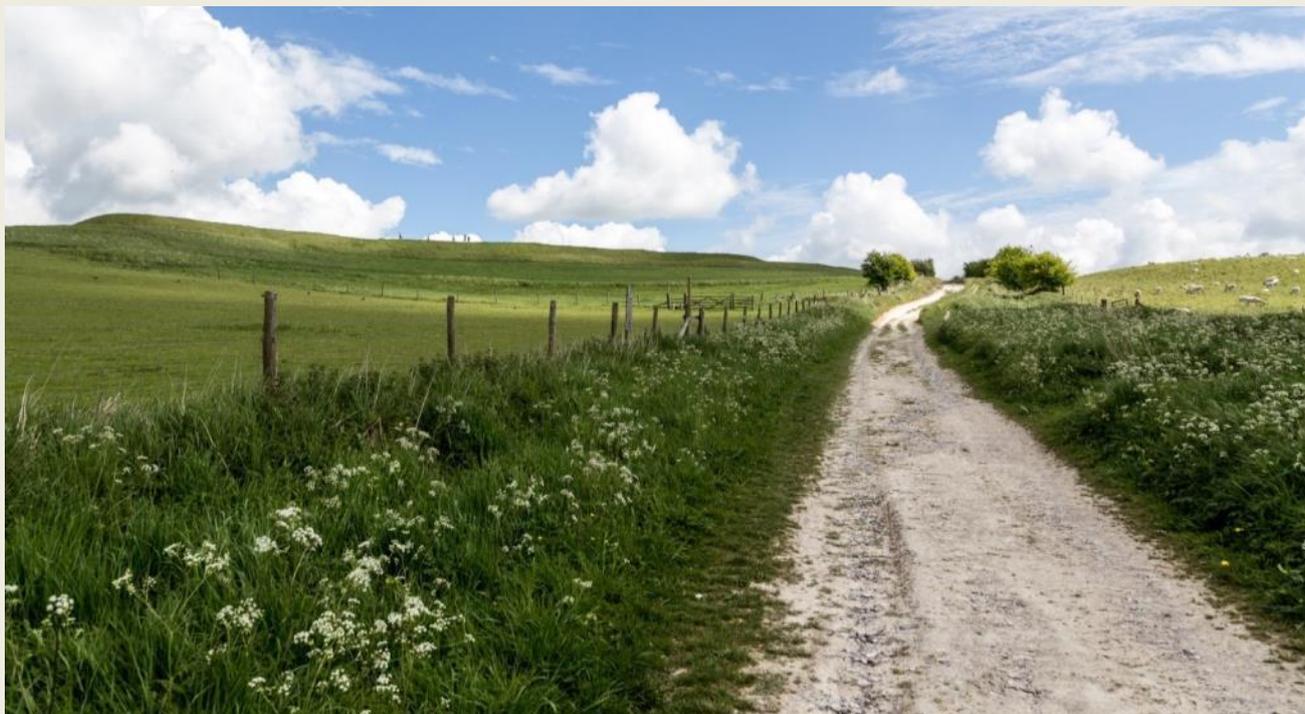


The Friends of The Ridgeway

Summer Newsletter, June 2017



From The Chairman

Dear Friends,

As I write, my sunburn keeps me warm even though the brief interlude of hot weather seems to have departed. Despite having lasted only two days, it was good to have a taste of summer. I hope that many of you had the chance in the fine weather to get out and appreciate the Ridgeway in whatever way you enjoy. Not only are there good things to look forward to in the summer weather, there are some good things to look back on and forward to in activities of the Friends of the Ridgeway.

It is wonderful to welcome two new members of our committee, Nicola Swan and Andy Greenhalgh as well as new members to the Friends; welcome all of you.

Undoubtedly the highlight of the last few months was the Ridgeway Friends Day, which included our AGM and the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize and Exhibition, both reported on elsewhere in this Newsletter and on our web site. We owe a real debt of gratitude, firstly to Sir Adrian Swire whose generosity made it possible to establish the Arts Prize and who, with great charm and graciousness, came along to inspect the Exhibition and to present the prizes. It was a great pleasure to welcome him to the Ridgeway Friends Day; his support for the Ridgeway in so many ways is very much appreciated. Special thanks are also due to Anna Dillon who not only contributed her professional advice, but also worked hard setting up the exhibition, as well as acting as the Painting Judge; her energy, commitment and expertise made the competition possible. Thanks are due to Dorothy Burrows as Chair of Judges, and to the other judges, Clover Stroud (Written works) and Derek Gale (Photography). And lastly, but most definitely not least, thank you to the Friends of the Ridgeway team, particularly Sally Barnes.

But also there are things to look forward to in the future. We are actively updating the web site under the direction of our joint web-masters Ricky Cunningham and Andy Greenhalgh; some changes are already evident, more are to follow, including background on the Greater Ridgeway. And we plan to become active on Facebook and Twitter on the same accounts that have existed for some time.

With all best wishes

Anthony Burdall

Ridgeway Friends Day and AGM, 2017

Our annual get-together this year took a new form yet again, with the launch of the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize and Exhibition. After some research we had settled upon a new venue for the event, the Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall in Uffington. This capacious building, with its imposing hall and excellent facilities, including ample parking, is surrounded by a wide area of parkland, with views across the Vale towards the White Horse itself, and proved to be just what was needed.



The Arts Prize and Exhibition required a great deal of work, reported on elsewhere. It aroused a great deal of interest and provided a stimulating and impressive show for both members and visitors, which we hope that all found worth their attention. It certainly drew a substantial attendance on Sunday 23 April, for Ridgeway Friends Day itself, and for the AGM. The weather was kind, dry, warm and sunny. The day's activities, apart from the Exhibition, started with a walk to the White Horse led as

always by Trustee Jim Gunter, which was well supported and enjoyed by all. We were fortunate in our collaboration with Leprosy Mission in benefiting from the catering for lunch and snacks provided by Sue Jennings and her team, enjoyed by many of us.

The formal proceedings of the day started with the AGM. Our Chairman Anthony Burdall reported on what has been another exciting year, noting the efforts put into a recruitment drive, aimed at boosting membership to demonstrate the level of support for our long-distance Trails. This effort must and will continue, alongside the Committee's on-going work to preserve the Ridgeway from ill-considered developments, such as those recently opposed at Nuffield, and the 1,000 houses proposed in the VWH District Local Plan within the North Wessex Downs AONB at Harwell Campus. We are planning a renewed effort to improve our web-site, and to extend our faltering presence in social media. All this of course alongside the launch of the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize.

Anthony thanked the Committee for all their work, mentioning John Edgerton particularly, unfortunately unable to be with us today, for acting most efficiently as Membership Secretary as well as Treasurer. The Vale of White Horse Local group has had another successful year, and has issued an enticing programme for this summer. Thanks are also due to Steve Sherman for his continuing work as Independent Examiner. We are happy this year to welcome two new candidates for election to the Committee, Andy Greenhalgh, a Bishopstone resident from the IT world and a Rambler, who introduced himself briefly; and Dr Nikki Swan from Streatley, an academic recently stepped down as Chair of her Parish Council.

The Treasurer's Report and Accounts were adopted without discussion and the elections of Lord Bradshaw as President, and of our Vice-Presidents, Officers and Trustees, were all duly carried, noting our good wishes for the re-election of our Vice-Presidents in the forthcoming General Election. Anthony thereupon drew the AGM to a close and asked Lord Bradshaw to introduce the Prize Awards for the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize.

Jeff Goddard
Secretary

The Swire Ridgeway Arts Competition

The Exhibition and Prize-giving for the Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize was held over the weekend of Saturday and Sunday, 22 - 23 April 2017, in the Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Uffington, located in the centre of the beautiful and historic rural village of Uffington in the Vale of the White Horse.

A total of 70 entries were received, comprising 7 written works, 1 sculpture, 11 photos and 51 paintings. Entries came predominantly from the Wiltshire and Oxfordshire Ridgeway corridor but included entries from as far afield as London and Exeter.

A distinguished panel of volunteer judges gave their time to assess the entries, led by Dorothy Burrows, well known locally as Director of the Betjeman Festival. The other judges were Anna Dillon, a painter famous for her works inspired by the Ridgeway, and a Director of Oxford Art-weeks; Derek Gale, a fine art photographer and lecturer: and Clover Stroud, author of the best-selling Ridgeway memoir, 'The Wild Other'. We are most grateful for all the time and careful judgement they brought to the task.



Overall winner prize



Judges consider overall winning entry



Lord Bradshaw, Sir Adrian & winners

It proved possible for all works to be exhibited, making a wonderful and varied exhibition of art works inspired by the Ridgeway. A hearty thank you is due to all entrants submitting works. The judges were very complimentary about the variety and quality of the work exhibited, and this was echoed by visitor reactions. The Exhibition attracted at least 173 visitors, and there were many comments also on the standard of presentation. The ambiance of the exhibition was enhanced by the excellent catering provided by volunteers for the Leprosy Mission.

We were delighted that Sir Adrian Swire, whose generous donation made the event possible, was able to announce the winners and to award the Prizes, following the Friends of the Ridgeway AGM. The prizes were hand-crafted glass items engraved by local artist Helen Godsell. Each category winner received a keeper prize plus £100, while the overall winner received a keeper prize plus £250 and a handsome trophy.



The overall winner was Susan Klemencic, for her mixed media piece, 'Views of the Ridgeway', which used textiles, paper and paint on board described by Anna Dillon as "a fresh, unique, contemporary work." Other comments by the judges may be found in a fuller report on the event on our web-site, at www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk. The other category winners were:

- Written Work: Gill Learner 'The Oldest Road'
- Sculpture: Sharon Rich 'The White Horse'
- Photography: Anne Pagett 'The Long and Winding Road'
- Painting: Lawrence David Ward 'The Ridgeway from Uffington Castle'



Views of Ridgeway



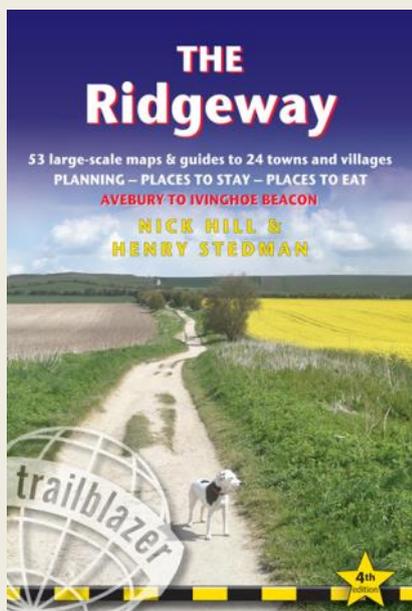
The Ridgeway from Uffington Castle



The Long and Winding Road

After the prize giving a cream tea was enjoyed by all at the exhibition. We were all delighted with the success of the Art Prize Exhibition over the week-end. The Friends of the Ridgeway owe a real debt of gratitude for all the expertise and hard work contributed by the judges and many helpers, and most particularly also to Anna Dillon, who not only contributed her professional advice and judgement, but also worked very hard in setting up the art works.

The Trailblazer Ridgeway Guide (4th Edition)



We are pleased to note publication of a new edition of the very popular Trailblazer Guide to the Ridgeway, the first new edition since 2012. Originally by Nick Hill, the Guide has been up-dated by the experienced Henry Stedman, with his dog Daisy, and accordingly includes notes on walking with a dog and several charming photos of her, amongst the wealth of colour photos; I'm pleased to note Daisy's recommendation of the Ridgeway as the best Trail she's yet experienced! The Guide, as always with Trailblazer, manages to fit into its compact, pocket-size format a wealth of useful information, covering access, towns and villages near the route with their accommodation and other facilities, and a nicely illustrated section on flora and fauna along the route. I was particularly taken with the improved, larger-scale maps, showing heights and gradients, as well as the many detailed sketch maps of the Trail. The Guide also again includes a handy list of GPS way-points for those navigating by smart-phone, also down-loadable from Trailblazer's web-

site, while warning against undue reliance on technology. All in all, a valuable up-date and confirmation of this compact Guide as one of the best available for the Ridgeway.