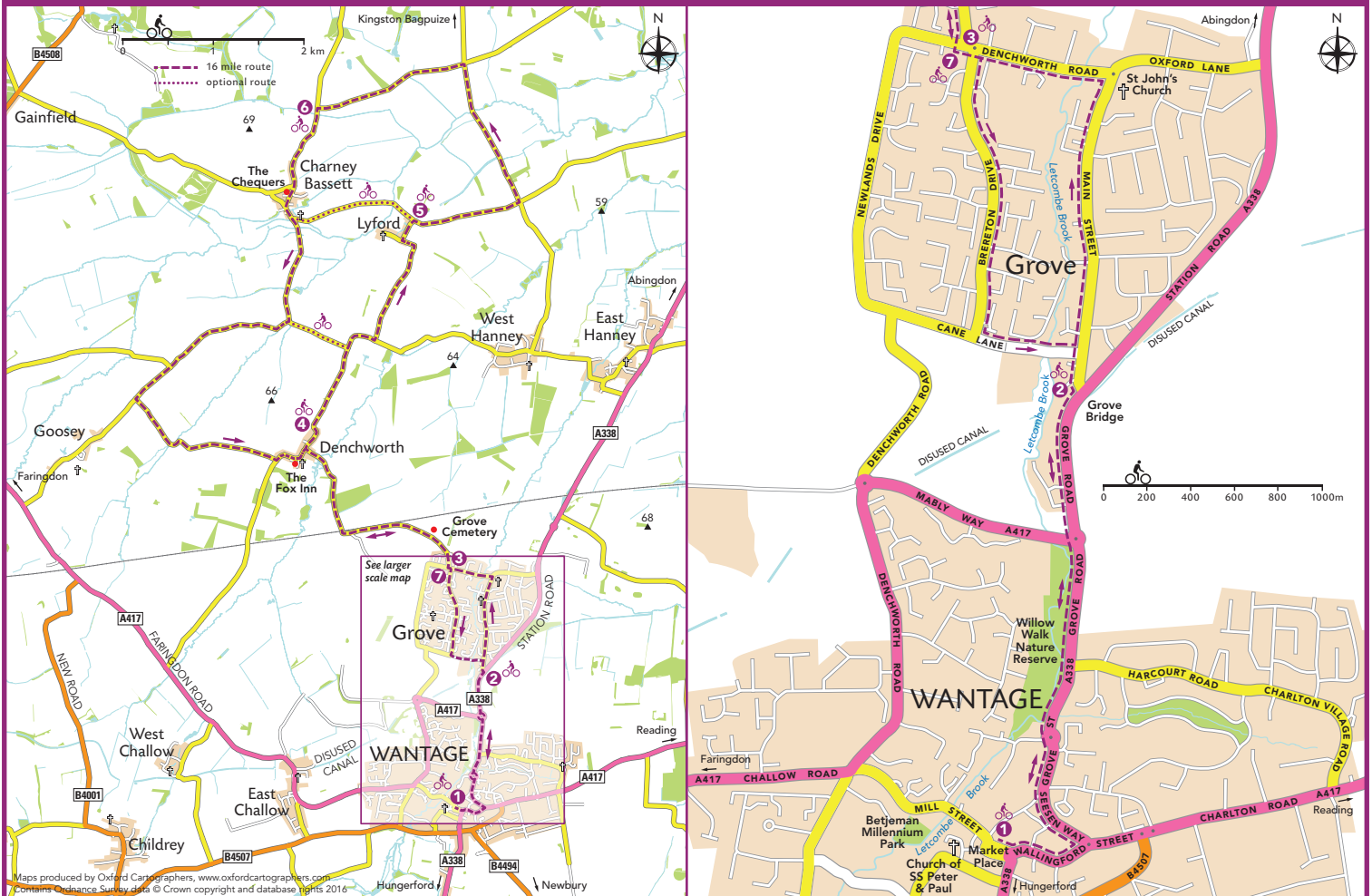


WANTAGE AREA WALKS & CYCLE ROUTES



Route 12 - Vale Cycle Route via Denchworth

The ancient market town of Wantage sits on the Letcombe Brook, at the foot of the Berkshire Downs. The town is characterised by 16th century timber framed houses refaced in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in red brick. In 1847 Wantage became an educational and spiritual centre for the Oxford Movement, and the vicar of the parish church, Rev William Butler, was responsible for several fine buildings in the town centre.

This route heads from Wantage to Grove then uses a loop of the White Horse Half Marathon Race through Denchworth, Lyford and Charney Bassett, returning via Denchworth and Grove to Wantage. The route is a flat 16 mile ride from Wantage, mainly on country lanes, and can be seen on the "walkjogrun" web site at: http://www.walkjogrun.net/routes/current_route.cfm?rid=0E7A5AA6-91C3-37B2-626B5333527AA50D

1 Start in Wantage Market Square near the statue of King Alfred. Head out of the Market Square along Wallingford Street past Boots and Waitrose. At the first mini roundabout, turn left onto Seesen Way (signposted Oxford A338, Grove, and Faringdon (A417)). Follow the road past The Abingdon Arms Public House to the "Sainsbury's" roundabout where you go straight ahead, down the hill. As you proceed along the road towards the next set of traffic lights there is a cycle track on the pavement to your

left. Follow the cycle track past the traffic lights controlled junction to another set of crossing lights some 200 yards further on. Cross the road at this point to pick up the cycle track on the opposite side of the road. Follow this cycle track alongside the A338 (in the direction of Grove and Oxford) for around half a mile until it ends at a set of traffic lights at "Grove Bridge". Leave the cycle path behind and cross the A338 using the light controlled cycle crossing to enter Grove along Main Street to your left.



Letcombe Brook



Millennium Stone

2 Continue through Grove staying on Main Street, passing The Bell Public House on your right and Millbrook Square shops to your left. Shortly after passing St John's Church on your right you arrive at a mini roundabout by the Village Green where you turn left (signposted to Denchworth). Note the "Millennium Stone" on the Green on your right, a small monument to the different forms of transport that have historically been associated with Grove.

Note the Letcombe Brook at the edge of the Green and the information board by the bridge. Follow the road past The Bay Tree Public House to a mini roundabout (Brereton Drive). Go straight across then take the next right only around 20 yards further on and signposted to Denchworth.

3 Leaving Grove behind, passing Grove Cemetery on your right, follow the lane as it curves to run parallel to the railway line.



Downs view from Grove Cemetery

You may notice the undulations in the field to your left which mark the old pattern of farming. The road takes a sharp right bend to go over the railway via a narrow high bridge, and you carry on for a further half mile to the village of Denchworth with its picturesque thatched cottages. Arriving at a T-junction in Denchworth the route turns right signed towards West Hanney. (This point is known as Denchworth Cross, from the existence of an old stone



Thatched Cottage, Denchworth Cross

monument that used to stand in the middle of the junction. If you want a short diversion the village pub, The Fox, is some 100 yards along the road to the left).

4 Leaving Denchworth Village by a double bend in the road carry on along the lane. The first turning left (after about half a mile) provides a shortcut to the later stages of this route for those wanting a shorter cycle ride (see map). Staying with our route however, about 400 yards further on take the next lane left signposted to Lyford. After about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile the lane makes a sharp left bend, followed soon afterwards by another to the right in Lyford Village. After



Almshouses at Lyford Village

a further 200 yards you arrive at a T-junction. The route turns right here (signposted Lyford), although the road left leads to Charney Bassett and can be an optional shorter route (see map).

5 Carry on along the lane for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, until it reaches a crossroads. Turn left (signed Kingston Bagpuize and Longworth), but take care to check for any traffic coming along this road at speed. After a further $\frac{3}{4}$ mile the road crosses a small bridge then rises to reach a staggered crossroads some 400 yards further on. Take the road to the left (signed Charney Bassett, Denchworth) to follow a quieter lane. Continue to the end of this lane (about a mile), until it ends at a T-junction where you turn left (signed Charney Bassett, Denchworth).

6 Follow the road for about half a mile to the village of Charney Bassett. The village pub, The Chequers, which you pass on your right, makes a good point to take a break.



The Chequers, Charney Bassett

As you leave the village go straight ahead over a small bridge following the road signposted

fold line - non-printing

towards Challow Station and Denchworth. There is a turning to the left just before the bridge where one of the shorter options re-joins the main route. Stay on the road for a further mile until you arrive at a T-junction. (The road angled to the left is a point where one of the shorter options joins, and can itself provide a shorter route back to Grove and Wantage. See map).



Charney Bassett Green, Memorial

Turn right, signed Challow Station, Goosey and follow this road for a mile and half, to take the next turning left, signed Denchworth. You will pass the Asti Stud on your left, before some double bends and then after a further half mile arrive at a T-junction. Turn left to re-enter the village of Denchworth. Follow the road through the village, with a sharp left turn by the Fox Public House, back to the T-junction at Denchworth Cross. Turn right (signed Grove and Wantage) to retrace your route back to Grove.

7 On arriving in Grove turn left at the T-junction then, to vary the route through Grove, turn right at the mini roundabout into Brereton Drive and follow this for about half a mile until it turns sharp right, at which point turn left into Cane Lane. Follow Cane Lane, which has a barrier to stop cars part way along, to its end, a T-junction with Main Street in Grove, with the garage on your right. Turn right onto Main Street to reach the traffic lights at the end of Grove.



Grove Road cottages

You will now retrace your route back to Wantage as follows: From here take the cycle route (effectively a right turn) towards Wantage. Stay on the cycle track until it ends at traffic lights. Carry straight on, after a few hundred yards the road rises to the "Sainsbury's" roundabout, go straight on, and carry on along Seesen Way to the next roundabout with the BP "Broadway" garage opposite. Turn right to return to Wantage Market Square.



Statue of King Alfred

Produced thanks to funds provided by SEEDA and Oxfordshire County Council through Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

Series Editor: Jean Nunn-Price MBE

Illustrations by Stuart Roper

Photographs by Steve Trinder

Text courtesy of Gareth Smith

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