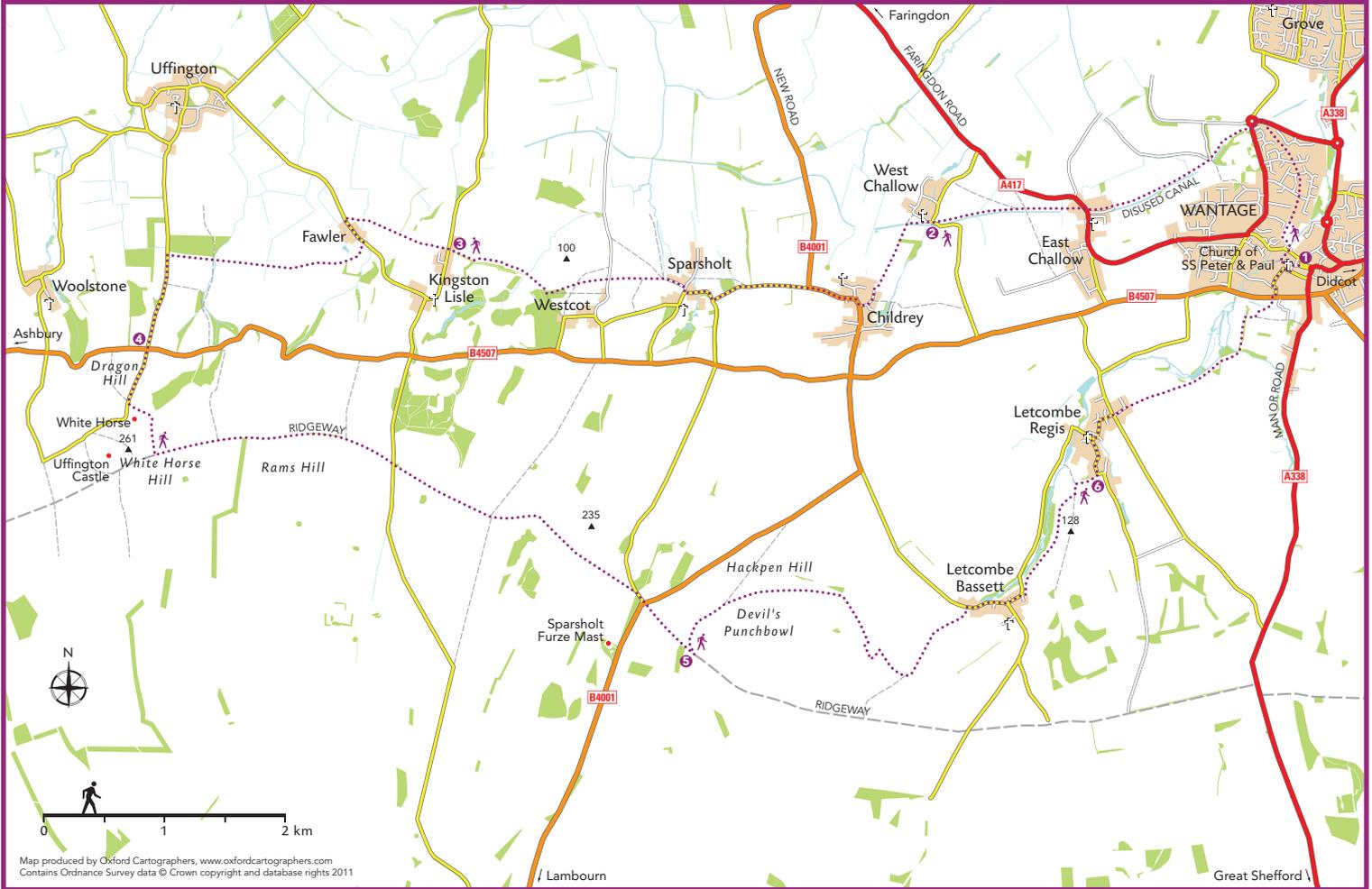


# WANTAGE AREA WALKS & CYCLE ROUTES



## Route 6 - White Horse Hill Walk

This long day's walk of almost 18 miles/28.5 km from Wantage to White Horse Hill and back passes through the Vale and returns on the Ridgeway. Initially the restored footpath of the old Wilts and Berks canal is followed, and the route then passes through the peaceful villages of Childrey, Sparsholt, Kingston Lisle and Fowler before ascending White Horse Hill. Only short stretches are needed on quiet roads. The first half of the return route is along the Ridgeway before descending to Letcombe Bassett through the Devil's Punchbowl which is often frequented by birds of prey. Letcombe Regis is reached by a path near a new Nature Reserve, and finally Wantage by a paved path across the fields.

**1** Leave Wantage Market Place and proceed west towards the church of SS Peter and Paul passing Barclays Bank and The Swan Public House. Continue through the churchyard along the church footpath to the steps on the far side. Proceed down the footpath immediately to the right of Old Church House. Upon reaching the iron bridge, turn right and continue alongside the Letcombe Brook. Continue under the Mill and cross the main road of Mill Street, taking extreme care.

Proceed to the left along the footpath through the garden. Take the narrow footpath between Mill Cottage and the old building with the 'West of England Sack Hiring Company' tin advertising sign. At the fork in the junction continue to the right and proceed along the footpath be-

tween the houses, forking right at the following two junctions, until you come to Witan Way. Continue straight ahead crossing the road and proceed along the path through the housing estate crossing the next two roads straight ahead also. You will begin to pick up the old canal on your left so continue along the canal path to the main road of Mably Way. Turn left and approach the roundabout following the tarmac footpath around to the left into Denchworth Road.

Join the surfaced lane and continue to the main road, crossing the A417, following the footpath to West Challow 1 mile. Proceed along the canal towpath to West Challow.

4.5 km

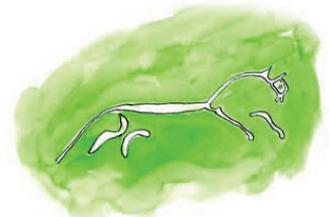
**2** Upon entering West Challow cross the road to a gate and continue along the towpath. Turn left across the canal at the bridge continuing along the surfaced path towards Childrey.

Continue straight ahead through the housing estate upon entering Childrey turning right at the Methodist Church Centre on your right. Walk along the raised pathway along the road bearing left at the sharp bend and continue past the playing fields on your left. Continue along the road to Sparsholt signposted  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles bearing left as the road forks sharply to the right. Continue to the village of Sparsholt.



Village of Childrey

Almost immediately cross Denchworth Road, opposite Canal Court, at the fingerpost signposted East Challow 1 mile, crossing the stile into the field. Proceed across the field, keeping to the left, to the next stile and continue alongside the canal to East Challow.



White Horse



Canal path through Challows

The Star Inn



At the T junction in the centre of Sparsholt turn right then left into West Street opposite The Star Inn. At the end of West Street follow the left hand path across the field towards the chalet bungalow. Follow the fence line beside the bungalow to the lane.

Crossing the lane to the footbridge proceed into the field, signposted Kingston Lisle 1 mile. Follow the field margin around to the left of the field towards a line of trees. Do not proceed through the trees but keeping the trees on your left continue around to the right and down the hill which bears to the right. Proceed into the left hand field at the bottom of the hill and continue up the hill keeping the line of trees on your left. At the top of the hill continue straight over into the lane between the trees.

10 km

**3** At the end of the lane cross the road straight ahead (you could make a slight detour here to The Blowing Stone Inn on your left into the village of Kingston Lisle). Proceed into the field and continue along the left hand field edge.

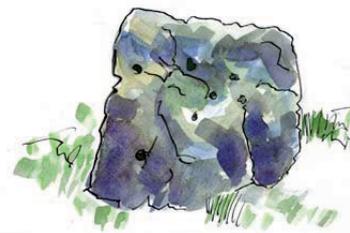
The Blowing Stone Inn



Continue downhill crossing the stile into the next field. Cross another stile into the field following the field edge on the left. Follow the footpath to the left in the corner of the field. Cross the stile into field. Head for the stile on the far side of the field, following the fence line on your right, and then diagonally across the next field to a stile by a gate. At the road turn left into Fawler.

As you come into the village take a right at the footpath sign, signposted Woolstone 1¾ miles. Proceed through the gate and head diagonally across the field to approx. 50m to the right of the Willow tree. Take the footbridge and the kissing gate.

The Blowing Stone



Continue diagonally across the field to a gate half way along the fence line. Cross the stile on the far side of the small wooded area. Proceed into a large field following the well worn path

across to a gate in the hedge line and over a stile. Keep to the left on the ridge and furrow field and head for a gap in the hedge line to a gate. Continue through the gate and across a footbridge into a further field. White Horse Hill is clearly visible on your left.

Cross the next footbridge and proceed straight ahead, following the sign for the Ridgeway Circular route. Continue along the side of the plantation to the gate before coming out onto the road. Turn left onto the road and continue to walk along the road in the direction of White Horse Hill. Cross the main road with care and proceed up the hill towards the White Horse, crossing the cattle grid.

Dragon Hill



14.5 km

**4** Opposite the footpath for Dragon Hill take the left hand footpath to take the sharp incline alongside the White Horse chalk figure. Continue directly across the top of the hill, to the left of the hill fort, until you join the Ridgeway path to the south of the hill fort.

White Horse and Manger



Turn left onto the Ridgeway path and continue for approx. 5 km. Just before you approach the B4001, at Sparsholt Furze mast, there is a farm on your right where you can find a tap for drinking water beside a gate. Cross the B4001 with care, continuing straight ahead along the Ridgeway.

Ridgeway



20 km

**5** After a short distance leave the Ridgeway on the left hand side at the footpath sign to walk round the Devil's Punchbowl. Follow the footpath through the field until you come to the kissing gate onto Hackpen Hill. Follow the well trodden path straight ahead and continue along the left hand ridge. On the far side take the left hand path and proceed up the hill to the top ridge towards the high ridge of beech trees. Begin the decline aiming for the metal gate along the fence line.

Continue through the metal gate until you join the track, turn right and continue to the bottom of the hill. Turn left onto the track. After a short distance, at the signpost, turn right following the sign through the field. You will come to a gate, continue straight ahead. At the kissing gate turn left and head for the village of Letcombe Bassett following the track down into the village. Proceed to the main road turning right in the direction of Letcombe Regis. Continue along the main road through the village, taking care as there is no footpath, until

Letcombe Bassett



you come to Rectory Lane at the sharp left hand bend. Leave the road crossing straight ahead, to take the left hand footpath signposted Ridgeway Circular, just to the left of the houses.

Cross the stile after several hundred yards and continue along the path. At a sharp right hand bend in the path follow it to the right (you can leave the path to enjoy the nature reserve on your left through the gate) and continue to join a lane, turn left. Proceed along the lane taking the right sharp hand bend until you reach the road in the village.

25.5 km

**6** Turn left along the road and continue until you come to the crossroads by the church of St Andrews. Turn right, signposted Wantage, and follow the road around to the left, then right and at the next sharp left hand bend proceed over the road straight ahead into Manor Fields.

Continue through the small housing estate until you reach a surfaced footpath, signposted Wantage. Proceed along this footpath for approximately 1 mile/1.6 km until you come to a red tiled cottage, keep to the left of the cottage and follow the path until you reach the main road in Wantage.

Cross the main road with care into Priory Road alongside the high wall of King Alfred's school. Continue along Priory Road. Approaching the church of SS Peter and Paul bear right through the churchyard and proceed back into the Market Place. 28.5 km

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Photographs by Charles Clement

Further copies of this route and others in the series are available from the Independent Advice Centre, Market Square, Wantage