



(waymark symbol)

- Main route
- Short cuts and spurs to extra facilities
- Busy road

RIGHTS OF WAY

- Bridleway
- Byway open to all traffic
- Road used as a public path (RUPP)

FACILITIES

- Recommended parking
- Public house
- Public telephone
- Youth hostel (with stables)

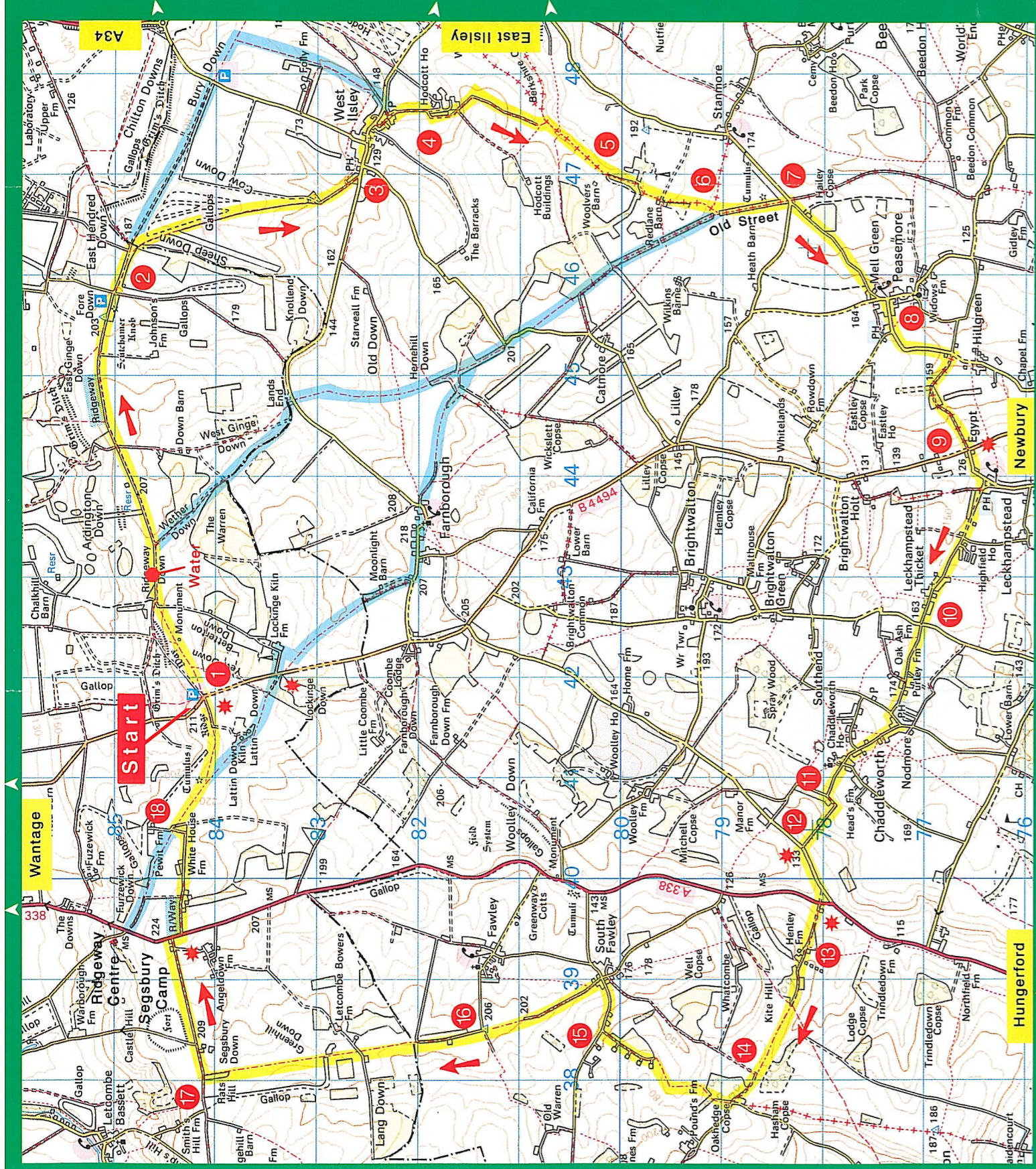
SCALE 1:50 000

(about 1 1/4 inches to 1 mile)



- 0 miles 1 1 1/2
- 0 kms 1 2

Reproduced from the 1993 Ordnance Survey 1:50 000 scale Landranger map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright.



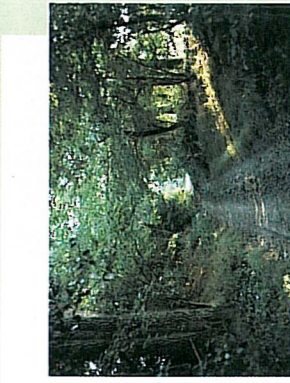
The route is described in a clockwise direction, starting from the Wantage Monument car park on the Ridgeway (see the section on Parking).

1 Follow the Ridgeway east from the car park, past the Wantage Monument. After about two miles, there is a small wood on the right, which contains the remains of a burial mound, Scutchamer Knob.

2 Continue along the Ridgeway for another 1/4 mile, then take the bridleway to the right. This runs alongside a gallop (see the section on Safety). After 500 yards, keep straight on across another gallop which goes off to the right, and follow the bridleway as it descends for over 1 mile to West Ilsley.

3 Turn left along the village street, past the pub (the Harrow) and the pond. About 200 yards beyond the church, turn right, at the byway sign, into Church Way. At the end of Church Way, keep to the right along the metalled road which leads to Hodcott House. Just before the house, turn right, on to a bridleway.

4 The bridleway skirts the buildings, then, at a junction with a footpath, heads uphill as a grassy track. After 1/2 mile the track descends to a junction with another footpath. Turn left here, then right at the next junction and keep straight on at another junction, as the track climbs up a valley.



Near Redlane Barn

5 Off to the right of the track is Woolvers Barn. As you pass this, keep to the left on the track which enters the trees. The track climbs up a wooded gully, then leaves the trees and levels out as it passes Redlane Barn.

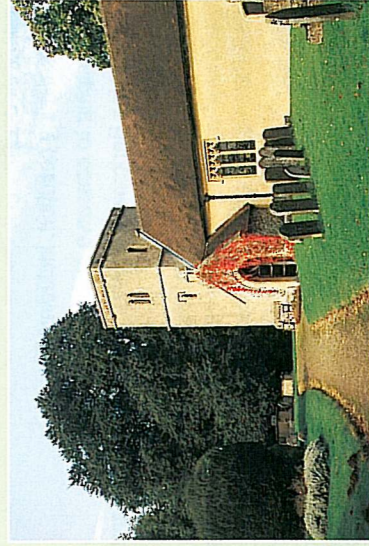
6 About 600 yards past the barn, the route passes a turning on the left to Stanmore and then joins Old Street, an unsurfaced track running within a prominent belt of trees. Turn left along Old Street for about 800 yards until it meets a metalled road.

7 Turn right along the road, then immediately left on to Hailey Lane, which leads to Peasmore. As you enter the village, turn left at the junction with Field Road and then right, a hundred yards later, into Hilgreen Lane.

8 As you leave the village you pass the Fox and Hounds pub and after 1/2 mile emerge on to the green at Hilgreen. Take the track immediately to the right, which climbs over a low brow and then runs down to the main B4494 at Egypt.

9 Cross the road with care and take the lane opposite up to Leckhamstead. Turn right as you enter the village (the war memorial and pub, the Stag, are to the left) on to the Chaddleshaw road, which climbs gently between the houses of Leckhamstead Thicket.

10 At the next crossroads, continue straight ahead on the lane to Chaddleshaw. Turn left as you enter the village, past the pub (the Ibez), then turn right on to the road which runs through the village to Chaddleshaw House and church.



Chaddleshaw church

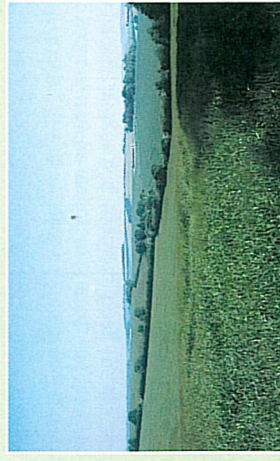
11 The road leaves the village and then turns sharply to the right. Turn left here, on to a byway which turns downhill after 100 yards and joins a metalled road in the valley bottom.

12 Turn left along the road for 500 yards (take care, fast traffic), then turn right on to the short linking road to the main A338. Cross this road with care and go up the track opposite, which leads to Henley Farm.

13 Go past the farm and the barns above it. At the metal mast, the path keeps to the right and continues uphill within a thick hedge bank. After 600 yards, the path comes out on to the field edge at the next transverse hedge. Follow the field edge uphill, until you emerge on to a track.

14 Keep straight on along this track until it meets a metalled lane, beside Oakhedge Copse. Turn right at this junction on to a narrow path which runs just inside the copse. During the next mile, the path becomes a track beside a large free-range hen farm and descends to join a metalled lane.

15 Turn right on to the lane, which climbs to South Fawley. In the village, take the track to the left, between the black barns. The track emerges into open country, and rises gently for 3/4 mile to a triangulation pillar and a junction with a road.



Looking north from Oakhedge Copse

16 Keep straight on along the short stretch of road. This then becomes an unsurfaced track again, following the ridge top for 1 1/2 miles until it meets the main Ridgeway.

17 Turn right, along the Ridgeway (passing Segsbury Camp hillfort on the left) to the main A338. Cross the road with care, and turn right, along the road, for 100 yards. Turn left, back on to the Ridgeway. Beyond White House Farm, the track turns to the left and comes to a T-junction with another track.

18 To follow the Ridgeway back to the Wantage Monument car park, turn right and then keep to the left at the next fork. Take care crossing the B4494 to the car park. (The track to the left at the first junction leads down to the Ridgeway Centre Youth Hostel, avoiding use of the main road.)

21 Mile Circular Ride



Royal County of
BERKSHIRE



GREENING
BEAUTIFUL
BERKSHIRE

This circular ride through the peaceful countryside and villages of west Berkshire and south Oxfordshire offers a series of continuous, quiet lanes bordered by picturesque cottages, and an enclosed green world of hedge and woodland.

The Geological Setting

The route lies entirely on the Berkshire Downs — a link in the chain of chalk hills that stretches from Dorset to Yorkshire. Chalk is a pure limestone that formed in the warm clear seas of the Cretaceous period, about 70 to 100 million years ago.

On a fine day, the views from the Ridgeway illustrate the effects of geology on the landscape. The chalk slopes gently to the south and disappears some nine miles away beneath low, well-wooded hills of clay and sand from the succeeding tertiary period. However, beyond the River Kennet, the chalk re-emerges as another high ridge, including Inkpen Hill and Wabury hillfort, forming the southern horizon.

To the north of the Ridgeway, erosion has carved away the chalk into a scarp slope, and the view looks back through geological time, across the clays of the Vale of White Horse to the Jurassic limestones of the Faringdon ridge and the distant Cotswolds. To the east, beyond the Thames, you can see the next link in the chalk chain, the Chiltern Hills.

Prehistory and History

During the Ice Age, the downs suffered tundra conditions but were free of ice. About 10,000 years ago, the climate relaxed and temperate woodland gradually spread across the land. People lived mainly in the river valleys at first, but probably used the Ridgeway as an easy route along the chalk hills.

From about 2300 BC, Bronze Age farmers started clearing the woodland in our area of the downs. Their most lasting monuments are the round barrows in which they buried their dead. These are marked on the map as "Tumulus" (for example, beside the Ridgeway on stage 18 of the route and near Old Street on stage 6). The Ridgeway was also a popular site for later memorials: Scutchamer Knob commemorates the Saxon king, Cwiccheim, while the Wantage Monument is dedicated to Lord Wantage, hero of the C11rmean War and founder of the British Red Cross.

Iron came into use for tools and weapons about 600 BC. The Iron Age peoples built fortified sites on prominent hills, as at Segsbury Camp (stage 17). Here an impressive ditch and bank (clearly visible from the

The Country Code

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Fasten all gates
- Keep your dogs under close control
- Keep to public paths across farmland
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
- Take your litter home
- Help to keep all water clean
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees
- Take special care on country roads
- Make no unnecessary noise

Greening Beautiful Berkshire

Berkshire County Council runs a campaign to conserve and enhance the county's environment and to encourage others to do the same, under the banner of "Greening Beautiful Berkshire." The campaign promotes a range of initiatives concerned with:

- Reducing pollution, including litter
- Helping to conserve global resources
- Making Berkshire's environment safe, diverse and attractive

For further information about the "Greening Beautiful Berkshire" campaign, please contact County Environment at Berkshire County Council, Shire Hall, Shinfield Park, Reading, RG2 9XA (Tel. 0118 9234158).

This leaflet was produced for Berkshire County Council by Babtie Public Services Division (planning and transportation consultants). For further information about this and other leaflets, please contact Babtie at Shire Hall, Shinfield Park, Reading, RG2 9XG (Tel. 0118 9758844).

Acknowledgements

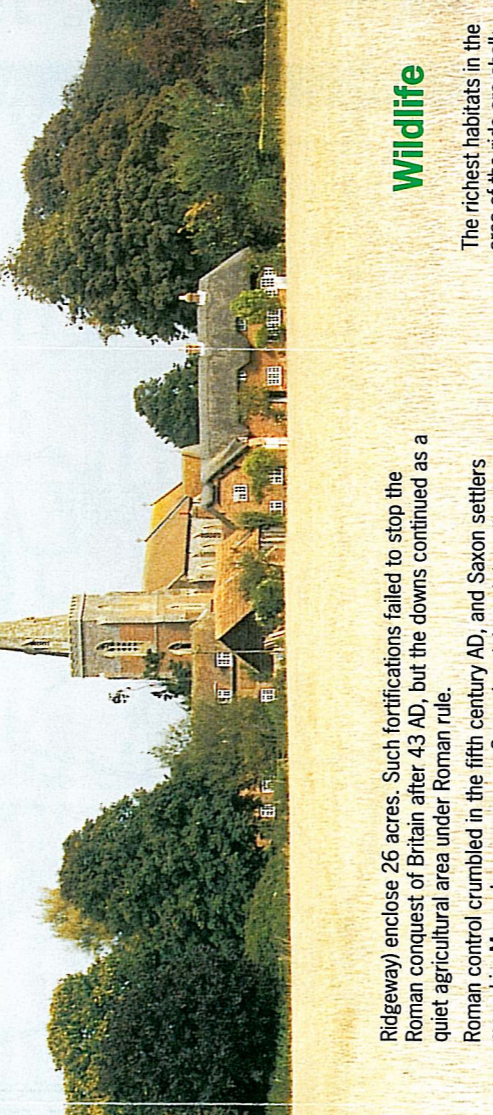
BHS County Bridleways Officer for Berkshire, Ridgeway Officer, Oxfordshire County Council



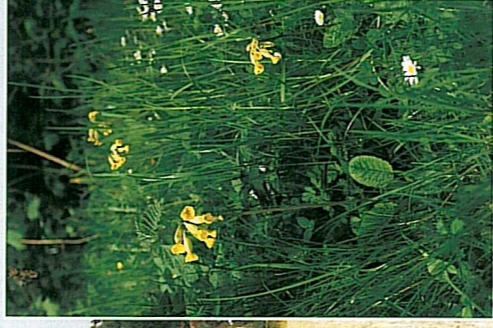
Printed on recycled paper.
March 1995

Supported by the
COUNTRYSIDE
COMMISSION

Printed in Great Britain by PICA Design and Print Limited



Main Picture: Peasemore village



Cowslips

Wildlife

The richest habitats in the area of the ride are chalk grassland and coppiced woodland, but both have

lost ground through recent changes in agricultural practice. **Chalk grassland** is not a natural habitat; it owes its existence to close grazing by sheep which prevents taller plants becoming established. Efforts are being made to preserve and improve the remaining stretches of grassland, for example, on the scarp slope west of the Wantage Monument car park. At Segsbury Camp, clearance of hawthorn scrub will both restore the grassland and reveal the site in its entirety.

The thin, free-draining, alkaline soils are home to a rich flora, including orchids, gentians, and cowslips; this in turn supports many butterflies, for example, the chalkhill blue and the marbled white. Among the downland birds, the skylark and the corn bunting catch the ear with their song (the bunting's call has been likened to jangling keys), while the looping lapwing and hovering kestrel draw the eye with their flight. Look out for these flowers, insects and birds along the Ridgeway and near West Ilsley (stages 1 to 4, and 17 and 18).

Coppiced woodland occurs mainly where the clay-with-flints covers the chalk. Most of the trees (always native broad-leaved species) were cut back to ground level on a regular cycle. Their regrowth provided a supply of evenly sized poles for a wide variety of uses. Coppicing was practised for thousands of years, but has largely fallen out of use this century. The disused coppices can be recognized by their dense tree stools, where many shoots spring from a single base. Coppicing opened up the ground to light and encouraged a diverse flora. Despite their current disuse, these woods are still bright in spring with bluebells and wood anemones. This ancient woodland, together with old hedged tracks, occurs between West Ilsley and Peasemore (stages 5, 6 and 7) and south of South Fawley (stages 13 and 14).

Cover Picture: Riders on Sheep Down