

Friends of the Ridgeway



Small text label below the painting, likely providing details about the artwork or artist.

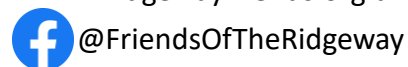


Spring 2023



Spring 2023

www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk



Welcome

SWIRE RIDGEWAY ARTS PRIZE AND EXHIBITION 2023

Editor Dave Cavanagh
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Articles were written by the editor, Dave Cavanagh, 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 of the Ridgeway or nearby countryside, villages and events? Do share them with us.

Cover photo: winner of the Wall Art class and overall Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize winner Ken Organ

Elizabeth Turner

The Spirit of the Ridgeway was alive and well at this year's Swire Arts Prize exhibition held over the weekend of 22nd/23rd April at Uffington.

A total of 49 artists entered almost 100 pieces of work for the exhibition, celebrating the Ridgeway with an eclectic mix of written work, photography, sculpture and wall art enjoyed by almost 250 people who attended over the two days.



New theme for the 2024 Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize – see page 8

The competition was established by The Friends of the Ridgeway, following a generous donation from the Swire Charitable Trust, the inaugural event being in 2017. It has been held annually since then.

SWIRE RIDGEWAY ARTS PRIZE AND EXHIBITION 2023



Judges Jane Strother and Lucy Stopford conferring.

A small team of trustees supported artist Anna Dillon who gave up her time to curate the pieces into an exhibition that showcased each work and the Ridgeway superbly – Friends of the Ridgeway are very grateful for the support Anna gave.

Also giving up their time to support us were judges Jane Strother (wall art), Keith Appleby (sculpture), Melita Kyle (photography) and Sylvia Vetta (written) all led by Head Judge Lucy Stopford.

AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS, the wall art class dominated the show but we had some wonderful poetry and the winning written work entry from Carole Barfoot told the story of 'Clara'. Photography entries spanned the seasons and a rider's eye view 'Between the Ears' from Jane Imbush was successful in that category. Sculpture entries featured ceramics, stone carving, woven figures, paper and wood with John Nicholls stone and slate entry 'Chiltern Ridgeway' portraying a central roundel of rolling Chiltern Hills on the Ridgeway with slate insets featuring local flora and fauna winning the day.

THE WALL ART entries also featured a range of media including acrylics, water colours, oils, inks, pastels, etching, lino cuts, collage, pyrography (decorating wood or other materials with burn marks) and textiles. The artists in this class had been inspired by the Ridgeway from Ivinghoe, around Wantage and Princes Risborough, with as expected many images featuring the Uffington White Horse and Wayland Smithy. With many pieces to choose from, **KEN ORGAN'S** 'White Horse Hill' that had been painted 'en plein air' during 2022 stood out as a 'monumental' image of this ancient landmark.

ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A STRONG FIELD of winners from each class, Ken's 'White Horse Hill' was awarded the overall winner for this year.

As well as the exhibition we were very grateful that many artists presented their works for sale and a total of 22 pieces sold yielding a commission for Friends of the Ridgeway of £740 which is far in excess of previous years.

If you have not already seen some of the wonderful Facebook posts about the exhibition, or you wish to take a longer look at all of this year's entries and winners, do head over to <https://ridgewayfriends.org.uk/swire-ridgeway-arts-prize-2023-exhibition/> to view our online gallery.



Lucy Stopford, head of the panel of judges, presented the Wall Art prize to Ken Organ for his painting *White Horse Hill*. Ken was also winner of the Overall Prize.



You can see the exhibits any time you want by going to the Friends of the Ridgeway website.

CAROL BARFOOT won the Written category. You can read the whole of her piece, and those of the Runner Up and Highly Commended writers on our website

<https://ridgewayfriends.org.uk/swire-ridgeway-arts-prize-2023-exhibition/>



CLARA

Clara stuffed her large black hat over her flaming red hair and pushed in three long hair pins, one topped by a green round natural stone, one with a finial made of ivory and the third sporting a purple glass decoration. This was the most subtle way in which she could acknowledge her allegiance to the Women's Suffrage Movement without causing major embarrassment to her employers. Green for Hope, white for Purity and purple for Loyalty. She actually saw herself as more of a peace-loving Suffragist and was not too keen on the militant attitude of the Suffragettes under the leadership of Mrs Pankhurst. However, she had read about the protest which had taken part in Parliament Square in 1910 during which the Police had beaten many Suffragettes and she had sympathised with them. It was time women had an equal vote with men, after all they were fifty percent of the population and women worked as hard as many men looking after the home and bringing up their children. Not an easy task when times were hard and money was tight.

Her hat held firmly in place, in each hand, gloved of course, she carried a wicker basket. As she left by the service door she breathed in deep lungfuls of fresh air and relaxed. She had two whole hours away from the hot, stuffy kitchen with its noise and chaos as the breakfast dishes were washed, dried, cleared away and lunch prepared.

Clara was twenty-two and had been in service for eight years. Her family lived in the village and it was a natural progression that she should find work at the Manor, following in her Mother's footsteps, starting as a scullery maid. Hard work, which played havoc with her hands but she had now progressed to Cooks' right-hand girl and proved her worth as a pastry cook. Some members of her extended family worked on the cressbeds, the men cutting the cress and the women bundling it into bunches for despatch to the London market. Others worked at the papermills, Bledlow Mill and North Mill set along the brooks. In The Lyde corrie next to the Church fourteen springs fed the streams with pure water which had permeated through the chalk beds of the Chiltern Hills for thousands of years and provided the perfect set of conditions for both industries.

Clara and Pietro had been married for a year and she was almost in her eighth month of pregnancy. She was fit and well and had been able to keep her position in the school kitchen even though she was now a married woman. That would change when the baby arrived and the loss of her wage was a source of worry for the young couple.

Pietro was Italian. Good-looking with a permanent tan. He had left his home village in the hills above Florence and made his way through northern Italy and France to Cherbourg. Here there were good

You can see the exhibits any time you want by going to the Friends of the Ridgeway website.



RIDGEWAY
Photography Category
JANE IMBUSH

JANE IMBUSH won the Photography prize for *Between the Ears*, above, whilst **JOHN NICHOLLS** was the winner of the Sculpture award, right.



You can see the exhibits any time you want by going to the Friends of the Ridgeway website.

Pictures of an exhibition



Artist Anna Dillon hanging the wall art. Photos Jane Imbush



Three of the five judges.





To view the exhibits online go to

<https://ridgewayfriends.org.uk/swire-ridgeway-arts-prize-2023-exhibition/>

Select a category that you want to look at.

Entries shall comply with the following guidelines:

- wall art may be carried out in any medium (oil, watercolour, pencil, pastel, textile, mosaic etc.) and any size up to a maximum unframed size of 2.0 metres in any dimension. All wall art, including paintings and drawings, must be submitted framed and ready to hang with secure wire or cord attached at the back. Additionally entries shall be accompanied with a high resolution photograph of the work (say 5 to 10MB file size) or the work submitted for photographing;
- sculptures including ceramics may be in any material but excluding unduly fragile materials, of any size up to a maximum of 2.0 metres in any dimensions and not more than 100kg in weight. Sculptures shall be accompanied with a high resolution (say 5 to 10MB file size) photograph of the work or the work submitted for photographing;
- photographs and digital art shall be printed to ideally A4 size but between 10"x8" (254mm x 204mm) and 20"x16" (508mm x 408mm) and mounted with a mask but not framed, with a maximum mask size being 20"x16" (508mm x 408mm) or 50mm border around the image whichever is the largest, plus an electronic .jpg file to a maximum size of 15MB;
- pieces of written prose or poetry shall be a minimum of 200 words and maximum of 5,000 words in English. A single entry may comprise a collection of related shorter pieces which together form a coherent whole. Written prose shall be submitted as a .DOC or .PDF file.

There are four galleries corresponding to the four different classes. Click on the buttons to go to the Gallery of your choice. Each Gallery opens with an index of entries in that class.

There is an Exhibition Catalogue giving details of the works. To download the Exhibition Catalogue click on the button.

Many of the works are available for sale. To purchase a work please see the Sale of Works arrangements accessed by the button below.

Catalogue

View the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize Exhibition

Get now

Sale of Works

View the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize Exhibition

Get now

Gallery 1 : Wall Art

View the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize Exhibition

View Now (external site)

Gallery 2 : Sculpture

View the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize Exhibition

View Now (external site)

Gallery 3 : Photography

View the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize Exhibition

View Now (external site)

Gallery 4 : Written

View the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize Exhibition

View Now

Theme for the 2024 competition

This year's show was a success in so many ways and we will be running the Swire Arts Prize again in 2024 with a new theme of

‘Signs and Symbols along the Ridgeway’

The Runners Up and Highly Commended artworks will appear in future issues of the newsletter.

YOU CAN INTERPRET THIS THEME as your imagination takes you.

ASPECTS OF THE NATURAL WORLD may be the source of inspiration, such as signs of the seasons e.g. the first frosts of winter, spring buds, summer swallows, lambs and calves, autumn bronzes or wonderful birdsong and summer heat haze.

PEOPLE AND MAN-MADE THINGS could feature e.g. the signs of travellers along the route or indeed the waymarks and finger posts that assist them.

THE RIDGEWAY HAS AN ANCIENT HISTORY OF ITS OWN, of course. Signs and symbols of peoples' long past have left indelible inspiration on and near the Ridgeway National Trail.

WE HOPE that you will be inspired to produce more amazing works of art to help The Friends of the Ridgeway celebrate our national trail in art again in 2024.

People say I am a wanton plagiarist. Their words, not mine.
You can tell Monopoly is an ancient game - the banker can still go to jail.



Corrugated Iron Appreciation Society

Public group · 33.6K following

 Community home

Yes, there is a Corrugated Iron Appreciation Society. Send me your photos
davecavanagh1000@gmail.com



Corrugated Iron Appreciation Society

 Follow Group



Exhibit in Pompidou Centre, Paris





The Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Partnership - Farmers and friends working together on a landscape scale

www.spacefornature.net/
MarlboroughDowns@gmail.com

From a Marlborough Downs Space for Nature post on Facebook

12 March

Wow! What a fabulous morning we had litter picking this morning along a section of the Ridgeway. We literally did a few hundred metres from Hackpen carpark to the first clump of Beech trees and this is what we found!

Many thanks to Janice, Jamie, Helen, Emma, Anna, Isla and Alice for joining in! We were expecting a few more people but it was soooo cold and windy!

We were also challenged by our friends at The Friends of The Ridgeway to look for yellow so please see our grids of yellow litter! Nearly everything has yellow on it somewhere! Very interesting! ♡

Did you know it's the Ridgeway's 50th anniversary? It was officially opened in 1973! Find out more here at Ridgeway National Trail ♡



Decided to restart dancing classes majoring on the Hokey Cokey. Just to keep my hand in.

There's a fine line between angling and just standing at the water's edge looking like an idiot.

The Pace Centre Big Walk



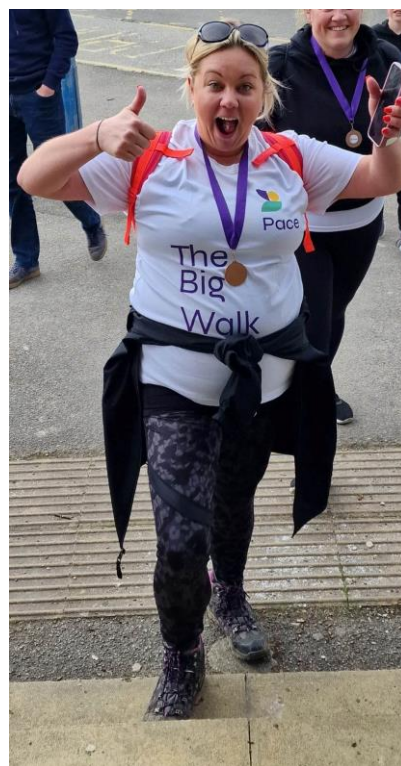
THE RIDGEWAY featured in all three routes in The Pace Centre's annual Big Walk on 22 April. Established in 1990, Pace helps children with neurodisabilities achieve their potential. It is based on two sites in Aylesbury, supporting hundreds of children with neurodisabilities and their families.

The Big Walk is one of many events by which the charity raises funds – over £16,000 for this event alone this year. There was a choice of three routes:

- 18 m – Watlington to Wendover
- 12 m – Chinnor to Wendover
- 6 m – Princes Risborough to Wendover

All the routes took in the Ridgeway National Trail.

<https://thepacecentre.org/event/the-big-walk/>





Oh great, here comes the German spy balloon.



3:20 pm · 5 Feb 2023 · 302K Views

1,945 Retweets 113 Quote Tweets 9,865 Likes

752

30 comments · 179 shares

Like

Comment

Share

When you hit a wrong note but it still sounds as good

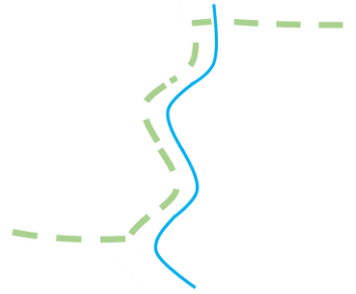


Thieves have stolen 20 crates of Red Bull from my local shop. I don't know how these people sleep at night ...

I think they meant the date.



So I was telling my friend I hate backgammon. And draughts. He said "Hate chess too?" I said, "Don't even get me started on that high-speed rail project."



Mind the Gap

In America, when you've seen one shopping centre, you've seen a mall



Thanks for explaining the word "many" to me, it means a lot.

The main function of your little toe is making sure all the furniture in the house is in the right place.

This Southern Girl Can

I just saw a sports car, driven by a scantily-clad young sheep - it was in a lamb bikini.

The Ridgeway and Thames Path volunteers



NATIONAL TRAILS VOLUNTEERS Diane, Steve and Ian working with volunteer coordinator Lucy Duerdoth to move an overgrown information board to a more prominent place in the parking area on Kingston Hill near Kingston Blount. The volunteers have 7 tasks on the Ridgeway in the next three months, and 14 on the Thames Path, with three half-days in the workshop in Sutton. Photos Wendy Tobitt.





Vale of White Horse Ramblers near the Ridgeway in the North Wessex Downs in January. Photo Sandra Newton

FoR on show in Avebury

THE BEAUTIFUL CHAPEL at Avebury has been made available by the National Trust to Avebury Parish Council which is using it as a Community Exhibition Space. Friends of the Ridgeway is one of several organisations that are exhibiting in the former chapel. We have placed enlarged posters of our membership leaflet in a corner where they can be clearly seen by visitors to the chapel, soon to be joined by an enlargement of the Great Chalk Way information board. The chapel is manned by volunteers so is opened only irregularly.



Tim Lewis



It all depends on your point of view. Left, 'Avebury in the Pink' by Marcus Good; right, photo by Norman Crisp.

Richard Jefferies Wildlife Walk: 175 miles for 175 years

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES MUSEUM is organising a Wildlife Walk across Southern England to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the birth of Jefferies. The route, through the main places in which he lived, will reflect the life and interests of the author, a Victorian writer with a passion for the countryside and the richness of nature. The public are invited to join in along any section of the walk they

wish. It will start at Broadwater Cemetery in Worthing where Jefferies was buried, go through Sussex and the suburbs of London, and follow the Ridgeway in Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire from Streatley past Uffington to Liddington Hill before dropping down to finish at the Museum in Coate, Swindon.



Richard Jefferies Museum

Marlborough Road, Coate, Swindon SN3 6AA

f t i Nature Cam

Home Activities Visit Us Help Us About Contact



IN THE WORDS OF ELIZABETH DERRINGTON, a volunteer at the Richard Jefferies Museum "The Walk has been officially launched and we're inviting as many people as possible to join in between now and November. All we ask participants to do is to have a look at the information on the Museum website (www.richardjefferies.org/wildlife-walk), choose a bit of the route (short or long), follow it (on foot or by any other method) sometime between now and November and then let us have their reactions (in photos, drawings, words...) to the environment they passed through – focusing perhaps on the nature and wildlife they saw or the changes there have been since Jefferies' time. In November, after celebrating Jefferies' birthday, we'll start to pull together the responses into a book to follow up "Wildlife" which was published by the Museum in 2022."



The Ridgeway Hall of Fame

IF YOU HAVE EVER walked or run along the whole length of the Ridgeway, or cycled or ridden a horse along the Ridgeway between Avebury and Goring-on-Thames, why not enter the Ridgeway Hall of Fame? You don't need to have done it in one go. To find out more go to www.facebook.com/RidgewayNationalTrail



You can see more members of the Hall of Fame [here](#)

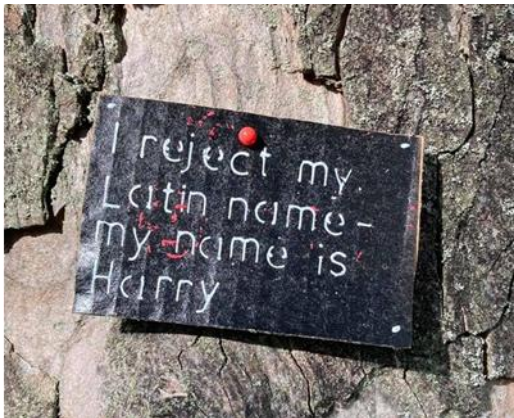
“Started March 2020 at Ivinghoe Beacon on a very stormy and muddy day. Started walking sections again after lockdown and finished today. Thoroughly enjoyed the wide variety of the Ridgeway. Besides the walk we found lots of little cafes to stop for coffee and cake too.”



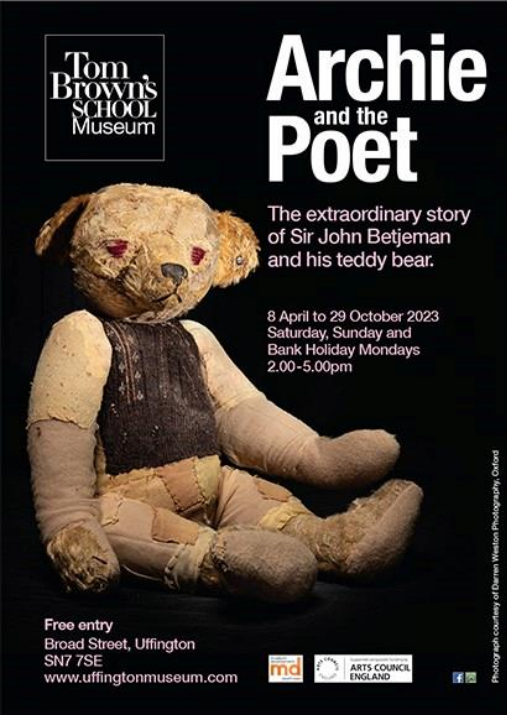
Bill Bailey was the first in the Hall of Fame, 2017



Karin ran the Ridgeway in one go in 2020



This spaceship landed right in front of me and out came a cream cake. It was one of those extra-cholesterols. You don't need qualifications to be a road sweeper. You just pick it up as you go along.



The lifelong friendship of John Betjeman and his teddy bear

SEVERAL PLACES can claim the poet John Betjeman as their own. Uffington is one of them; he lived there for 11 years. (There's a blue plaque on the wall of Garrards Farm, High Street, to prove it.)

The small but beautifully formed Tom Brown's School Museum in the village has a new exhibit, opened on 8 April, focussed on the teddy bear, Archie, that was given to Betjeman when he was three years old.

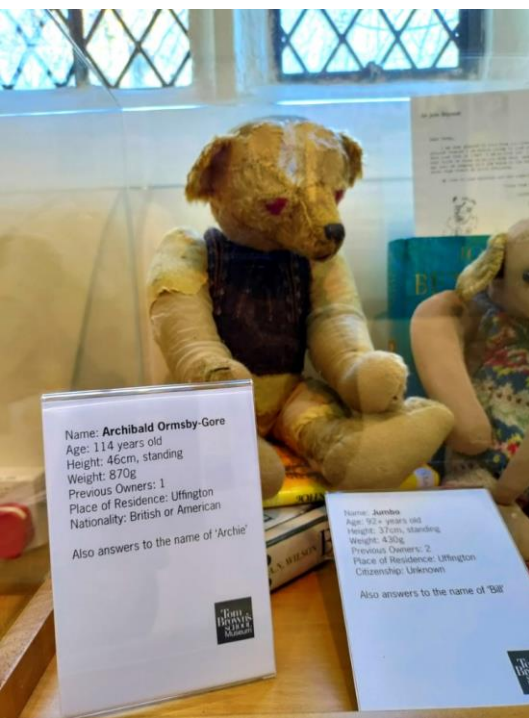
ARCHIE – full name Archibald Ormsby-Gore – and Betjeman were the inspiration for Sebastian Flyte and Aloysius in Evelyn Waugh's novel *Brideshead Revisited*.

This and much more, including how Archie was X-rayed prior to restorative surgery, is revealed by the museum's curator, Garry Gibbons, in a high quality exhibition.

Uffington is a good place from which to start to explore Whitehorse Hill, Dragon Hill, the Giant's Stairs and the Manger, and the Ridgeway behind them. The museum is open on Weekends and Bank Holidays from 2 -5 pm, starting at Easter through the end of October.



Garry Gibbons, curator of the Tom Brown's School Museum



The museum has another new exhibit on the Scouring of the White Horse.

Garry has a programme of talks, held in the village hall. Details on the museum's Facebook page.



FoR trustees for the coming year

At the AGM on 23 April your new executive committee, comprising eight trustees, was elected. Ed Peveler has stepped down as a trustee and we are joined by Carl Moffatt as Secretary. Dave moved from that role to focus on communication.

Mike Lewington
(Chair)



Tim Lewis (Treasurer,
Membership Sec.)



Jane Imbush



Nathan Boyd



Jim Gunter



Duncan Strutt



Dave Cavanagh



We are delighted that Elizabeth Turner, who co-organised the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize with Jane and Nathan this year, will be project manager for the Prize next year.



You can add interest to a walk along the Ridgeway by embracing Friends of the Ridgeway's #RidgewaySpotter activity, created to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Ridgeway National Trail.

THE ESSENCE of #RidgewaySpotter is that each month FoR encourages you via social media to look for a particular feature of the Ridgeway and to post your photographs on social media with the hashtag #RidgewaySpotter. There is a [guide that you can download](#). This has examples of what you might look out for, with links to additional information. We encourage you to photograph what you find and to use your favourite social media app – with the hashtag #RidgewaySpotter - to share your photos with friends, family and others. We shall be on the lookout for posts with #RidgewaySpotter in them so that we can respond to them and share them to the [Friends Facebook page](#) and elsewhere. You can see some of our members' photos on the following pages.

Mary-Ann lives near the eastern end of the Ridgeway. Find out more on Twitter and Instagram @MaryAnnOchota or at www.maryannochota.com

The Patron of the 50th anniversary of the Ridgeway National Trail is Mary-Ann Ochota, pictured above on the cover of the [guide](#) to the #RidgewaySpotter activity.

MARY-ANN is a broadcaster and author specialising in archaeology and anthropology. She's presented Channel 4's Time Team, and recently Mystic Britain on Smithsonian Channel. Her books on British archaeology include Hidden Histories: A Spotter's Guide to the British Landscape, which helps you identify ancient features in the countryside around you, and Secret Britain: Unearthing Britain's Mysterious Past. She's also the British Mountaineering Council's Hillwalking ambassador.

APRIL
SINGING RIDGEWAY

Are there birds that you see near your home that you also see on The Ridgeway and others that are different? Can you hear them singing? Several birds, such as skylarks shown in the photo above, nest on the ground so keep to the worn track – if you see birds flying up from the ground or landing down on the ground, it means they are vulnerable to you or your dog disturbing them.

THE RIDGEWAY IS A GREAT PLACE TO LOOK FOR AND LISTEN TO BIRDS. SOME ARE EASIER TO IDENTIFY THAN OTHERS – GET STARTED BY LOOKING FOR A KITE OR A YELLOWHAMMER.

Use the RSPB website to find out more about different bird species, such as this webpage about the Yellowhammer: [FIND OUT MORE](#)

Compare what you hear on the Ridgeway with these recordings of birds singing: [FIND OUT MORE](#)

This free spotter guide provides a list of several birds found along The Ridgeway: [FIND OUT MORE](#)

Watch Clare Bidding talk about skylarks and dogs in this video: [FIND OUT MORE](#)

THE RIDGEWAY NATIONAL TRAIL

Share your photos on social media #RidgewaySpotter

MAY
LOOK FOR WHITE

How many different types of white things can you see? What is the most surprising or unusual white thing you can find? Which white flower has the best or worst perfume? Can you visit a chalk horse or other chalk mark along The Ridgeway? How many sheep and lambs can you count during your walk/ride?

Use the #BlossomWatch guide to identify the white flowers on different shrubs and trees: [FIND OUT MORE](#)

Watch this video to see how the famous chalk horse at Uffington is kept white: [FIND OUT MORE](#)

Learn about the significance of sheep and wool to the Ridgeway area here: [FIND OUT MORE](#)

Here's a video of the Dogfather Graeme Hall explaining how dogs can cause sheep deaths: [FIND OUT MORE](#)

THIS MONTH LOOK FOR WHITE THINGS, BOTH ON THE RIDGEWAY AND IN THE DISTANCE.

THE RIDGEWAY NATIONAL TRAIL

Share your photos on social media #RidgewaySpotter

JUNE
THAT'S OLD!

What is the oldest built thing you can find during your walk/ride and what is the most unusual? What materials are used in the construction and can you imagine or find out who built it? Where can you find old trees? You may be surprised to know that an ancient Hawthorn measures 1.5m or more around its trunk, compared to over 6m for ancient Oak.

HISTORIC ROUTEWAYS OFTEN LEAD TO ANCIENT MONUMENTS, OLD TREES AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS.

Check out the history timeline in the Ridgeway leaflet to get you started: [FIND OUT MORE](#)

Watch this video of the National Trust ranger showing a group around the oldest monument along The Ridgeway – Wayland Smithy's long barrow: [FIND OUT MORE](#)

Find out about ancient trees here: [FIND OUT MORE](#)

Use this video guide about ancient trees to estimate how old your tree is: [FIND OUT MORE](#)

DON'T KNOW HOW OLD? Post photos of what you find on social media tagged #RidgewaySpotter and ask the question!

Photo: windmill, one of the oldest post mills in Britain, can be seen from the Trail

THE RIDGEWAY NATIONAL TRAIL

Share your photos on social media #RidgewaySpotter

The #RidgewaySpotter guides for April, May and June. You can [download the guide](#) from the Trail's website

THE RIDGEWAY NATIONAL TRAIL OFFICER has created the Ridgeway Top 50 that is available on the Trail's [Facebook page](#). It was launched by the Trail's patron, Mary-Ann Ochota, on New Year's Day. The Ridgeway Top 50 is a year-long treasure hunt revealing the rich history, wildlife, art, farming, sport and landmarks of The Ridgeway. It is designed to offer something new and free for everyone to enjoy online and to inspire ideas for days out and longer trips to the Trail during 2023 and beyond.

EACH WEEK of 2023 will reveal a new entry to build a complete set of 50 stories of fact and fiction linked to places to visit, to experience the Top 50 first-hand. Each entry is published in conjunction with a social media post every Sunday at 7pm until 31st December on The Ridgeway National Trail's [Facebook](#), Twitter and Instagram pages. You can also follow the Ridgeway Top 50 using the hashtag #Ridgeway50. You can share your thoughts and experiences of the Top 50 using the hashtag #Ridgeway50 to create a Ridgeway community Top 50 as a memento of the 50th anniversary.



Fifty stories of fact and fiction to inspire visits along The Ridgeway



Walker and blogger Ruth Nolan made this gorgeous Birthday Card of images from the Ridgeway National Trail for the Ridgeway's 50th anniversary. Yellow was the theme for the March Ridgeway Spotter. Read about Ruth's walk between Princes Risborough and Chinnor in the March sunshine and showers: <https://walkingaway.uk/2023/04/01/the-ridgeway-to-chinnor/>



8-9 July 2023

<https://www.thresholdtrailseries.com>

LAST YEAR was the first time that Friends of the Ridgeway was a Participating Charity for the Race to the Stones. We were very fortunate that Lucy Duerdoth, who manages the Ridgeway and Thames Path Volunteers, raised £750 in sponsorship for FoR, to be used to preserve the spirit of the Ridgeway and maintain and improve the Trail.

We are also a Participating Charity in this year's event. Consequently we are seeking people who will take part and raise money for FoR. Participants can walk, jog, run or a combination of all three. Some people are driven to complete the route quickly, competing with others for fast times, others just want to get to Avebury within the 24-hour time limit. If you feel like having a go, instructions on how to do so are on the next page. If not, perhaps you know someone who would be interested in the Race to the Stones, and in raising funds for the betterment of the Ridgeway. If so, please forward this newsletter to them.

The UK's favourite ultramarathon along the UK's oldest path

🚩 **Date:** 8th-9th July 2023

🚩 **Route:** Lewknor to Avebury

🏃 **Distance:** 100km / 50km

The 100 km 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 or a combination of the three.



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 100 km 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

How to enter and support The Friends of the Ridgeway

In your search engine type in “Race to the Stones 2023”. In the dropdown under the top level ‘Race to the Stones’ tab click on ‘Packages’. On the next page choose your package and then select the appropriate ‘CHARITY ENTRY – ENTER NOW’ for you (non-stop, or weekender ± camping). On the next page scroll down to get to ‘Charity: Participating’. 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.



Your 100km Options

Non-stop

The original challenge of the full route to Avebury stone circle in one go

Date: 8th-9th July 2023

Start/Finish: Lewknor/Avebury

Ballot Price: £145

Standard Entry: £170

Charity Entry: £40

CHARITY ENTRY - ENTER NOW

GENERAL ENTRY - ENTER NOW

2-days inc. camping

Make a weekend of it and stay overnight at our all inclusive base camp

Date: 8th-9th July 2023

Start/Finish: Lewknor/Avebury

Ballot Price: £225

Standard Entry: £250

Charity Entry: £60

CHARITY ENTRY - ENTER NOW

GENERAL ENTRY - ENTER NOW

2-days exc. camping

Complete 50km each day and arrange your own overnight stay nearby

Date: 8th-9th July 2023

Start/Finish: Lewknor/Avebury

Ballot Price: £135

Standard Entry: £155

Charity Entry: £30

GENERAL ENTRY - ENTER NOW

You can also register for the 50K (single day) option.

Top 5 Reasons to Take Part in Race to the Stones

1. **UK's oldest trail:** An unforgettable route running towards the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Avebury stone circle
2. **Unrivalled support:** World class support whether you set the record or make the most of extended cut offs
3. **Accessible terrain:** A fantastic mix of woodland, riverside and ridge trails without the need for technical skill
4. **90% completion rate:** Extended cut off times and medical support at every stage make it the a fully accessible Ultra
5. **Community:** Join our community of thousands of Ultra runners and walkers for guidance, support and camaraderie



Tips and experiences of three participants in the Race to the Stones

EVEN IF YOU WOULDN'T GO on the Race to the Stones in a million years (which is about how long it would take me) you'll be interested in the reminiscences of these three people who are made of sturdier stuff.

LUCY DUERDOTH (volunteer coordinator with the Ridgeway National Trail), Martin Beecher (a National Trail volunteer) and Rebecca McNaught (member of Oxfordshire County Council Countryside Access team) share their experiences of preparing for the Race and memories of the event.

REBECCA AND MARTIN walked all the way, Lucy walked and ran 50-50. Rebecca and Lucy took the two-day option (50 km each day) while Martin did the whole 100 km without a sleepover.

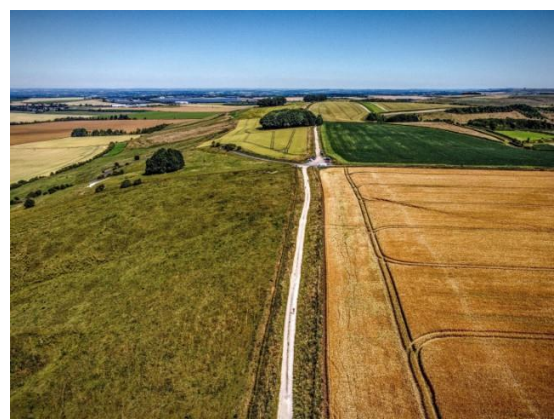


LUCY, who did it in 2022, explained that she "... set out to see how my training went and decided to set myself three goals for the event (which is what I typically do for any sport event): to enjoy myself in the training and the event (for the majority of the time); to finish it within the 24hrs; to walk half and run half each day.

REBECCA also did it in 2022, walking all the way, with, like Lucy, an overnight stop in a tent at the 50 km mark. "I walked with a friend who I had trained with, but not walked a 'race' with before. We joined up with a solo walker on day 2 and were the last three over the finish line, just within the set time limit."



MARTIN completed the Race to the Stones twice, in 2018 and 2019. "I guess you forget the exhaustion, blisters and lost toenails." He walked all the way, without an overnight sleep.



Sense of achievement

“I GOT A REAL SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT – of both sticking to my training programme and completing the event,” said Lucy. “I also found that I built up my endurance running and that I really enjoyed the running training and exploring my local area and other areas, as I had to keep training even when on holiday. It also got me out running in places and distances I wouldn’t have done otherwise. And I also got fitter and stronger.”

Martin said that “The views along the Ridgeway are nothing short of spectacular and you really get the sense of how it must have been so long ago when you do it as one continuous section.

“I have now done three 100K walks, each over 2 days,” remarked Rebecca. “The Race to the Stones was my favourite.” Shortly after writing this Rebecca was going to do a 50K one-day walk. “This is addictive. And a great way to keep up your fitness all year round.”

Training

LUCY commented that “I’d never done anything this long before in one discipline - I did the Coast to Coast 105 miles in Scotland in 2017 but that was running, cycling and kayaking, and I’ve done Duathlons and Triathlons before, so I was intrigued as to how I’d find the training and if I could do it and enjoy it. I started my training in February and followed a 20-week training programme (based on the ones we had access to once you signed up to RTTS), as I wasn’t running that far at that point - I was recovering from a back injury.

“I STARTED IN FEBRUARY as I knew I was going away on holiday in June and this gave me buffer time for not rigorously sticking to my training programme whilst away on holiday. It really depends on what your base-line running/walking distances are when you start, and you need to factor in what time you have to give to training not just in the weeks and weekends but also what holidays you have got planned.”

LUCY ALSO did other forms of exercise - cycling, swimming, HIIT, circuits and/or core strength classes, “cross training can help you prevent and recover from injury by adding mobilisation, stability and strength to joints and muscles, while increasing your overall fitness.”



Lucy in a running phase

MARTIN said that his training “... consisted of walking from Ivinghoe Beacon to Watlington and ensuring I did it well within 12 hours. Theory was that if I could do 50-something km in under 12 hours then 100 km is achievable. That worked for me, but I do a fair bit of walking anyway. If you are a couch potato then you may struggle with lack of stamina and more injuries. I didn’t suffer any blisters (I felt sorry for those that did) but I did lose both of my big toenails. They turned black and fell off after a week or so (not on the day of the race itself) but they do grow back!”

Lucy sets off.



“Looking after your feet is the most important thing once on the walk. That and hydration.” Tips and experiences during the Race

MARTIN mainly walked the 100 km. “The only stipulation of the race is to complete it within 24 hours, whether that is a straight 24 hours or split over the two days of 12 hours each (Saturday and Sunday). There are electronic timers at the beginning, halfway and at the finish so they keep track.” I elected to complete them in one go without a sleepover at the half-way point (I doubt I would have had any sleep anyway – they had a bar there. Can you imagine how you’d feel in the morning, I do!).

“The first 50 km of the race was tiring on the feet but there were pit stops that had drinks, snacks, everything you needed, just help yourself. And, of course, fresh water to keep hydrated, very important.”

Reflections

REBECCA considers that “It’s much better to do the Race to the Stones with someone, preferably a team, to give you encouragement especially when you are tired and you need to leave the comfort of the pit stop (one every 10 km or so). Having said that there are plenty of people you meet along the way who you will chat with and share stories, reasons for doing the race, generally in support of a charity.”

Rebecca walked all the way, completing it in about 24 hours. “It is an event for all (although there is a strict time limit to stick to).”

The second 50 km, during which Martin wore a head torch, was harder. “I set off again from the half-way point after taking on board lots of food around 8 o’clock in the evening to tackle the next 50 km. I felt fine for the first 10 km or so then my body/feet must have remembered the previous 50 km and decide to protest. Then you just have to remember to keep putting one foot in front of the other and ignoring any complaints from them.”

REBECCA and her friend took two days to complete the event and had full support from the organisers along the whole route. “My biggest tip is the socks – we changed our socks at every stop, and taped our feet in the known ‘hot spots’ before we even started the walk and used talc! Looking after your feet is the most important thing once on the walk. That and hydration.”



MARTIN walked through the night. “Walking the Ridgeway in the pitch black of night was interesting. Obviously, a head torch was needed even if just to see the path, but it was magical to experience nature at that time of night and see other torch lights in the distance, or were they fireflies?”

Martin remembers “I was at the 80 km pit stop just as the sun was announcing dawn around 4.30 or so. That was quite something to see and I spent far too long looking at it and needed to catch up on some time into Ogbourne St. George. I must admit to being very tired at the finish line and forgot to take photos.”



LUCY chose to run and walk: “I wanted to see the Ridgeway and join up all the bits I work on. I wasn’t particularly interested in walking/running through the night. I ran 25km both days and walked 25km both days, getting the running done first, and then walking afterwards.

Fundraising tips

LUCY: “emailed out to friends, family. I think social media can be a great help in getting your cause out there and your reasons for doing the event and why you want to support that charity.”

REBECCA: “I did things like car boot sales, small sponsored walks (with the kids) and raffles leading up to the event, rather than just asking people to donate. Another idea is getting people to guess your time, with a small prize for the closest as this keeps people interested all the way through the walk.”

MARTIN: “used social media for most of my fundraising and emailed everyone in my contacts list, even if I had not emailed, seen, or spoken to them for years. 100 km in under 24 hours? Not your average charity activity so it’s got to be worth something.”



Rebecca, left, at the finish.

Here’s the event website <https://www.thresholdtrailseries.com>



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.”