coast, respectively. Tim Lewis, a trustee of FoR, picks up the tale.

In common, I suspect, with many others, the Ridgeway National Trail (RNT) was the first long-distance path (LDP) I walked. As I did, I became aware of another much longer and therefore more challenging route which went by the name of the Greater Ridgeway. So I bought the guide book to this trail, written by Ray Quinlan and published by Cicerone, that fount of information about everything to do with LDPs in the UK and, increasingly, in Europe.



View from Oliver's Castle just off the Wessex Ridgeway across the battlefield of Roundway Down towards Beacon Hill. Photo Hedley Thorne.

You might justifiably ask why I prefer walking LDPs to tramping along my local rights of way, to which I would reply “variety and interest”. They have taken me the length and breadth of the British Isles (although admittedly I have only walked one in Scotland, the West Highland Way, and none in Ireland) over a fascinating variety of landscapes. There is always something new and interesting to see, and, with the relevant guide book (and Google!), to learn about our history and geography. And of course finishing each LDP is a target in itself, giving me something to aim at and, hopefully, achieve.

This book described itself as “a walk along the ancient route from Lyme Regis to Hunstanton”, so one which connected two distant English coasts, and which was made up of four component LDPs: the Wessex Ridgeway, the RNT, the Icknield Way and the Peddars Way. Two of these were already National Trails, the RNT and the Peddars Way. The RNT had been a tantalising start to what has become my attraction to LDPs, especially National Trails, and I made up my mind to complete what I had started by walking the other three LDPs comprising the Greater Ridgeway. I didn’t manage to do this for another eight years.



Westbury White Horse from the Wessex Ridgeway. Photo Ben Love Grove.

The Cicerone guide book describes the coast to coast path from Dorset to The Wash, acknowledging that it is the author who has called it the Greater Ridgeway, as “a route along a chalk ridge that spans the entire width of southern England. It’s a route that some have called the oldest road”. It goes on to speculate about its origins, concluding that it was probably a Neolithic highway connecting far-flung centres of commerce, flint-mining and culture, and describes the Brecklands around Thetford as “the ancient equivalent of the industrial north”! But it also readily admits that there is no evidence on the ground for this, although it does connect a series of well-known archaeological sites.



A good section of Ox Drove, part of the Cranbourne Drovers Way. Photo Tim Lewis.

The Great Chalk Way SOUTHERN ENGLAND

Plans are underway to establish a long-distance trail connecting the Norfolk and Dorset coasts, following a 645km/400-mile ancient trading highway. The proposed route would use existing trails, including the Ridgeway (pictured) and Peddars Way, to create a ‘family of trails’, each retaining their individual identities, but featuring information boards about the longer route. greatchalkway.org.uk



Tim Lewis, FoR treasurer and membership secretary got a shout-out for the Great Chalk Way in the December issue of Ramblers *Walk* magazine.

Spotted by Ian Macpherson on a hike with Oxon Weekend Walkers



A candidate in an economics exams points out that the questions are the same as in the previous year. “Yes,” says the examiner, “but the answers have changed.”

At this point a brief description of its route seems appropriate. As noted above, it starts with a steep climb out of Lyme Regis on Dorset's Jurassic Coast. It then winds its way through Dorset's upper reaches and crosses into Wiltshire via the village of Ashmore. After reaching Win Green, one of Wiltshire's highest

points with stunning views in all directions, weather permitting, it undulates through villages and small towns such as Ludwell, Heytesbury, Warminster and Devizes, to join the RNT at Overton Hill, a stone's throw from Avebury with its large stone circle.



As you will no doubt be fully aware, the RNT follows ancient drove roads through or past some well-known features such as Barbury Castle, Wayland's Smithy and the Uffington White Horse before crossing the Thames at Streatley and Goring. It then passes through the gentler countryside of the Chiltern Hills to end at Ivinghoe Beacon, near Tring. The Icknield Way then takes over the baton, passing very close to Whipsnade Zoo, then making its way across the Dunstable Downs and Therfield Heath to finish at Knettishall

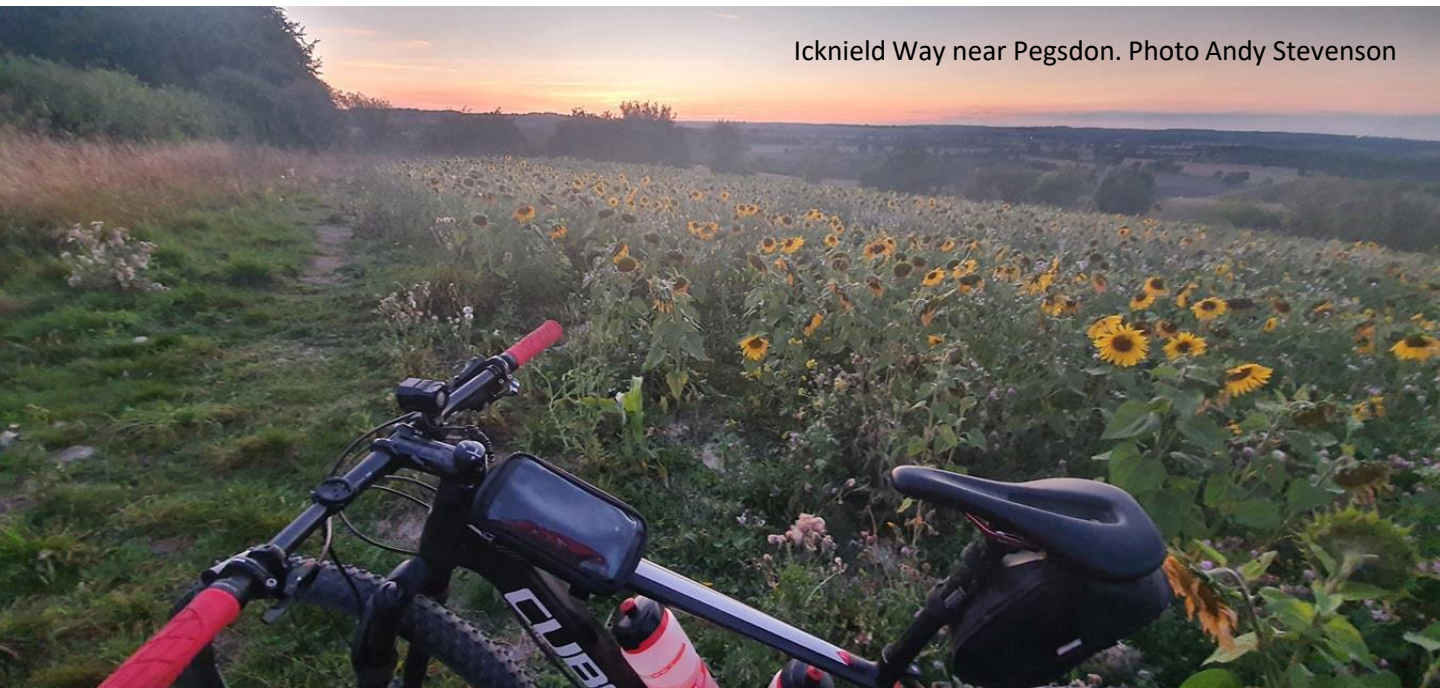
Heath in Suffolk. On the way it passes through or close to Luton, Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock and Royston. The last part of the route takes the walker along a Roman Road, which forms the backbone of the Peddars Way, to finish in Hunstanton on The Wash. Both ends of the Greater Ridgeway thus connect with the England Coast Path.

This is a very brief overview of the route, as further details of each component LDP will be provided in future articles for the newsletter.

What cheese do you use to hide a horse?
Mascarpone.

I first became aware of the Friends of the Ridgeway (FoR) in 2016 as a result of its secretary at the time becoming aware that I was about to walk the Wiltshire section of the Wessex Ridgeway. It was he who first alerted me to the FoR's stated objective to create a LDP to be called the Great Chalk Way (GCW). This was admittedly based on

the Greater Ridgeway concept, but with one important difference: instead of continuing along the Wessex Ridgeway from Win Green, it would follow what the trustees believed was a more authentic upland route along chalk ridges to Salisbury, from where it would head north to join the RNT at its southern-most terminus.



Icknield Way near Pegsdon. Photo Andy Stevenson

To put the theory into practice, a new route was created from Win Green to Salisbury. We have called this the Cranborne Drove Way, as it makes use of two ancient drove ways, and much of its length is contained within the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The route north from Salisbury, which we have called the Sarsen Way, makes use of two existing LDPs, the Pewsey Avon Trail and the White Horse Trail, for around 90% of its

length, with the rest of it following existing rights of way. As well as the delights of the Cranborne Chase AONB, we believe that this route is more interesting than the Greater Ridgeway described above, proceeding as it does through Salisbury with its majestic cathedral, past historic Old Sarum and close to Stonehenge and the Alton Barnes White Horse. Between these last two places of interest it climbs up from the Avon River valley to the edge of Salisbury Plain.

The FoR trustees have brought together representatives of the various councils through which the GCW passes, as well as the Icknield Way Association, to bring this project to fruition. Ultimately it would have been wonderful to make the GCW a National Trail, but it quickly became apparent that with Natural England's resources diverted onto the creation of the England Coast Path, and the fact that we would be joining a queue of other LDPs seeking a similar status, headed by Wainwright's Coast to Coast Path, this aspiration was extremely unlikely ever

to be realised. Very early on it was agreed that each component path should keep its own identity and waymarks, so the decision was taken to place information boards at the beginning and ending of each trail, describing its route and providing tempting glimpses of what could be seen along the way. These boards are now very close to finalisation. All that then remains is to erect them and publicise the route. And there is also the small matter of funding to consider....

Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize and exhibition 2022

THE FRIENDS OF THE RIDGEWAY'S ANNUAL ARTS COMPETITION AND PRIZE – the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize – will be held on Saturday 2nd April and Sunday 3rd April 2022. The venue remains as in previous years: Uffington village hall (the Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Broad Street, Uffington, Oxfordshire, SN7 7RA).

ENTRY TO THE EXHIBITION IS FREE and open to the public - all are welcome.

THE RESULTS of the competition will be announced and prizes awarded at the Ridgeway Friends Day on Sunday 3rd April 2022.

THERE WILL ALSO be an [online exhibition](#) from Sunday 3 April 2022.

THE CLOSING DATE for entries shall be one month prior to the Ridgeway Friends Day i.e. 3 March 2022.

THE AIM of the competition is to bring the Ridgeway to life not only as a long distance trail but also as an artistic inspiration, and to show the Ridgeway, its history and environs, in all their aspects throughout all seasons. The theme of the competition is 'Spirit of the Ridgeway'.

FULL INFORMATION about the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize, including rules of the competition and entry form are on our website.

The Ridgeway Friends Day

Sunday 3 April 2022. The Ridgeway Friends Day will be held in the Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Uffington. Full details of the day's activities will be circulated in due course but will include the Friends of the Ridgeway Annual General Meeting and the Arts prize-giving.



There is good access to, then along, the Ridgeway for carriage drivers at West Ilsley, Berkshire.
Photo: Ginny Williams

New Event Project Manager sought for the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize

Mike Lewington

AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, Friends of the Ridgeway (FoR) organise and run the annual Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize. After many years of organising the competition and being the driving force behind it, Anthony Burdall is stepping down after the 2022 Prize in April.

Consequently, we are seeking a new project manager who will take sole responsibility to organise the competition in April 2023. The successful volunteer would, where time permits, understudy Anthony to ensure a smooth and seamless handover.



The art is displayed online as well as at the venue of the display open to the public.

EACH YEAR through our network of previous entrants, artists, contacts, Facebook and website, the competition is launched in early November. The exhibition is held the following April with an associated online exhibition. The project manager receives the entry forms, liaises with the artists, physically receives the art work and arranges the scrutinising of the submissions with the group of established judges including a Chair. The project manager is also responsible for the exhibition which

is held in a suitable location near the Ridgeway. FoR Trustees assist in setup/breakdown and running of the exhibition.

TO EXPRESS AN INTEREST or for more information, contact

the Chair of FoR, Mike Lewington
michaellewington@hotmail.com

or
Anthony Burdall at
anthony.burdall@burdall.net

Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Friends of the Ridgeway 2022

THE AGM will be held at 15:00 on Sunday 3rd April 2022 in Uffington village hall (the Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall).

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for Absence and Proxies
- 2 Minutes of the 2021 AGM held online at 15:00 on Sunday 25 April 2021
- 3 Annual Report
- 4 Treasurer's Report & Accounts
- 5 Election of President & Vice-Presidents
- 6 Election of Executive Committee Members/Trustees
Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer
1-5 Committee Members
- 7 Appointment of Independent Examiner

ANYONE WISHING TO STAND FOR ELECTION to the Executive Committee should inform the Secretary (davecavanagh1000@gmail.com) no later than 14 days before the date of the AGM i.e. by 20th March.





Photos by members in the 1990s, showing the damage caused by motor vehicles.



The driver of this Range Rover is taking their dog for a walk on the Ridgeway.

Proposed developments at White Horse Hill, Uffington

In the last issue of this newsletter I described how Britchcombe Farm, on the lower slopes of White Horse Hill (Uffington) had been purchased by Lovat Parks, a company that provides “holiday homes and luxury lodges”. We believe that their aim is to change it from a seasonal low key, low impact campsite to one of all year round static caravans with corresponding infrastructure. Such development, which is inside the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, would have a serious detrimental effect on the views from White Horse Hill, including from

the Uffington White Horse, and its environs e.g. Dragon Hill, as well as from within the Vale of White Horse, and on the setting of these Ancient Monuments.

Local people have formed the Britchcombe Farm Working Group (BFWG), with input from various concerned organisations, including Friends of the Ridgeway, to fight this. The BFWG continues to meet regularly and is ready for whenever a planning application is made for specific works. The CEO of Lovat Parks has accepted an invitation to attend the meeting of Uffington Parish Council in March.

Sunrise at Silbury Hill, Wiltshire. Photo Steve Bessent



Weekend ban on Ridgeway drivers urged

By Robert Shrimley

THE Countryside Commission is calling for traffic to be banned from one of the oldest roads in Britain, the Ridgeway in Wessex, on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

It has asked Mr Parkinson, Transport Secretary, to ban motor vehicles for the 40 miles between Streatley, Berkshire, and Overton Mill, Wiltshire, which is a mud route presently



designated as a public byway, in the North Wessex Downs.

The road is believed to be between 5,000 and 10,000 years old and ran from the Suffolk flint quarry known as Grime's Grave to Salisbury. Only the 85-mile stretch from Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire to Overton Mill forms the Commission national trail and only the last 40 miles are open to traffic.

Mr Duncan Mackay, the Commission's south east spokesman, said: "Between 210,000 and 250,000 people use the Ridgeway each year.

"The vast majority of them simply want to enjoy a peaceful day's walking in beautiful countryside and we cannot ignore the annoyance, disturbance and physical damage caused by the eight per cent in cars and four wheel drive vehicles or on motorbikes.

"After 10 years of seeking to resolve the conflicts on the Ridgeway, we have come to the

conclusion that a traffic regulation order is the only effective way of controlling the problems."

Many of those using motor vehicles want to enjoy the view without having to walk, but Mr Mackay said there was a second group of motorists who enjoy driving in rough countryside, rutting up the mud and damaging the pathway.

This is the second time the Commission has asked for a traffic ban on the route. In 1986 they asked for a more limited ban to apply to peak season Sundays and bank holidays. The Transport Department asked for more evidence of the damage so the Commission has reinforced its call with a £50,000 survey of the Ridgeway.

That survey showed 39 per cent of all walkers using the route were unhappy about the noise and damage caused by motor vehicles.

● Peaceful walks in the Essex

countryside will be virtually a thing of the past if road-building plans for the county are carried through, ramblers on a nine-day hike from Sudbury to Waltham Abbey claimed yesterday. Mr John Newnham, a member of the Ramblers' national executive, said the county was in danger of being "swamped by a sea of concrete".

The plans for Essex, announced in May as part of a scheme to spend £12 billion building 2,700 miles of new or widened roads nationwide over the next 10 years, include the widening of the M11 north of Bishops Cleeve at a cost of £81 million, and a new motorway from the M25 to Chelmsford (£45 million).

● Verges of the new M40 between Oxford and Birmingham are being seeded with wildflowers to brighten up the drive and encourage wildlife, a Transport Department spokesman said.

1st February 1990

7th September 1989

The Countryside Commission again calls for non-essential motorised vehicles to be banned on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

IZES - CHIPPENHAM - MELKSHAM - COUNTY

Government is to consider motor ban on Ridgeway

A DECISION to ban traffic from a famous ancient road has been held up as Government officials meet to discuss the controversial proposal.

Transport Secretary Cecil Parkinson is being urged to bar motor vehicles from a 40-mile stretch of the 5,000-year-old Ridgeway through Wiltshire.

The Government's Countryside Commission has asked for the ban on 60 days of the year amid fears that bikers and drivers are damaging what is said to be Britain's oldest road.

The Ridgeway is an official long dis-

tance footpath but a 40-mile stretch between Avebury and Streatley in Berkshire is legally designated as a byway, which means traffic can use it.

About 250,000 people - mostly ramblers, horse riders and cyclists - use the Ridgeway each year and a recent Countryside Commission survey has revealed widespread opposition to the use of the route by vehicles.

The commission, which is responsible for long distance footpaths, sent a delegation to see Mr Parkinson last year to press demands for the ban - which would cover Sundays and Bank Holidays.

There were mixed reactions from District and County Councils, though mostly they were negative.

To be continued in the next issue ...

Vehicles ban on Ridgeway 'unworkable'

District Herald 4 Jan 92

by DEREK HOLMES

and is therefore open to all traffic, although a voluntary code of conduct has been agreed with motoring organisations to avoid using it on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

The county Director of Leisure and

County councillors this week poured cold water on a plan to ban Sunday and Bank Holiday motor traffic from the ancient Ridgeway green road, a long-distance track running along the Downs to the south of Oxfordshire.

Ridgeway car ban backed

Vale councillors have backed a move by the Department of Transport to ban vehicles from using the Ridgeway on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

The Vale environmental services committee backed the department's plan to impose a traffic order banning the vehicles on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Farmers will still be

Ridgeway traffic ban derided

BERKSHIRE county councillors have decided not to support a proposal for a traffic order along the Ridgeway because it is unenforceable.

law abiding and will take notice of this. I'm surprised that no-one is prepared to trust the people. The public is becoming more environmentally aware, particularly

How do I drive safely and care for The Ridgeway?

Just as you have to drive safely on roads, so you have to drive safely on the Ridgeway. It is important to be aware of the following points to help you drive safely on the Ridgeway. Please note that the Ridgeway is a public highway and you must follow the rules of the road. Please note that the Ridgeway is a public highway and you must follow the rules of the road.

- Please avoid ground conditions as well as the weather in road crossing design and driving conditions. The Ridgeway is a public highway and you must follow the rules of the road.
- Please avoid ground conditions as well as the weather in road crossing design and driving conditions. The Ridgeway is a public highway and you must follow the rules of the road.
- Please avoid ground conditions as well as the weather in road crossing design and driving conditions. The Ridgeway is a public highway and you must follow the rules of the road.

The Ridgeway National Trail

The Ridgeway National Trail is a 46-mile long trail in the Cotswolds, Wiltshire, England. It is a public highway and you must follow the rules of the road. Please note that the Ridgeway is a public highway and you must follow the rules of the road.

- Please avoid ground conditions as well as the weather in road crossing design and driving conditions. The Ridgeway is a public highway and you must follow the rules of the road.
- Please avoid ground conditions as well as the weather in road crossing design and driving conditions. The Ridgeway is a public highway and you must follow the rules of the road.
- Please avoid ground conditions as well as the weather in road crossing design and driving conditions. The Ridgeway is a public highway and you must follow the rules of the road.

Some of the helpful leaflets on the website of the Ridgeway National Trail

← Ins and outs of motorised vehicles on the Ridgeway. You will find Sarah's map (below) very instructive. Be sure to download this one.

Sarah Wright, Project Officer for the Ridgeway Partnership, has produced some excellent leaflets which you can download from the Ridgeway National Trail website

https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/the-ridgeway/leaflets/

Introduction to the Ridgeway

The Ridgeway

The Ridgeway National Trail is a 46-mile long trail in the Cotswolds, Wiltshire, England. It is a public highway and you must follow the rules of the road. Please note that the Ridgeway is a public highway and you must follow the rules of the road.

Step Back in Time

Illustrative map showing Byway sections of The Ridgeway and connecting Byways

The Ridgeway National Trail comprises several Byway stretches totalling 3.8m (20 miles). Details of these Byways and other rights of way can be checked for free on interactive maps (Definitive Maps) provided on council websites: Wiltshire, Swindon, West Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. Other mapping is available but has limitations for example, Ordnance Survey maps can become out-of-date and Google Maps does not provide adequate information about route status. A simplified summary of the current permanent TROs is provided on this map but details need to be checked with the relevant highway authority and/or signs on the Trail. Notices about temporary and emergency TROs on The Ridgeway are posted on the news pages of The Ridgeway website and on the Trail's social media. Details about TROs on connecting Byways can be obtained from the highway authority. Always use the most up-to-date version of this leaflet which is available as a free download from www.nationaltrail.co.uk/ridgeway/leaflets.

KEY

- Public Road
- National Trail following public road
- Byway
- Byway subject to TRO
- National Trail that is NOT a Byway
- Connecting Byway

TRO applies 1st October to 30th April every year, except from Barbury Castle to west side of Ogbourne St George where TRO restriction applies all year and except from the western edge of Barbury Castle to the connecting Byway to Uffcott which is open to motorcycles but not 4 wheeled vehicles all year. Note that surface damage is a particular concern in the Avebury World Heritage Site.

TRO applies 1st October to 30th April every year.

www.nationaltrail.co.uk/ridgeway

The Ridgeway Partnership

From 1st April, 2015, The Ridgeway Partnership will manage, develop and promote The Ridgeway National Trail and its wider Ridgeway corridor and environment.

Now it will be easier than ever to enjoy the spectacular scenery and monuments of this ancient route through the heart of Southern England.

Ian Ritchie, Chair of The Ridgeway Partnership, says

“The Partnership represents a great opportunity to bring the delights of the UK's oldest path to a much greater number of people, pursuing a wide range of activities. The Ridgeway has some spectacular scenery and prehistoric sites such as the Uffington White Horse and the series of Iron Age hill forts along its length. We aim to encourage more people to get out and enjoy it, and we want to introduce it to young people and make it accessible for the less mobile and those with disabilities.”

The Ridgeway National Trail is the 87-mile central section, between Ivinghoe Beacon in the Chilterns, and the Avebury World Heritage Site in Wiltshire, of an ancient trade route along the chalk downs stretching from Norfolk to the Dorset coast. Its glorious scenery, wide-ranging views and cloudscapes, the hill-forts and ancient monuments, nature reserves and



My Ridgeway:

Which aspect most appeals? These themes are our key aspirations:-

The Natural Ridgeway: The Ridgeway forms a natural corridor through the length of the Chilterns and the North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a precious reserve of bio-diversity in the heart of South-east England, that we'd like to see designated and protected as well as enjoyed.

The Ancient Ridgeway: Itself an ancient monument, the Ridgeway links hill-forts, barrows, hill-forts such as the famous Uffington White Horse, and the Avebury World Heritage Site. We plan to raise awareness of this rich heritage and support its further discovery and understanding.

The Sporting Ridgeway: We plan to extend the scope for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, plus kite and model flying, geocaching and orienteering, and challenge events, with improved access and facilities.



The Living Ridgeway: A feature of people's daily lives in communities along the route, for dog-walking and picnics, chilling or just admiring the view, The Ridgeway links walkers to welcoming pubs, shops and country fare, to public transport and beds for the night. We'll try to make sure that the Ridgeway always provides quiet enjoyment for everyone.

Dave Cavanagh of the Ramblers, a Partnership member, says

“We shall enhance the visitors' experience by improving the approach paths to The Ridgeway with the help of volunteers from Ramblers and the Chiltern Society. This will encourage people to park in villages or use public transport, explore the many circular routes that take in sections of The Ridgeway, and enjoy local pubs and tea shops on their return.”

Introducing the Ridgeway Partnership, the body that manages, develops and promotes our National Trail.

Geology of the Ridgeway

Water points on or close to the Ridgeway

The Ridgeway NATIONAL TRAIL

Water Points on or Close To The Ridgeway

Visit the Plan your visit pages on our website, and click on the 'services' box this will bring up toilets and water points along The Ridgeway. <http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/ridgeway/plan>

As The Ridgeway follows a ridge, springs and rivers occur below the level of the trail and accessing them may mean descending to springline villages. Water points are sign posted, however vegetation growth in summer may hide them! **Please note:** Isley Barn is a water point which may be marked on some maps/guides, unfortunately due to vandalism it is capped. We are not currently aware of any plans by the landowner to reinstate it.

T = Tap only

T* = Tap and trough for animals

** = Animals n/v/n/a (not visible/halt)

The Ridgeway

NATIONAL TRAIL

Beneath your feet

Geology and gradient profile

The Ridgeway National Trail

- Section 1
- Section 2
- Section 3
- Section 4
- Section 5
- Section 6

- Wylend's Smithy
- The Manger
- White Horse Hill
- The Bowingstone
- Devil's Punchbowl
- Ashdown House

The Ridgeway

The Ridgeway National Trail is the central section of what has often been called Britain's oldest road, stretching from the Dorset coast to The Wash. Never a single road, but rather a complex of braided tracks which successive generations have used for their own purposes. Pre-historic barrows and burial mounds and hillforts line the route.

This is a superb trail for walkers, cyclists and riders.

But it is more, much more than a walking route. It is a wonderful landscape from Ivinghoe Beacon, an ancient signal point and hillfort, through the beech woods of the Chilterns to the River Thames and then up to the large skies of the chalk downs to Overton Hill, Avebury. It is an artistic inspiration, and a historic monument.



Join Us

Apply for membership online at www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk and click on the 'join us' button.

Make a Donation

Please help us by making a donation. We rely on the support of our members and other donations. All money donated is used to benefit The Ridgeway. To make a donation go to the web site at www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk and click on the 'donate now' button.

The Friends of The Ridgeway is a registered charity (No. 1107926).



Katherine Foxhall 'Into the manger'



THE FRIENDS OF THE
RIDGEWAY



JOIN THE FRIENDS OF THE RIDGEWAY



Preserving the spirit of The Ridgeway

*If you love the countryside
and enjoy the peace and
inspiration it gives you, join us!*

We have our own leaflet describing Friends of the Ridgeway. You can download this from the [homepage](#) of the FoR website and from the Ridgeway National Trail [leaflets page](#)



Who are the Friends?

The Friends of the Ridgeway is a campaigning charity committed to preserving and promoting both the Ridgeway National Trail and the Great Chalk Way.

Our Patron is Sir Chris Bonington and our President is Lord William Bradshaw. The Vice-Presidents are those MPs whose constituency includes a section of the Ridgeway National Trail.

We are run by an Executive Committee, elected annually, whose members are also Trustees of the Charity. We have no employees; everyone involved is a volunteer.

What do the Friends do?

The Friends of the Ridgeway have been active in protecting the Ridgeway from misuse by motorised vehicles, and were instrumental in shaping the NERC Act 2006. They were influential in establishing the Ridgeway Partnership, a key group of local authorities, landowners, user groups and other stakeholders.

Today our objectives are the preservation of all the ridgeway trackways along the chalk downs of Southern England, and of their associated features, monuments and access paths, including the Ridgeway National Trail.

Present threats to the Ridgeway include funding issues, continuing illegal motor vehicle use, inappropriate development impacting on the trail, and vandalism and damage.

We have established the annual Swire Arts Prize, to promote the artistic inspiration of the Ridgeway, and working with others have established the Great Chalk Way. Additionally we have raised funding for projects including the Oxford Plant Sciences Department Project as well as projects carried out by the Ridgeway Partnership.

Membership

Why join the Friends of the Ridgeway?

The overwhelming reason for joining the Friends of the Ridgeway is to support the campaign to preserve the Ridgeway and keep it safe. The Ridgeway is a wonderful resource for all the communities that live along its route. It must be preserved and protected for future generations with its benefits brought to the attention of as many people as possible.

The greater our membership, the louder our voice in protecting the Ridgeway in all its aspects.

Benefits of joining the Friends

As well as the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to protect the Ridgeway, you will get:

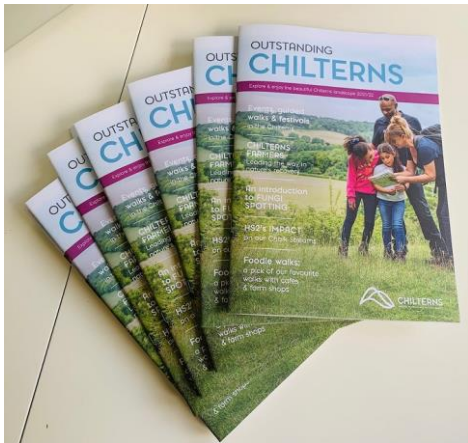
- A free quarterly newsletter and Annual Review
- An invitation to the annual Friends Day
- The opportunity to volunteer at special events held along the Ridgeway
- A chance to meet like-minded people with an enthusiasm for protection of the Ridgeway
- To influence decision makers about the future of the Ridgeway
- The opportunity to form your own local supporters' group.

How to Join the Friends

You can now apply for membership online. At our website www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk click on the 'Join Us' button and pay your membership fee using Internet Banking.



THE FRIENDS OF THE RIDGEWAY have agreed to contribute 25% of the cost of installing a Chambers radio beam counter at the Ivinghoe Beacon end of the Trail, to count those on foot, cycle and horse. Natural England is providing the other 75%, and the National Trust (Ashridge Estate) is keen for the counter to be installed on their land, as the data will also be useful to them. As well as getting a better understanding of users in this stretch of the Ridgeway, the data will be useful in supporting future grant applications.



The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has produced a free magazine called *Outstanding Chilterns*. It's packed with articles on foodie walks, fungi spotting, interviews, conservation news, events, our young explorers section and more.

It's on display at cafes and libraries and hundreds of displays throughout the region or read online:

<https://bit.ly/39KFk9p>

My wife told me to take the spider out instead of killing him.

Went out. Had a few drinks. Nice guy. He's a web designer.



Beauty lies in the hand of the beer holder.

I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy (Tom Waits).

Sunrise on a snow-covered Avebury.
Photo Lisa Flower