The Return of Bill Bailey

You can always hope to meet friendly people along The Ridgeway and this summer you may have bumped into the well-known comedian Bill Bailey.

Bill walked The Ridgeway in July to raise over £9,000 for Stand Up To Cancer. This is a Cancer Research UK initiative to turn scientific discoveries into new game-changing treatments and tests for patients.

Bill started his walk some distance north of The Ridgeway so that he covered 100 miles by the time he finished at Avebury. It was his second visit to the Trail, having walked it for charity in 2015. The Ridgeway Officer met Bill on his way to Goring to find out more about his interest in The Ridgeway and walking.

Bill’s connection to the Trail dates back to his youth when his family would visit Wayland Smithy, Uffington White Horse and Avebury. Walking is one of his past-times and he has completed other long-distance trails, including the South Downs Way National Trail and trails abroad. Bill gets his legs trained for long-distance walking by doing circular walks and swears by good walking shoes and an ice bath to keep him going day after day. It seems a ‘support crew’ driving a Winnebego camper van also revives him and his band of friends and family with tasty food and drink at occasional points!

Bill’s tips for long-distance walking include the importance of preparation. Organising where to stay and how to travel around has taken him months. He recommends the ‘distance calculator’ tool on the National Trail website and says that the good signage on the National Trail is a real help. Bill also shared a tip for booking taxis to collect you from the Trail – check they take muddy boots and dogs!

Hear more from Bill at our forum event in Uffington!
Wednesday 18th October 2017

Be inspired to make more of the outdoors, with talks from Bill Bailey, Cycling UK, MIND mental health charity and more.

Booking essential. See page 7 for details.
The Ridgeway is an 87 mile (139km) signed trail open to the public to enjoy walking, cycling, horseriding and events in attractive countryside. The route lies to the west of London, passing over the chalk hills of the Chilterns AONB and North Wessex Downs AONB, taking in rural villages and market towns. Visitors come from near and far, including tourists from the United States and Europe, and are served by numerous local accommodation providers, shops, eating places and visitor attractions.

The Ridgeway is popularly known as Britain’s oldest road - parts of the Trail follow tracks used by travellers, herdsmen and soldiers over the centuries. The landscape is dotted with historic features and chalk grassland flowers, butterflies and farmland wildlife are a highlight too.

The Ridgeway is one of 15 National Trails in England and Wales. It is also part of an international network of trails called the International Appalachian Trail.

The Ridgeway is managed by a group of organisations called The Ridgeway Partnership. Day-to-day work is led by the National Trails Team hosted by Oxfordshire County Council. The Partnership works with user groups, landowners, local councils, local communities and others to realise social, economic and environmental benefits from The Ridgeway.

Plan your Visit

Plan your day visit or holiday to The Ridgeway using our interactive online map: http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/ridgeway Our website also lists events along the Trail and there are circular walks and rides leaflets to download for free.

The Ridgeway Companion guide lists details of campsites, B&Bs, hotels, self-catering cottages and inns around the area. Other useful contacts, such as taxis, hospitals, vets, are provided as well as car park locations. It costs £4.95 and is available from our online shop: http://shop.nationaltrail.co.uk
The current Chairman of The Ridgeway Partnership, Ian Ritchie, is stepping down in March 2018 at the end of the standard three year term.

The Partnership is looking for a successor for the next three years. Working with an ambitious group of partners and a committed Trail team, this is a great opportunity to help shape the future of one of the country’s National Trails. The Ridgeway is used by thousands of walkers, cyclists and horse riders every year and the Partnership aspires to ensure every visitor enjoys a world class experience. There is also ongoing work to move towards a new financial model and to conserve the Trail’s natural and cultural heritage.

For more details or to express interest, please contact the current Chair Ian Ritchie: ian.ritchie1@btinternet.com

As part of the British Horse Society’s Ride Out Month in May, four horse and carriage combinations and one donkey pair drove along The Ridgeway. Horse-drawn carriages can be driven along stretches of restricted byway and byway. Wide stretches of the Trail provide space for everyone to carefully pass by. They are a great sight to see.

Leading the Way
New Chairperson needed April 2018

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Produced by the National Trails Team on behalf of The Ridgeway Partnership.
www.nationaltrail.co.uk/ridgeway
For the gastronomic visitor, one of the highlights along The Ridgeway is The Miller of Mansfield pub in Goring, Oxfordshire. The pub was awarded ‘The Good Food Guide Readers’ Restaurant of the Year 2016’ by Waitrose. More casual but good quality offerings are available, including The Blueberry in Blewbury, Oxfordshire, which specialises in wood-fired pizza and also does takeaway. There are of course many country pubs to choose from, with The Greyhound at Letcombe Basset being a favourite as it was awarded 'Country Pub of the Year 2017' by the local CAMRA club.

For those who want snacks or food to go, there are food shops in the area including some lovely delicatessens. The Granary Delicatessen in Watlington is a small deli specialising in cheeses and sells drinks and take-away sandwiches. For those with a sweet tooth, Rumsey’s in Wendover is locally famous for its chocolates which you can watch being made on the premises!

For the full Ridgeway experience, visitors can look out for food and drink that has been produced or manufactured locally. There are farmers’ markets held in major towns along The Ridgeway, but also in less obvious places such as the village of Aldworth’s Saturday Market.

Farmshops dotted along the Trail are also a treasure trove of local produce and serve refreshments. These include the Three Trees in Chiselden (Wilts), Savages in Blewbury (Oxon), Dunsley Farm Shop in Tring (Herts) and Buckmoorend Farm Shop near Butlers Cross (Bucks).

Visit our website to discover places to eat and drink along The Ridgeway – find the interactive map under 'Plan your visit' and select the 'Food and drink' box.
The farmshop at Buckmoorend opened 18 months ago and conveniently lies directly on The Ridgeway. It has already become popular with Ridgeway walkers seeking out hot drinks and also their home-made sausage rolls and scotch eggs made with meat from the farm. Small tubs of local ice-cream also proved popular on hot days this summer!

**Farmshops and farmers’ markets reveal the range of food grown and made along The Ridgeway.** Buckmoorend Farm Shop is run by the Hares family who farm the surrounding fields to produce bacon, sausages, pork, lamb and beef to sell in their shop. Next door, at the Prime Minister’s country retreat, Chequers, the chef makes the shop’s novelty chocolates in the shape of tractors and sheep! A little further afield, cakes and Chiltern Brewery beer are made in villages that you can see from The Ridgeway on top of Coombe Hill. Towards the north in Hertfordshire, chutneys and jams are made in Cheddington near Ivinghoe Beacon at the end of the Trail. To the south in Oxfordshire, wheat is grown near The Ridgeway at Wallingford to make flour for Wessex Mill flour and grapes are grown and made into wine at Brightwell Vineyard.

**Bon appetit e!**

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Produced by the National Trails Team on behalf of The Ridgeway Partnership.

[www.nationaltrail.co.uk/ridgeway](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/ridgeway)
Events along The Ridgeway

Enjoy events on The Ridgeway. Visit our website for more details and more events. Many events require booking in advance.

Join an event or seek solitude
There’s something for everyone along The Ridgeway. Check out what’s on and plan to either join in or find a quiet spot! Our most comprehensive events listing is on our website but there are some events we are not aware of. Many event organisers work with us to keep local communities informed.

Until 1 Oct Sculpture in the garden
Avebury, Wilts (National Trust)
Enjoy a variety of sculpture in the garden at Avebury Manor, including ceramics in the borders, a glass mosaic and a stylised head in stone.

Fri 1 Sept-Sun 5 Nov Coronation of George VI
Nuffield Place (National Trust)
A display in the house celebrates the 80th anniversary of the coronation of George VI, attended by Lord and Lady Nuffield.

Sat 16 Sept Chiltern Wonderland 50
Starting in Goring (Centurion Running)
50 mile trail run through the south Chilterns.

Sat 16 Sept-Sun 1 Oct Chilterns Walking Festival - Autumn
Various locations in the Chilterns
Explore a host of places, landscapes and lifestyles across the Chilterns AONB. Numerous events on and near The Ridgeway, including ramblers for mobility scooters.

Wednesdays 20 Sept, 4 Oct, 18 Oct, 1 Nov, & 15 Nov
Welly Wednesday at Tring
Tring Natural History Museum, Herts
Outdoor activities for 3-5 year olds. Explore a UK animal through play, storytelling and creating an outdoorsy craft to take home.

Sat 23 Sept My Wild Chilterns
College Lake, nr Tring, Herts (Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust)
Walks, talks, demos, workshops and more about the landscape and wildlife.

Sun 1st Oct & various dates into Jan 2018 Illuminated woodland walk
Basildon Park (National Trust)
As the sun fades see the woodland walk lit up, and enjoy the changing colours of the trees through the seasons from autumn to winter.

13,14,15, 20, 21, 22 October Deer Rut walks
Ashridge, Herts (National Trust)
Join the Ashridge ranger for an early morning walk to search for fallow deer during the rutting season. Breakfast is included following the walk.

Sun 8 Oct Ridgeway Run
Tring, Herts (Tring Running Club)
Long-established annual trail run in the north Chilterns.
**Events along The Ridgeway**

**Thurs 5 - Mon 9 Oct  Swindon Poetry Festival**
Various venues around Swindon
Poetry performances, workshops, open-mic sessions, films, bring your own poetry and more in the Richard Jefferies Museum, Tent-Palace of the Delicious Air and other spaces.

**Thurs 14 - Fri 15 Oct Apple celebrations**
Avebury, Wilts (National Trust)
Visit Avebury and celebrate the apple harvest. Apple tastings, apple pressing and children's activities in the Orchard at Avebury Manor.

**Wed 18 Oct Autumn walk at Pulpit Hill and Grangelands**
Longdown Hill, nr Princes Risborough, Bucks (Bucks, Berks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, National Trust)
Guided walk to enjoy autumn wildlife at two Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

**Sat 21 Oct Autumn 100**
Starting in Goring, Oxon (Centurion Running)
100 mile run involving four loops around Goring, taking in the Thames and Ridgeway.

**Sat 21-Sat 28 Oct Wantage (not just) Betjeman Festival**
Various venues around Wantage, Oxon
Range of events for all ages, from drawing with a kid's illustrator to hearing from the adventurer Sarah Outen.

**Sun 22 Oct White Horse to Ashdown guided walk**
Uffington, Oxon (National Trust)
See signs of autumn and spectacular views on this ranger-led bracing eight mile circular walk.

**Sat 4 Nov Wallingford bonfire display**
Wallingford, Oxon
Celebrations on the Kinecroft, with a huge bonfire and enormous firework display attracting thousands of people.

**Fri 10-Sun 12 Nov Druid’s Challenge**
Starting at Ivinghoe, Bucks (XNRG)
84 mile ultra-marathon along the full length of The Ridgeway.

**Fri 24 Nov-Sun 21 Jan Wildlife Photographer of the Year Highights**
Tring Natural History Museum, Herts
Stunning annual exhibition of 16 awe-inspiring winners from the international photography competition.

**Thurs 30 Nov, Thurs 14 Dec Winter warmer walks**
Avebury, Wilts (National Trust)
Join archaeologist Dr. Nick Snashall for a winter ramble around the stone circles. Festive refreshments, free parking and discount in the shop included.

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The Ridgeway Partnership & North Wessex Downs AONB Annual Forum

**The Great Outdoors!**

**Wed 18th October**
Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Uffington, Oxon

**Everyone welcome**

Talks, discussion and field visits about how we can enjoy the outdoors. Look forward to Bill Bailey, Cycling UK, MIND mental health charity, Nordic Walking and more.

**Book your place:**
info@northwessexdowns.org.uk
Volunteer Task Diary

Practical work is carried out along The Ridgeway to ensure walkers, cyclists and horseriders enjoy using it. Work is carried out by the National Trail Team, local highway authorities, landowners and contractors. The Chiltern Society do occasional work on The Ridgeway in the Chilterns. Volunteers are welcome to help maintain The Ridgeway and Thames Path by joining the task team led by the National Trail Team. The location and activities for the next 3 months are shown below. Please ensure that you book early as the practical tasks are popular. Locations for tasks may change and volunteer numbers can be limited due to type of task.

Volunteer to help with a task by contacting the National Trail Team.

Book in advance and as soon as possible.

E: nt.volunteers@oxfordshire.gov.uk  T: 01865 810211

Whether reporting by phone or by email, please add a grid reference and a photo is also very useful!

Task Locations for Ridgeway and Thames Path

KEY
IB = Interpretation boards
G = Gate
S = Signage
ST = Steps
TBC = To be confirmed
BBQ = :-)
400 Years at School!

Autumn brings the start of the new school year and this is a particularly special year for one of the oldest schools in the country, in Uffington near The Ridgeway.

Uffington’s chalkstone School House was built 400 years ago in 1617, founded by Thomas Saunders who lived at Hall Place in Woolstone. Schools developed in most places through the provision of a Sunday School during the 1800’s, so the school in Uffington was a very early example of education for ordinary villagers.

The school has literary associations, featuring in the well-known book ‘Tom Brown’s School Days’ by Thomas Hughes, first published in 1857. Hughes was the son of Uffington’s vicar and his book offers an insight into what life was like in Uffington in Victorian times.

Today, the school building is listed and is open to the public as a small museum. This year’s special exhibition describes how education has evolved over the past 400 years since the school was founded. Another exhibition tells the story of the local landscape, including the famous Bronze Age chalk horse overlooking the village.

The museum, picturesque village, chalk horse and local pubs make Uffington a great place to explore next time you visit The Ridgeway.

Tom Brown’s School Museum
Broad Street, Uffington, Oxon, SN7 7RA
Open April to October weekends & Bank Holidays, 2-5pm. At other times by prior appointment with Curator.
Admission free
www.museum.uffington.net
Do you love The Ridgeway or know someone who does? Buy a gift and support National Trails too!
http://shop.nationaltrail.co.uk/collections/ridgeway

Winter Edition
We’d love to hear your feedback and stories for the next edition!

Latest News
Follow us on Twitter
@TheRidgeway1972
For more detailed news, visit
www.nationaltrail.co.uk/ridgeway/news

Thanks to all our volunteers helping us look after The Ridgeway. We host a BBQ in their honour each September. This year, the local rescue service joined in - they were training nearby and smelt the sausages!

The Ridgeway National Trail
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General enquiries: 01844 810224
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Volunteer email: NTvolunteers@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Social media: @TheRidgeway1972
Website: www.nationaltrail.co.uk/ridgeway/

A BIG THANK YOU for recent donations from:
Marlborough Running Club,
SENSE Ridgewalk,
Wessex TREC, Cycle Classics,
Race to the Stones,
Trail Running Association
and Cycle-tec.