



Vale of the White Horse Local Group of Friends of the Ridgeway
(LGFoR) Annual Report February 2009 to March 2010.

Introduction:

LGFoR was brought into being by the Friends of the Ridgeway at a public meeting on 13th February 2009, held in the United Reform Church in Stanford in the Vale. The meeting was called to provide an opportunity for Friends of the Ridgeway members to consider the creation of a Local Group. At the conclusion of the meeting, the following persons agreed to participate as members of the first LGFoR Committee, or to offer support or advice.

Roger Griffin.	Chairman.
David Axford.	Main Committee Representative.
Sally Barnes	Treasurer.
Kate Crennell.	Support and Advice.
Joyce Gardner.	Publicity.
Lesley Gross.	Secretary.
Anna Hanslip.	Committee Member.
Thomas Loyd.	Support and Advice.

Organised Events:

During its first year of operation the LGFoR planned and delivered a series of events designed to cater to both physical and cultural objectives of local walkers. They were:

Friday 24th April. A Public Meeting from 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm in the small room of the Methodist Church in Wantage. At the meeting the group discussed its planned events for 2009/2010.

Saturday 6th June 2009. Roger and Lesley turned up to lead an accompanied walk from Court Hill along the Ridgeway to Woolstone Hill Car Park with transport support to return walkers to the start. The day was grey, cold, overcast and very wet, with only the walk leaders attending.

Wednesday 22nd July 2009. Following a visit to Dr Gary Lock's Archaeological site at Marcham and lunch at the Café in Ardington High Street, Roger and Lesley led an accompanied circular walk from Ardington via part of the Ridgeway. At the beginning of the walk, the walkers were given an introduction to the Ardington area by Mr Thomas Loyd of the Ardington Estate.

Sunday 11th October. Roger and Sally led an accompanied circular walk from Woolstone Hill car park to the Rose and Crown at Ashbury. A small band of walkers set off from the car park towards Woolstone and then followed the cross country path to Knighton, Compton Beauchamp arriving at the Rose and Crown for a well deserved lunch. After lunch there was an uphill walk back to the Ridgeway and then the group turned East returning to the start via Wayland's Smithy.



Wednesday 26th November. Dr Gary Lock of Oxford University gave a presentation in Faringdon Town hall on the history of Uffington Castle. He also provided background information and detailed descriptions of other monuments in the area such as White Horse hill, Segsbury and King Alfred's Castles. The event was very popular.

Sunday 6th December. Roger led an accompanied circular walk from the Royal Oak Public House at Bishopstone through the village and along the Field System to the Ridgeway. The walkers turned east along the Ridgeway, returning via Idstone for another well deserved lunch at the Royal Oak.

Thursday 25th February 2010. Dr Lesley Dunlop of the Oxfordshire Record Office gave a presentation on "The Geology of the Region", providing a fascinating insight into the subject showing how the type and availability of local stone influenced the architectural style of older village houses. This was the second of the LGFoR presentational evenings which was also very popular.

Forthcoming Events:

The LGFoR has planned a number of events for 2010 in addition to its programme of walks.

Thursday 29th April 2010: A presentation by M & G Taylor on local Lepidoptera to be held at Uffington village hall at 7:30 pm.

Saturday 26th June 2010: A presentation on "Red Kites" at Court Hill followed by lunch at the Court Hill restaurant or your own picnic in the grounds and an afternoon walk along the Ridgeway with a hope of seeing some "Red Kites".

Wednesday 21st July 2010: A visit to an excavation site at Marcham followed by a lunch opportunity at the Eastern Arms or picnic in the village and a walk in the East Hendred area.

It should be mentioned that at presentations, a small charge of £3 is made for non-members to defray the cost of refreshments and the cost of the venue. Booking on events is requested by contacting Joyce Gardner. Walks are for members, are free, non-members can always become members for the very reasonable charge of £5!

Other Events in Preparation for 2010:

A local walk to spot Butterflies.

A "Learn to Map Read" event.

A presentation from a Barn Owl Conservation Officer.

A presentation on Red Kites from an RSPB member.



A presentation on Butterflies and Moths.

A visit to a Racing Stable.

A visit to a Sheepdrove.

A LGFoR Barn Dance.

Conclusions:

The LGFoR committee has worked hard to promote the Friends of the Ridgeway Agenda. With the exception of its first walk, all of the LGFoR events have proved popular and have promoted the physical and cultural agendas of the Ridgeway societies.

The 2010 programme will build on the 2009 experience and continue to provide a series of events for all sections of local Ridgeway walkers.

It is important to acknowledge the imagination, support and enthusiasm of the LGFoR committee in the design of their programmes and the Friends of the Ridgeway for their funding which enabled the start of the cultural events.

Dr Roger Griffin
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Local Group
Friends of the Ridgeway