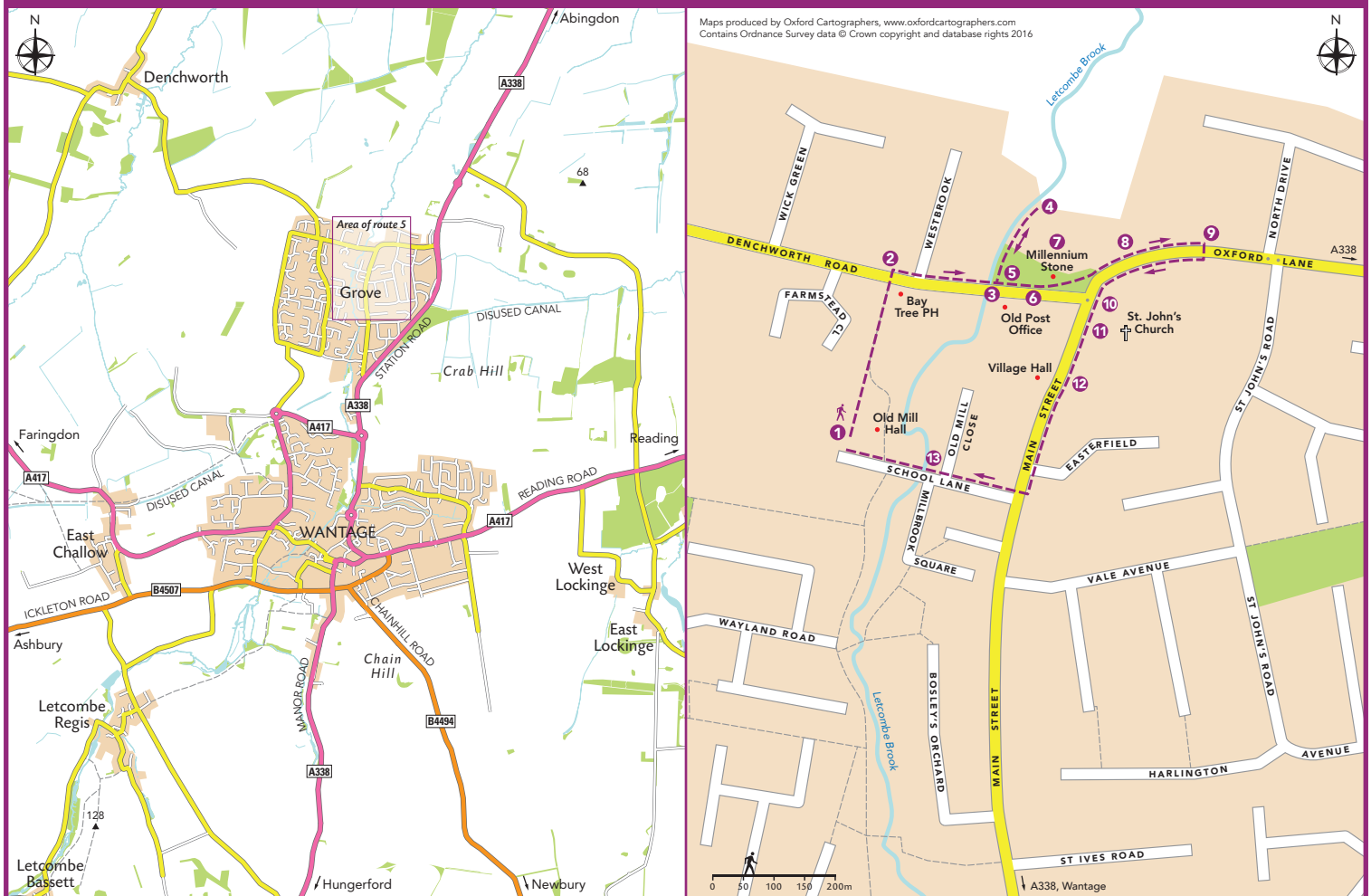


WANTAGE AREA WALKS & CYCLE ROUTES



Route 5 - Old Grove Walk

Grove today is the largest village in the Vale of White Horse, vastly different from the village recorded in 1142 when King Stephen granted the Manor of Grove to the Abbott of Bermondsey, and very different from the self-supporting village that had its own baker, bacon factory, clockmaker, wheelwright, smith and forge and three working watermills, two of which are recorded as early as 1622, during the ensuing centuries.

1 Start at Old Mill Hall car park. Head north by basketball court; behind the court is the site of the "old mill" from which the hall gets its name.

2 Look left at the old farm house – a timber frame yeoman farmhouse with herring bone design, initials AC above the centre top window.



Old farm house



Farm house roof detail

Turn right (east). Continue to Bay Tree public house on the right. The present Bay Tree pub (1895) is next to the site of the old one which was a thatched building on the left.

Walk on past 16th century timber framed box "prefab" cottages: Brookside Cottage, Orchard Cottage.



Orchard Cottage

3 Cross over to the Village Green at the Letcombe Brook bridge. This brook is a rare example of a chalk stream; it originates from the springs above the Letcombes and flows for 12 kms until it joins the Childrey Brook. Pause to read the Letcombe Brook Information Board.



Information board

Follow the brook downstream, walking on the grass to the next (cobbled) footbridge.



Old cobble footbridge

4 On our left is Brook Farm House with its surviving timber-framed pigeon house in the



Brook Farm House

garden. Outside there are stone steps down to the brook for accessing drinking water (killing three Grove people out of a population of

520 during the 1832 cholera epidemic as the water-borne disease spread downstream from Wantage).

Old stone steps



5 Return to the cobbled bridge and cross onto the Green. See the Old Post Office to the right across the road, also Rowan Cottage which was the “poor house” and in 1828 became part of the Wantage Union. It stands on the former Village Green, which then covered both sides of the road and has since been much encroached.

Old Post Office



6 Follow the tarmac path across the Green towards the bus shelter.

Now cross over the main road and turn right, back into Grove.

Green House



10 The Green House and Green View are at the roundabout at the start of Main Street. The church footpath on the far side of the church (with a “no cycling” sign) led to old wood-frame cottages on the former village green, but they burned down. Before dedication the cholera victims were buried here, then a church was built, then a second church, but this deteriorated and in the 1960’s a newer church was built which survives until the present day.

St John the Baptist Church



7 Pause on the Green by the Millennium Stone, erected on 1st January 2000, depicting transport through the ages.

Millennium Stone



8 Some 30 metres on the left past “The Laurels” is the shed of the old wood yard; opposite was the coach builders. First on the left is Homeleigh Cottage (a cruck cottage made from four A-frames of elm tree), one of the two oldest cottages in the village although it has “new” brickwork now.

Homeleigh Cottage



Next door, “Old Herriards” is a box cottage.

9 Opposite, The Old Cottage at 1, Oxford Lane is another box cottage (a 2-bay cottage like the Vale & Downland museum in Wantage).

13 Finish the walk by crossing over and walking up School Lane past the balancing ponds to Old Mill Hall.

Old Mill Hall



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11 Proceed southwards along Main Street. Yew trees are situated around the site of the first old church. Continue along Main Street past the bus shelter and seat.

Churchyard



Grove Village Hall



12 Two red brick cottages on the left, “Rosslyn” and “Old School View,” are across from the old school, where the village hall is now.

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