

Friends of the Ridgeway



Autumn 2023



Autumn 2023

www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk



@FriendsOfTheRidgeway

Welcome

Editor Dave Cavanagh
davecavanagh1000@gmail.com



Articles were written by the editor, Dave Cavanagh, unless credited otherwise.

Cover photo:
Celebration on Coombe Hill, Bucks, of the 50th anniversary of the Ridgeway National Trail.
L to R: Sarah Wright, Ridgeway Officer; Duncan Strutt, FoR trustee; Simon Kearey, Chair Ridgeway Partnership; Dave Cavanagh, FoR trustee.
Photo Mary Tebje, Ridgeway National Trail.



LOTS HAS BEEN HAPPENING, and still is, on Ridgeway National Trail this year. Over 70 people, representing many organisations, congregated on Coombe Hill, Bucks, on 29 September to celebrate the Trail's 50th anniversary (page 3).

This was covered by ITV Meridian, and this celebratory year had earlier inspired lots of coverage in national and local media. Attendees were asked by Ridgeway Officer Sarah Wright to look forward and to contribute their aspirations to the Ridgeway Future 50 Vision document. You can see some of their thoughts, including from the British Horse Society and The Friends of the Ridgeway, on the [Trail website](#).

Another Ridgeway '50' has very recently got underway, namely the Ridgeway 50 Photos. This is a project funded by Arts Council England and involves professional photographer Matt Writtle to inspire contributions (page 10)

Historic England are funding an Historic Ridgeway Project to improve the condition and management of archaeological sites along the Trail, to make them more accessible and meaningful to the public. Project Manager Dan Bashford explains all about it (page 13).

Part of the Trail north of the Thames is not available to horse riders and cyclists so an alternative route is being developed by the Ridgeway Partnership in conjunction with landowners. A leaflet about this is now available (page 17). On page 6 Janice Bridger describes Alison Elmer's journey on horseback along the Ridgeway in the North Wessex Downs and the Chiltern Areas of Outstanding National Beauty.

To keep up to date with developments along the Ridgeway, why not sign up to the Ridgeway National Trail newsletter? Email ridgeway@oxfordshire.gov.uk to be added to the distribution list. You can also follow events on the Ridgeway National Trail's Facebook page.



29th September 2023
Coombe Hill near Wendover, Buckinghamshire

**Photo Mary
Tebje,
Ridgeway
National Trail**

ON 29 SEPTEMBER, fifty years and two days after the opening of the Ridgeway National Trail on Coombe Hill, Bucks, over 70 people congregated there to celebrate its half-century. Attendees represented many organisations who had in common the desire for more people to visit the Ridgeway and to enjoy it and nearby attractions, savouring the past whilst looking to the future.

AFTER MUCH MINGLING, we heard first from Jo Burgon (left), who was the Ridgeway Officer from 1981-83. He was the first to quantify motorised traffic on the Ridgeway, which caused horrendous damage to the surface for the first 30 years or so of this National Trail. Improvements came in the early 2000s though recreational vehicles are still permitted on the Ridgeway in Wiltshire and West Berkshire during the drier half of the year. This is unfinished business. Current Ridgeway Officer Sarah Wright (right, who had worked tirelessly with her colleague Mary

Tebje to deliver this event and other related actions) talked about contemporaneous matters, including an ambition to increase the diversity of people visiting the Ridgeway. The event was brought to a close by Dame Fiona Reynolds (centre, who had served as Director-General of the National Trust, and had had senior positions in the Council for National Parks and CPRE) who reminded us of the sheer joy to be had on our National Trails, in our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Left to right Jo Burgon, Dame Fiona Reynolds, and Sarah Wright.



Right. Did you know that the Chiltern Hills were the birthplace of the mountain bike in Britain? They were built by an Aylesbury resident, Geoff Apps.



Ridgeway signs, old and new.

Chair of the Ridgeway Partnership, Simon Kearey, presenting a bouquet to Sarah Wright, Ridgeway Trail Officer.





Another of the attractions was the casting of a Bronze Age sword found along the Trail at Ivinghoe Beacon

The four photos above, clockwise from top left: Brett Thorne, Keeper of Archaeology at the Discover Bucks Museum, showing some replica swords of ones found

on the downs; Will Lord (left) of Will Lord Prehistory supervises his colleague in pouring molten bronze into a mould for a sword; scraping remnants of the mould from the new sword; artist Anna Dillon brandishing the sword – she won the raffle.



Publicity throughout the year by Mary Tebbe of the Ridgeway National Trail has resulted in lots of coverage in the media, including these outlets.



Meridian | South East

FOR SOME, the Ridgeway National Trail is a trail to be walked or ridden from end to end. But the Ridgeway is also a spine linking old drover routes and ancient monuments, which has allowed travel though, around and beyond the Wiltshire and Berkshire Downs, for millennia.

IN EARLY JUNE this year, Alison Elmer from Lincoln used the Ridgeway as a spine to explore both the North Wessex Downs and the Chiltern Area of Outstanding National Beauty on horseback. The previous winter had been spent planning a route and places to stay. Alison rode solo covering 220 miles over 12 days. She was not actually alone, though, as her trusty steed, Cortez, carried her the whole way. Cortez is a striking 16.3 hand high palomino who, remarkably, was unshod and ridden in a rope bitless bridle, demonstrating a trusting partnership between woman and horse. Cortez carried their needs for the day while Alison had arranged for all their other needs, including feeds for Cortez, to be transported from overnight stop to overnight stop for the 12 days and nights.



Alison and Cortez on day 1, where Old Street meets Beedon Common

A Journey in June

Janice Bridger, with the permission
of Alison Elmer.

The Berkshire Downs in their June glory



ALISON AND CORTEZ started their ridden journey from LG Equestrian at Streatley where they left the trailer in which they had travelled from Lincoln. On the first day, they climbed up onto the Ridgeway and experienced the wide open expanse of the downs. They dropped down into East Ilsley to pick up Woolvers Rd, recently repaired by West Berks Council after vehicle damage, then picked up Old Street travelling due south and into the pretty village of Bagnor with the River Lambourn running through it, a complete change of scenery to the open downland they had passed through earlier that day. That night was spent at Stockcross where a luscious grassy paddock for Cortez and a bed and breakfast for Alison were provided.



Now, what's going on here, thinks Cortez

THE SECOND DAY saw them travel across the Kennet Valley, then high up onto the Hampshire Downs, along the Wayfarer's Way and then down to Burbage where they passed near to Wolfhall Farm and Wolfhall Manor before staying the night at the Suddene Park Farm. Is that really the Wolf Hall on which Hilary Mantel's novel is based? They then rode a circular route and more of the Ridgeway over several days visiting Bishopstone, Broad Town, Stanton St Bernard with the Ridgeway finally taking them back to Streatley. But that was not enough on this epic journey. Alison and Cortez then travelled east into the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, using the Ridgeway where it is open to horses, and other routes where not, passing through Britwell Salome and Acton Turville and staying at Cholsey Grange.



A map comes in handy

Down into Pewsey



IT'S NOT ONLY the sense of achievement of the ride and seeing the varied countryside that makes a ride like this so special but the little surprises that pop up along the way: the unexpected wild flowers and the flora and fauna making the ride so special but also the people met along the way sharing the same excitement of a special journey being made. Exchanges took place with two ladies from Luxembourg who were staying at Hill Barn on the Ridgeway, and Robert, who was walking from Norfolk to Salisbury over three weeks.

This year, the Ridgeway celebrates its 50th Anniversary as a national trail but this was not the only birthday that was being celebrated. Alison celebrated her 70th with a party while on the ride!

A full account with many pictures and a map of their route can be found on Alison's Facebook page.



Above, a well camouflaged butterfly spotted along the way. Right, comfrey



Prof Lindsay Turnbull from the University of Oxford's Department of Biology (left) identifying plants for Ridgeway Officer Sarah Wright on the Ridgeway at Bury Down. Photo Wendy Tobitt

IN AUGUST, Ridgeway and Thames Path Volunteers converged on Bury Down, just west of the A34 in Oxfordshire, together with two employees of the Ridgeway Partnership - Lucy Duerdoth (coordinator of the volunteers) and Sarah Wright (Ridgeway Officer). They were joined by Prof Lindsay Turnbull from the University of Oxford's Department of Biology, her partner Alan, also Lindsay's son and girlfriend. Their aim was to cut and remove grass on the verges of the Ridgeway at Bury Down, site of the Department's experimental plots to ascertain how best to enable the natural flora of the downs to get established and thrive alongside the Ridgeway. The experimental plots showing the greatest diversity of natural downland plants are those where vegetation has been cut and taken away, particularly in combination with initial removal of the topsoil. This is because this form of management creates a lower fertility environment that favours native plants. You can read more about this work in the [News](#) section of the Ridgeway National Trail's website.



As autumn progresses the Volunteers switch from mowing soft vegetation on the verges of the Ridgeway to hard vegetation clearance e.g. overhanging trees and creeping brambles and briar.

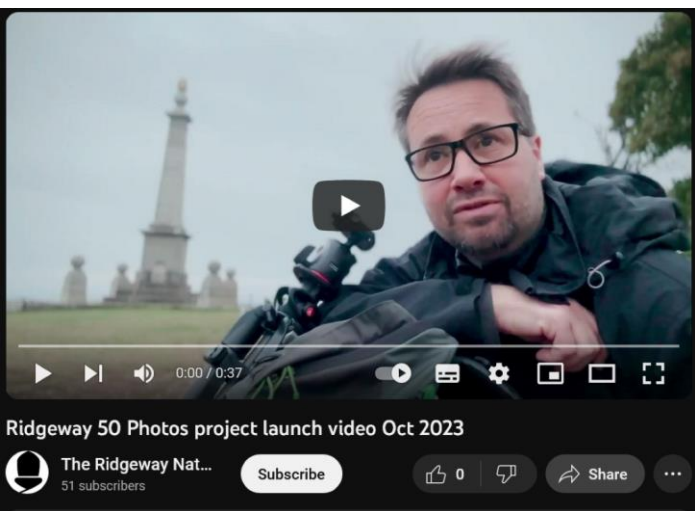


Sarah Wright, Ridgeway Officer

Learn from professional photographers and share your photos

IN CONTINUOUS USE since prehistory, there are many landmarks and stories to inspire budding and experienced photographers on a visit to The Ridgeway National Trail. To mark its 50th anniversary as a National Trail, a new project funded by Arts Council England was launched in September 2023 to encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to record and explore their experience of the Ridgeway, notice change and envisage the future through photographs.

PHOTOGRAPHY has been chosen as a medium that many people can readily engage with, especially if they carry a mobile phone with a camera. To encourage everyone to explore what they see, professional photographer Matt Writtle will be sharing vlogs about his work on the Ridgeway and exhibiting a collection of photographs along it and on social media. There will also be free outdoor photography workshops provided by Sharpshots to specifically encourage youngsters.



Watch [Matt's latest vlog](#)

Arts Council England project to inspire everyone along the Ridgeway



THE PROJECT will conclude with an exhibition of 50 photos by Matt Writtle and young people at the Queen's Park Arts Centre in Aylesbury and on the Ridgeway National Trail website in October-November 2025.

TO STIMULATE IDEAS amongst the public, Matt is taking photographs and recording [vlogs](#) between October 2023 and May 2024. Matt's work will explore three themes

- famous landmarks and their myths/legends, e.g. Wayland's Smithy long barrow
- lost and faded features and folklore, e.g. East Ilsley's sheep fairs
- and modern features e.g. Wroughton solar array

AS MATT'S WORK progresses, he will be sharing his vlogs and behind-the-scenes photos on social media with #Ridgeway50Photos. His final 25 photos will not be shared until August 2024 when they will be put on display alongside the Trail. The photos will be accompanied by brief text describing interesting aspects about the view and inviting Ridgeway visitors passing by to take their own photo of what is significant to them and to share them on social media #Ridgeway50Photos.

FROM SEPTEMBER 2024 to July 2025, Sharpshots will be providing free group workshops with cameras on the Ridgeway for schools, scouts groups etc based in Swindon, Reading, Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Luton. Sharpshots specialises in photography workshops for young people and this project is providing outdoor workshops suitable for ages 5 years to 19 years. Through skilful teaching, the workshops will facilitate young people's involvement in the project to ensure the Ridgeway anniversary recognises their perspectives, develops their skills and helps them visit the Trail. It is intended that this project will present opportunities for some youngsters who may rarely or never experiment with photography or visit the Trail or explore what they value/feel in the countryside. One of the exercises will identify signs of change/time depth in the landscape and ask them to imagine future forces of change in order to create a futuristic view or new folklore that they would like to pass on to future generations.

It is advisable for teachers, youth group leaders etc to register interest and book workshops as early as possible by emailing onlinebookings@sharpshotsphotoclub.co.uk. Note that the project does not cater for private workshops or individual/parent bookings – parents are advised to contact their child's school or youth group leader so that they can arrange bookings. More information about Sharpshots is available on their [website](#) and a project flyer is available [here](#).

The project culminates in a celebratory exhibition of 50 photographs at the Queen's Park Arts Centre in Aylesbury in October-November 2025. The gallery will display 25 photos by young people and 25 by Matt Writtle to celebrate the Ridgeway in its 50th year. Youngsters exhibiting their photos will be invited with their family to the exhibition opening afternoon to give them insight into the world of being a professional photographer or artist. All schools, scout groups, guide groups etc who were involved in workshops will be welcome to visit the free exhibition, as well as the general public.



A PROJECT FLYER is available [here](#). To stay updated about the project, please sign up for the Ridgeway newsletter by emailing ridgeway@oxfordshire.gov.uk and/or following The Ridgeway National Trail on Facebook, Instagram or X (Twitter).

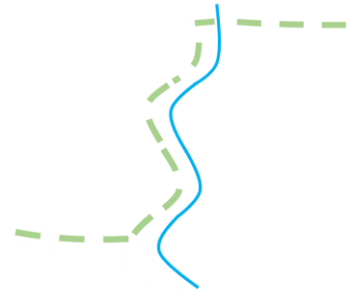
SPONSORSHIP AND DONATIONS to support this project are welcomed. Please email the Ridgeway National Trail Officer for more information: ridgeway@oxfordshire.gov.uk.



Masai Graham won the funniest joke of the Edinburgh Fringe trophy in 2016 with this joke: "My dad suggested I register for a donor card - he's a man after my own heart."

"My attempts to combine nitrous oxide and Oxo cubes made me a laughing stock" - Olaf Falafel at the 2022 Edinburgh Fringe.

Mind the Gap



Favourite TV programme of the Shakespearean crime-writers' guild:
Romeo and Juliet Bravo

Favourite song of the Toilet Manufacturers Association:

If you gotta go, go now, go now

In The Lamb pub, Wantage. Photo Dave Cavanagh

In the middle of COVID, 2021, the Sunday Times's economics editor David Smith invited readers to send in finance/business-related jokes, to cheer us up.

Baroness Ros Altman wrote: 'A pedestrian was attacked by a knife-yielding man who shouted "Give me all your money." The pedestrian replied "You can't threaten me like that - I'm head of HMRC." The attacker responded "In that case give me all *my* money."

Gordon Bottoms, formerly with Airbus, told of a chief executive sitting down in the back seat of his car, asking his chauffeur "Why do people take an instant dislike to me?" "Maybe they think it saves time, sir," the driver replied.

A week is a long time in politics...



Thomas Mackintosh
BBC News Live Reporter

Aren't they all?

Historic Ridgeway Project

Dan Bashford

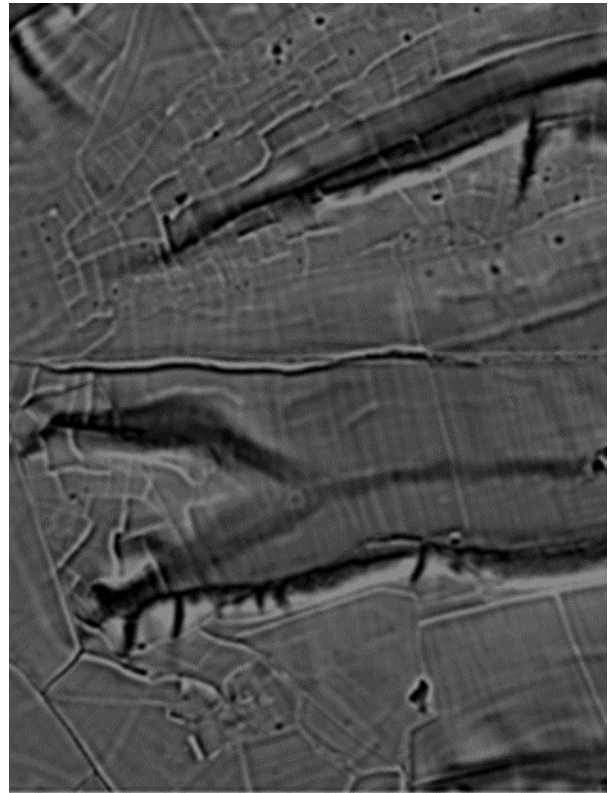
Historic Ridgeway Project Manager

TO INTRODUCE MYSELF, I'm Dan, and I have the great good fortune to have been appointed as Project Manager for the Historic Ridgeway Project covering the National Trail between Wayland's Smithy and Nuffield, east of Wallingford.

I GREW UP in West Hendred near Wantage, and have worked extensively as an archaeologist in the area for Oxford Archaeology, English Heritage, Natural England and Historic England. I started work on the Ridgeway Project on 4th September.

THE PRINCIPAL AIM of the project is to improve the condition and management of archaeological sites along the route, both Scheduled and un-Scheduled, and whilst doing so to improve inclusion, interpretation and active participation of local and wider communities in the understanding and care of these sites.

THE IMPROVEMENTS to management will hopefully be facilitated by condition surveys that I will be producing over the coming months. The management recommendations that these surveys provide will include works that can be undertaken by volunteers through the project's volunteer co-ordinator who will be appointed early next year. We hope that the research for these surveys will also lead to the enhancement or correction of the Schedule entries for a number of sites, or, where not Scheduled, update their entries on the county Historic Environment Record.



Prehistoric and Roman field systems around Streatley Warren, revealed by LiDAR.

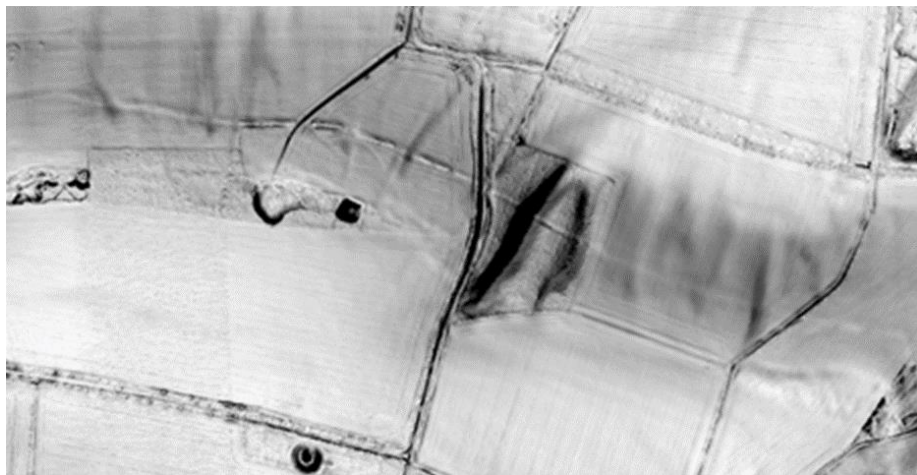


Excavations, by Harold Peake and colleagues in 1934, at the Scheduled East Hendred Down Barrow showing a Romano-British horse burial.

WE ARE HOPING to work with volunteers to undertake documentary research, undertake LiDAR ('light detection and ranging' or 'laser imaging, detection, and ranging') and aerial photograph analysis and other archaeological techniques to improve our understanding of the unrecorded archaeological resource along the route. Whether this is the extensive prehistoric and Roman field systems that can still be seen from the air and on LiDAR, or from ground-based assessments that monitor known sites and might identify new sites, from standing stones to pillboxes.

WE ARE ALSO seeking to work with communities currently under-represented amongst Ridgeway users to enjoy its many benefits along with its rich heritage. The half-forgotten stories, the legends and folklore associated with these sites reflect, in us all, a fascination and wonder with history and all its mystery. Excitingly, we have begun working with Historic England's Heritage Schools Programme to seek to bring sites along the Ridgeway into the teaching of Key Stages in schools to illustrate learning with places that students can visit.

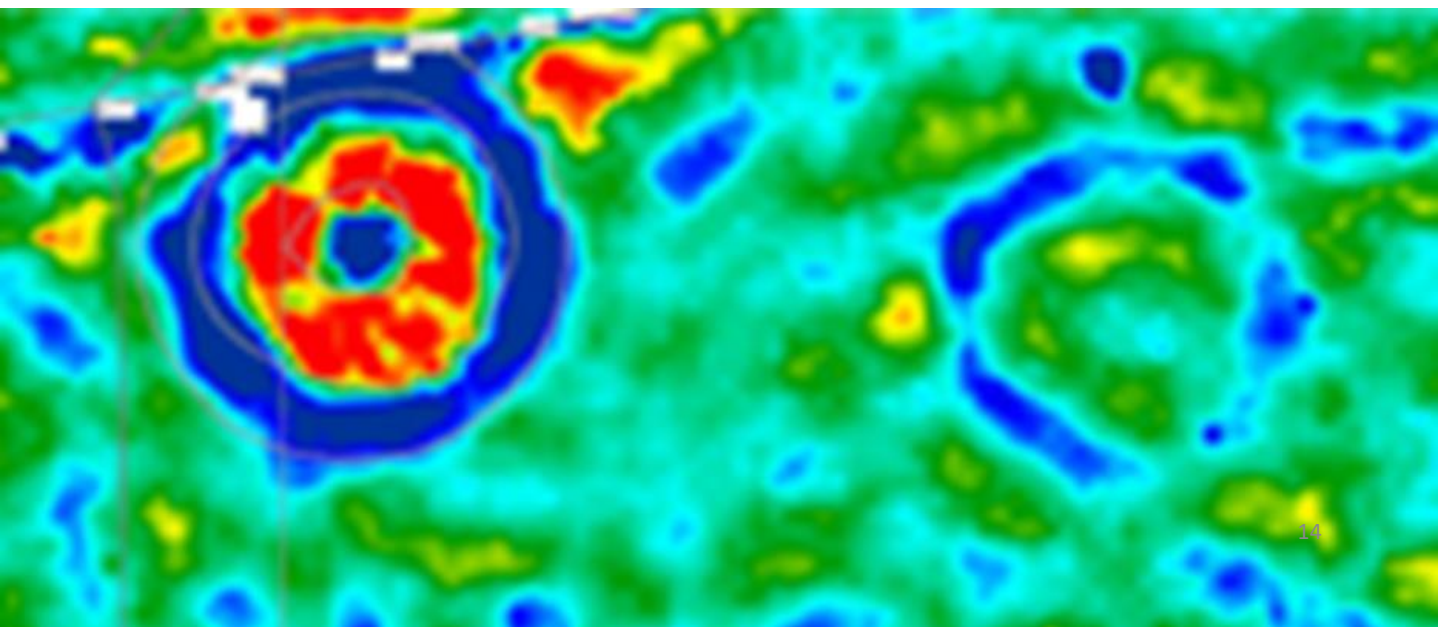
For further information or to participate please contact daniel.bashford@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Or visit the Project web page [Historic Ridgeway Project - National Trails](#)



Cuckhamsley Hill to the south with, to the north Grim's Ditch cutting across the face of the Berkshire Downs, revealed by LiDAR.

WHILST LOWBURY HILL may be my favourite site in Southern England, I have a particular fascination for Scutchamer Knob on Cuckhamsley Hill, standing shaped now (when clear of scrub) like an extinct volcano. It has such a rich and deep history and was such a hive of activity, it is now seen by many who pass it as just an earthen lump in the woods near the car park. This site, along with so many others, gives us a real opportunity to provide good interpretation and greater engagement with the Ridgeway and its tangible signposts to the past.

Geophysical survey in 2010 of the Scheduled barrow on Hackpen Hill above the Devil's Punchbowl. The ring ditch to the east is a previously unknown barrow, just visible as a slight rise on the ground.



Ridgeway Top 50

Discover 50 special things about The Ridgeway to celebrate 50 years since the Trail was opened



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



**SARAH WRIGHT
AND MARY TEBJE**

of the Ridgeway Partnership are creating a wonderful resource that is still growing by the week – every Sunday evening until the end of the year on the Ridgeway National Trail’s Facebook page. In their words “the Ridgeway Top 50 is a treasure hunt revealing the rich history, wildlife, art, farming, sport and landmarks of the Ridgeway.” Take a look.



Number 28: Swords and hoards

Posted on social media 16th July 2023

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Number 29: Famous archaeologists

Posted on social media 23rd July 2023

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Number 30: Chalk flowers

Posted on social media 30th July 2023

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Number 31: River Thames

Posted on social media 13th August 2023

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Number 32: Industrial heritage

Posted on social media 20th August 2023

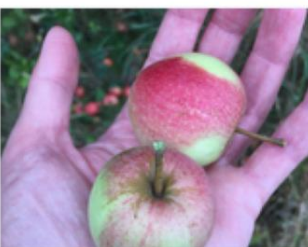
[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Number 33: Trail running

Posted on social media 27th August 2023

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Number 34: Fruits and nuts

Posted on social media 3rd Sept 2023

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Number 35: Viewpoints and views

Posted on social media 10th Sept 2023

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Number 36: Highest hills

Posted on social media 17th Sept 2023

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



FROM TIME TO TIME you might be minded to make a donation towards making the Ridgeway an even better experience than it currently is – for us now and for future followers of the Trail.

IF YOU WANT TO GIVE US – The Friends of the Ridgeway (FoR) - the choice of how to use your donation then click on the green ‘Friends of the Ridgeway’ button on our [homepage](#).

TO DONATE TO THE RIDGEWAY PARTNERSHIP (FoR is a member), which is responsible for the improvement and publicising of the Ridgeway National Trail, then to donate click on the green ‘Ridgeway 50th Anniversary button’. Your money is held by FoR in a ring-fenced Ridgeway National Trail account. We only make that money available to the Partnership following applications from them for specific projects to improve and publicise the Ridgeway.

FoR IS A KEY MEMBER of the steering committee of the **Great Chalk Way** (GCW), a series of linked long distance trails, including the Ridgeway, with a western terminus at Lyme Regis in Dorset and, some 400 miles away, the eastern end at Holme-next-the-Sea in Norfolk. You can find out more about it on [our website](#) and on that which is dedicated to the [Great Chalk Way](#). To donate to the GCW then click on the green ‘Great Chalk Way’ button. Your money will then be held in a ring-fenced GCW account by FoR.

Christmas gift
for friends, family and The Ridgeway

★ £50 to celebrate 50 years as a National Trail ★

2024 membership with Friends of the Ridgeway
plus two special gifts:
Illustrated Ridgeway map A4 poster
Guided group walk with an expert in 2024

Organise your gift online using the Friend's membership form
<https://ridgewayfriends.org.uk/join-us/>

Text-to-donate is quick and easy to use as it doesn't need an internet connection. Donations can be from £1 to £20. To make a donation, text **RIDGEWAY**, followed by your donation amount, to **70560**. Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard network rate message. Friends of the Ridgeway's charity number is 1107926. Having made a donation, you will receive the following messages: To add Gift Aid and thus increase the amount of your donation by 25% please visit <https://mo.donr.com/k8g26>. To upgrade your donation to a monthly donation, reply YES to set up. Help? 03334444111.

Interested? Look on the homepage of our website
www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk

Ridgeway Riding Route



THE RIDGEWAY PARTNERSHIP, the body that manages and promotes the Ridgeway National Trail, is developing a new route for cyclists and horse riders through the Chilterns. Why?

WELL, 22 miles of the Ridgeway through the Chilterns are officially classed as footpaths, which can only be used by those on foot or mobility scooter. This means that whilst cyclists and horse riders can travel along three-quarters of the Trail, they can't do the whole thing, which is a shame.

THE PARTNERSHIP is working with the British Horse Society, Cycling UK and landowners to create a bridleway roughly parallel with the Ridgeway so that cyclists and horse riders can enjoy a good quality route between Overton Hill, the western terminus, and Ivinghoe Beacon, at the east end.

THIS WILL TAKE years to achieve although money from HS2 Ltd is enabling the first section of the riding route between Pulpit Hill, near Princes Risborough, and Chivery, near Wendover, to be created. The funding is to pay for signage, surface improvements, cycle stands and more.

YOU CAN READ MORE [here](#) and download a [flyer](#) with an overview.



Jim Gunter

AFTER 15 YEARS as a Trustee of The Friends of the Ridgeway, Jim Gunter has recently resigned from this role. Jim is an archaeologist who is active in the Avebury area. The impromptu nature of his work meant that he often couldn't make it to FoR committee meetings. Thank you, Jim, for your long and cheerful service to FoR, and for offering archaeological articles for the newsletter from time to time.

RECENT ENTRANTS TO THE RIDGEWAY HALL OF FAME

YOU CAN ENTER the Ridgeway Hall of Fame after walking along the whole of the Ridgeway, however long it takes. You get in, free, at the top of the Ridgeway National Trail's Facebook page and click on this link

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.217067399777833...>

To find out more about the adventures of those who are in the Hall of Fame, just click on their photos.



Monica, from Canberra had walked from Ivinghoe Beacon to Streatley with her sister, and was completing the Trail with her partner Tim, who grew up in Compton and is clearly a lover of the Uffington White Horse. Photos Wendy Tobitt.



Maren and Arne travelled from Germany to walk the Ridgeway National Trail – the 11th long distance trail that they have walked in the UK.



Alan and Sam completed the Trail over nine days in September. Staying in pubs-with-rooms along the way, they managed well with local taxis and public transport. "We enjoyed the trip east to west as we found it much easier walking in that direction" said Alan.



LETCOMBE REGIS

United Kingdom

Day 7 already!!!



Above, Joanne completed the Ridgeway solo in July. "It was the best time ever, the beautiful scenery and wildlife ... the sites of interest like Wayland's Smithy."

Left, two of local family Deb, Finn and Jim who completed the Trail during this summer holiday. They walked, ran and used public transport, including the Chinnor & Princes Risborough stream railway and also enjoyed watching some location filming. Jim told us; "we knew the area from previous trips but it was great to be able to join them all together by doing the trail in its entirety (over 13 day trips). We have seen places to go and explore in more depth in the future."

The BBC was at the Uffington White Horse in August to film archaeologists discussing the removal of turf to return the horse to something like its original size, as reported in our Summer 2023 newsletter.



Adrian Cox

National Trust

SOUTH TODAY



BBC

@LIVE 1330-1345

South Today

Lunchtime News: 03/08/2023

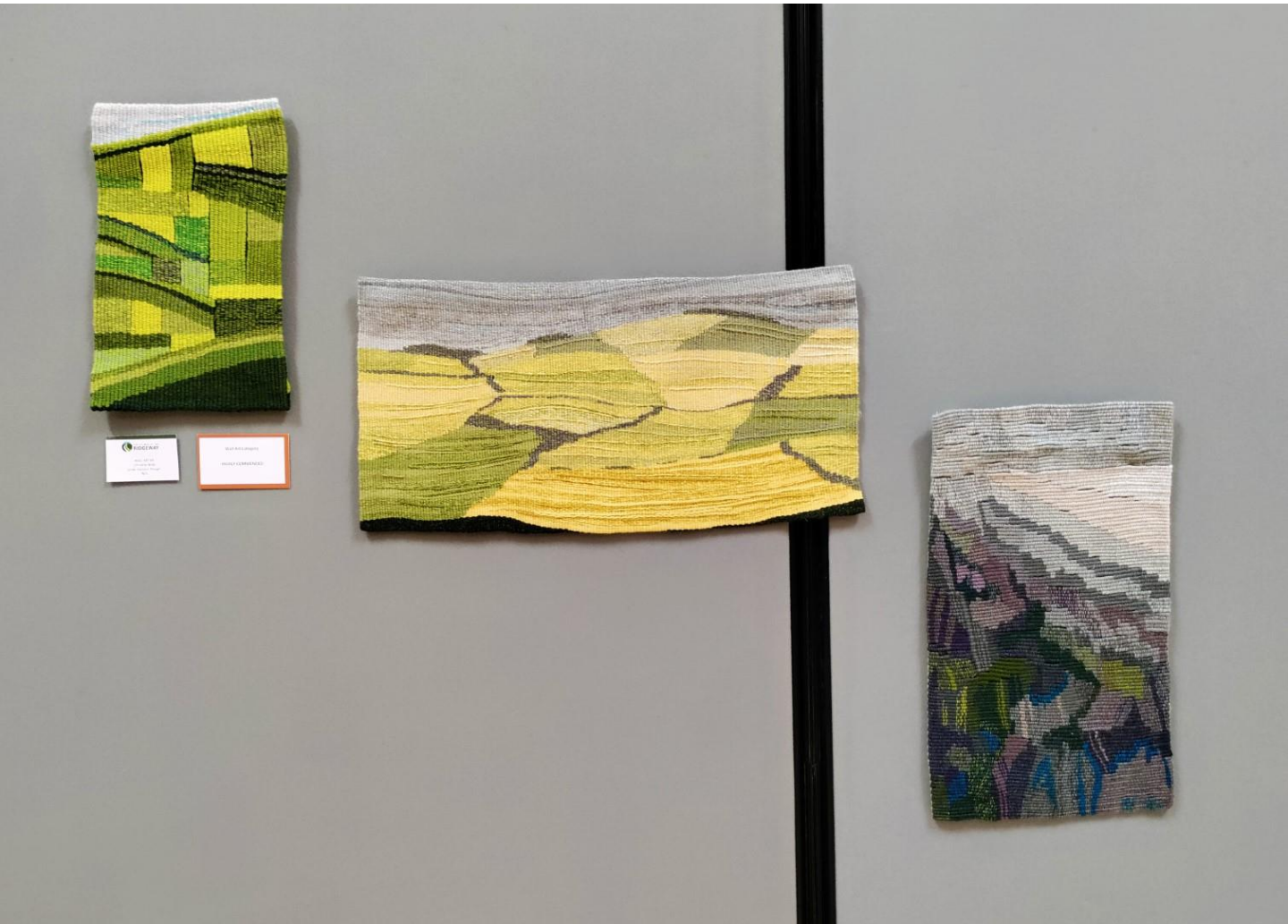
In this issue we look at the runners-up and highly commended works in the Wall Art category

Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize 2023



Wall Art Runner-up: *Looking east from Chain Hill*, by Martin Beek.

Wall Art Highly Commended: *Grow. Harvest. Plough.* By Christine Wild.



Wall Art Highly Commended: View from Brush Hill, by Emma Williams



Wall Art Runner-up: LOST now FOUND, by Jennie Wood.



The theme for the 2024 Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize is

Signs and symbols along the Ridgeway

**Details are on The Friends of the
Ridgeway website**

27 & 28 April 2024, Thomas Hughes Memorial
Hall, Uffington

The AGM of The Friends of the Ridgeway will held on
Sunday 28 April 2024 at 15:00 in the Thomas Hughes
Memorial Hall, Uffington SN7 7SE

Exhibition in Newbury

Nick Schlee is an artist who has made the landscape around the Ridgeway a favourite subject. He has an exhibition of his paintings at the West Berkshire Museum, Newbury, until the end of March 2024. The exhibition features oil paintings of various views along the Ridgeway between Streatley and Avebury. [Here](#) is a link to a catalogue of his work in the exhibition.

**Look again: this green leaf is actually a
brimstone butterfly feeding on toadflax
on the Ridgeway at Bury Down. Photo
Wendy Tobitt.**





#RIDGEWAY SPOTTER

Click on the link above to see all of the monthly #Ridgeway Spotter activities during the year



SHAPE OF THE LAND

WINTER IS STRIPPING THE LANDSCAPE BARE, ESPECIALLY ON THE EXPOSED HILLTOPS.

Can you climb the high points of The Ridgeway to look for trig points? Can you use an Ordnance Survey map like the one on The Ridgeway website to find trig points and check their elevations? When the sun is low, shadows are cast across the ground to make it easier to spot earthworks (a type of archaeological feature). Can you find hillforts such as 'Barbury Castle' marked on maps and then go out to trace the earthworks (mounds and dips) on the ground? Wrap up warm when going to hilltops and make sure not to stray onto private land (take binoculars for those times you can't get close).

Watch this BBC News video about trig points:

[FIND OUT MORE →](#)

Look on OS maps for clues - blue triangle icons indicate trig points and historic features are labelled too. The OS map on The Ridgeway website is free to use:

[FIND OUT MORE →](#)

Check this new online map by Historic England to see where earthworks have been mapped:

[FIND OUT MORE →](#)

You can also search for Scheduled Monuments here:

[FIND OUT MORE →](#)



DOWN TO EARTH

AUTUMN LEAVES AND FUNGI
DRAW OUR ATTENTION TO THE GROUND AT THIS TIME OF YEAR.

How many different shapes of leaves can you spot and what artwork can you make with fallen leaves? How many different types of fungi (wild mushroom) can you spot and are they growing on the ground or on tree trunks or branches? Can you imagine the stories linked to fungi called Lemon Disco, Destroying Angel and Snaketongue Truffleclub? Wash your hands if you touch fungi and don't eat them in case they are poisonous!

Marvel at Andy Goldsworthy's sculptures using leaves and other natural items he finds:

[FIND OUT MORE →](#)

Use these free photo ID guides to identify what leaves come from which trees:

[FIND OUT MORE →](#)

This calendar gives you clues as to what type of fungi can be found at different times of year:

[FIND OUT MORE →](#)

Use these free ID guides for fungi growing on trees:

[FIND OUT MORE →](#)

Fungi growing on the ground:

[FIND OUT MORE →](#)



Autumnal leaf of a horse chestnut at Britchcombe Farm at the base of Whitehorse Hill. Photo Dave Cavanagh



WINTER SECRETS

WINTER IS A QUIET TIME WHEN YOU NEED TO LOOK AND LISTEN ESPECIALLY CAREFULLY



Prehistoric farming tools in Wiltshire Museum.

What patterns can you see in the bark of different trees? Can you find something made magical by ice, snow or fog, such as a frozen spider's web or ice hanging from a tree? Are there human, animal and bird footprints in the mud or snow? Can you find a local pub with a log fire? Can you visit a local museum and hunt for the most interesting/oldest/beautiful exhibit relating to The Ridgeway, e.g. an item made from chalk, a prehistoric item buried in a barrow along the Trail, an old photo relating to farming.

Here is a guide showing the bark of 12 common trees:

[FIND OUT MORE →](#)

Here is a free picture guide to wildlife footprints:

[FIND OUT MORE →](#)

Get inspired by the snow art of artist Simon Beck:

[FIND OUT MORE →](#)

Use The Ridgeway website's interactive map to find pubs and museums to visit - tick the box for 'Food and drink' and 'Attractions' respectively.

[FIND OUT MORE →](#)

