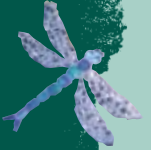


A Guide to the  
**WINDRUSH PATH  
MOSAIC TRAIL**



*taking a fresh look at a vision fulfilled...*

# The vision

## THE LOWER WINDRUSH FOOTPATH PROJECT

aimed to create a series of striking and individual mosaics to act as way-markers and points of interest along the two mile footpath running from Standlake, down Shifford Lane, along the Standlake Common and to the River Thames at Newbridge.

## THE PEOPLE

**Art Underfoot** is a Standlake based community enterprise committed to involving young and old in an exciting variety of artistic projects centred on the creation of mosaics from recycled materials.

Brain-child of local artist Ariana Clarke Windle, her team of enthusiasts has continued her mission since her death in 2004 and brought the unique Lower Windrush Mosaic Trail to completion.

**Art Underfoot** has involved many members of our local community in the making of these mosaics and fulfilled its mission to create a lasting and original expression of what we appreciate about our countryside and its special character.



We have used exclusively recycled materials, many of them donated by local people, and hope that the creation of these way-markers will inspire residents and visitors alike to walk the path, to enjoy and respect the peace and beauty of our rich environment.

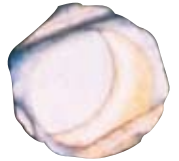
## THE LEGACY

A nature trail with a difference where, discreet among the paths and hedgerows, a Community's own unique creations sign the way.

# 1 kingfisher (with Moon)

*"It was the rainbow gave thee birth  
And left thee all her lovely hues."*

W.H. DAVIES



## **WILDLIFE NOTES:**

This brilliant small bird with the large head and short tail is well-suited to our still and slow-flowing waters. It catches small fish by plunge-diving. Its nest is in an underground chamber at the end of a tunnel which is dug by both parents. The 6 or 7 eggs hatch after 19 days and the young fly about 27 days later.

Its combination of distinctive colour and motion make for great excitement on sighting.



2

# Woodpecker

*"There is a small woodpecker, red and grey,  
That hides in woods and forests far away ..."*

JOHN CLARE

## **WILDLIFE NOTES:**

A resident of woodlands throughout Europe, the woodpecker eats insects, nuts and seeds, but also takes eggs and young birds in spring. It climbs trees in a series of hops and is rarely seen on the ground.

The nest is in a hole in a tree which the woodpecker chisels out itself. It lays 4-7 eggs which hatch after 10-13 days. Young fly after 20 days and stay with their parents for a further week.



3

# Heron

*"And the mussel-pooled and the heron  
Priested shore ..."*

DYLAN THOMAS

## WILDLIFE NOTES:

This large and distinctive bird is often seen on the wing or standing elegantly by local waters ready to grasp a passing fish. It also feeds on amphibians or small mammals. It nests in colonies (heronries) at the tops of tall trees. Its 3-5 eggs are laid in February-April, hatching after 25 days.

The mosaic totally captures the 'priestliness' of Dylan Thomas' poem.



4

Fox &amp;

5

Pheasant

*"The fox knows many things - the hedgehog  
just one, big thing ..."*

ARCHILOCHUS



WINDRUSH PATH MOSAIC TRAIL

*"The jut of that odd, dark head, pacing  
Through the uncut grass on the elm's hill."*

SYLVIA PLATH

#### **WILDLIFE NOTES:**

The fox has a special place in nature and folklore, epitomising an indomitable spirit of survival. It feeds on a wide variety of plant and animal matter, and is not averse to the dust-bin or poultry farm. The 4 to 6 cubs are born in a den (earth) in early spring and are blind and helpless. Dens can be made in old badger sets or enlarged rabbit holes, or may be self-dug in banks.

The attractive pheasant was introduced to Europe from Asia for hunting. It loves our local countryside, and eats a wide range of food including grain, worms, spiders and green shoots. It nests on the ground among thick vegetation laying 6-15 eggs which hatch after 23 days.

The mosaic jokingly pairs the pheasant with its arch-enemy the fox in a permanent pas-de-deux.





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# Dragonfly

*"Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragonfly  
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky."*

D.G. ROSSETTI



## **WILDLIFE NOTES:**

The Dragonfly is one of the largest and most impressive of insects. They are difficult to approach, as they are constantly on the wing, most often out over water.

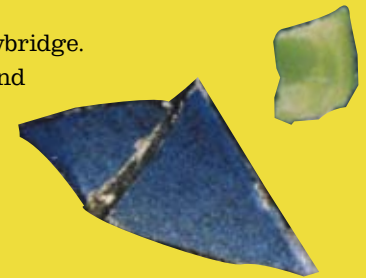
Their main habitat is larger ponds and lakes, or slow-moving water so they are ideally suited to our local environment.

The mosaic brilliantly evokes the transparent beauty and delicacy of Rossetti's poem.



# The Grand Plan

**The Lower Windrush Valley Mosaic Trail** can be started at either Standlake or Newbridge. It is a flat walk taking in a few bridges and stiles. It is approximately 2 miles long and you should allow 1 hour each way to enjoy all the mosaics along the trail.



## DIRECTIONS FROM STANDLAKE:

- 1 KINGFISHER (WITH MOON)** On your left hand side at the crossroads.
- 2 WOODPECKER** On a brown post to your right, just before the paths meet.
- 3 HERON** Go left down a slight dip, the mosaic is on your right.
- 4 FOX & 5 PHEASANT** On your right just before the path turns left. The mosaics are on opposite sides of the same stone.
- 6 DRAGONFLY** Situated in a picnic area. This can be found on the left hand side of the walk.
- 7 OTTER** On your left hand side in the undergrowth by the wooded trail.
- 8 STOAT** On your right, just before the stile to the gravel path.
- 9 KINGFISHER (ON BRIDGE)** On the A415 roadbridge. Go through the metal kissing gate and turn left to the bridge across the River Windrush.
- 10 SWALLOW** Cross the bridge and the mosaic is on your right.
- 11 FISHES** Walk to the end of the trail just before the road, the mosaic is on your right.



**KEY:**

-  Mosaic Trail path
-  Mosaics
-  Other paths
-  Roads
-  River / Bridge
-  Lakes
-  Buildings



7

# otter

*"Underwater eyes, an eel's  
oil of water body, neither fish nor beast is the otter."*

TED HUGHES

## **WILDLIFE NOTES:**

Aquatic carnivores, genus *Lutra*, cousins to the weasel and found worldwide (except Australia).

Short-limbed, web-toed, with thick brown fur and elongated tail. Lives beside fresh water, feeds on fish and with a playful and social disposition.



8

# Stoat

*"What mocking fate could call thee 'stoat',  
Then dress thee in this ermine coat?"*

ANON

## **WILDLIFE NOTES:**

The Stoat is small, long-bodied and a carnivore. Dens are made in burrows, trees and rock crevices, and are lined with the fur of the Stoat's rodent victims.

The Stoat feeds on mammals up to the size of rabbits and young hares (considerably larger than themselves). It has a single litter of 6-12 young that are born blind and helpless.



9

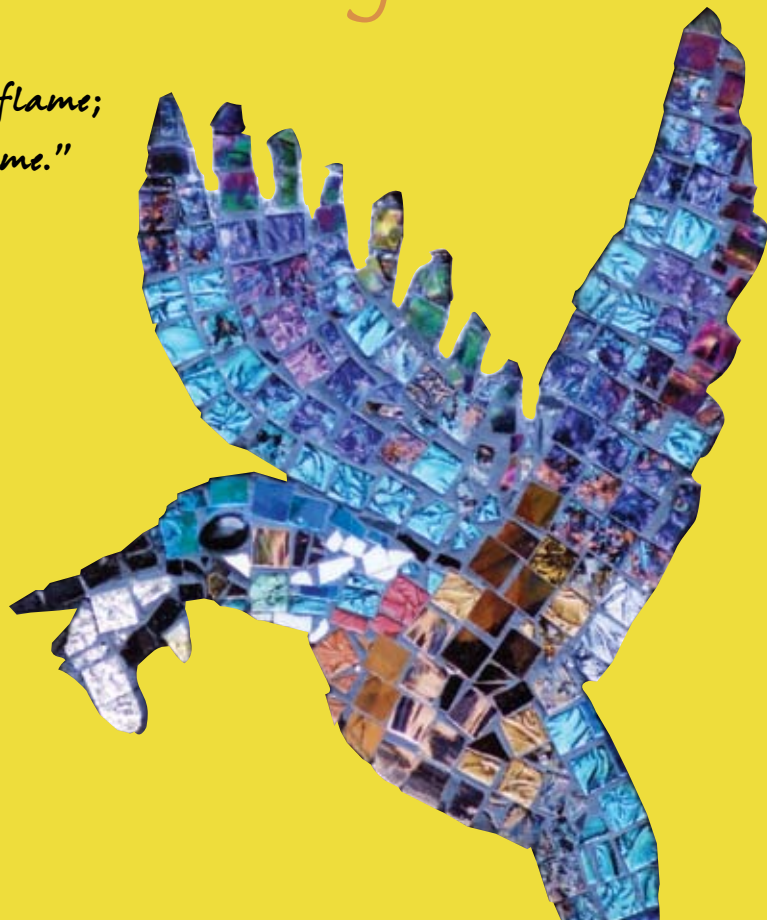
# kingfisher (on Bridge)

*"As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;  
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same."*

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

## **WILDLIFE NOTES:**

Unlike the Kingfishers of North and Eastern Europe, which migrate, our own are mainly resident. Look out for the bright, blue-green upper and distinctive chestnut-coloured underparts. Fast and direct in flight with long, sharp-pointed dagger-bill.



10

# Swallow

*"True hope is swift, and flies with swallows' wings ..."*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



## **WILDLIFE NOTES:**

This summer migrant returns each spring from its African odyssey. Swallows are often seen perched on wires or swooping low over meadows, pastures and open water as they feed on flying insects. The Lower Windrush is an ideal habitat.

The saucer-shaped mud nest is built under cover, in a barn or similar building. The 4 or 5 eggs hatch after 15 days. Young fly after 20 days and stay dependent on their parents for a further week or more.



# Fishes



*"When fishes leap in silver stream ...  
We then may say that May is come."*

JOHN CLARE

## **WILDLIFE NOTES:**

Cold-blooded, aquatic vertebrate, but nevertheless producer of warm passions in men like Izaak Walton!

Angling for them he described as "... a rest to the mind, diverter of sadness, calmer of unquiet thoughts, begatter of habits of peace and patience ..." Some, but not all, agree.



# Ariana Windle

## and Art Underfoot

The waymarkers of the Windrush Path Mosaic Trail point confidently to the future but have their origins, like all good things, in a special past.

The idea, creative inspiration and practical beginnings came from Standlake artist Ariana Windle. Born in Maryland, USA, she came to Oxford for post-graduate studies in 1977 where she met and married Ralph, writer and, at that time, a Fellow of Templeton College.

Cheswell Cottage, Standlake, became their home from which Ariana developed a wide reputation as painter (mainly in pastels), art teacher and demonstrator.

The Goose on the Green, Tree of Life at Standlake School, the Youth Club Dragon - these, and other mosaic artefacts, signalled in 2003 the coming together of her artistic talents with her passions for conservation, recycling and community involvement.

ARIANA AND LINDA



**The Windrush Path Mosaic Trail** was to be the climax of this ambition, enthusiastically welcomed and supported by Alison Hopewell, Project Leader of the wider Lower Windrush Valley Project.

**Art Underfoot** was the group, formed by Ariana, to organise and carry through these community mosaic projects. When she died, so sadly and unexpectedly, in August 2004, they decided spontaneously to complete the project as she had inspired and envisioned it. As 2005 drew towards its end this mission was accomplished.



# A VISION FULFILLED

*The Mosaic Trail has been brought into being by the energies and commitment of the following individuals and groups:*

## THE CREATIVE ACTIVIST'S

- **Art Underfoot:** Anne Colliou (Co-ordinator), Vanessa Francis (Artist), Karen Hawthorn, Alison Young, Jessica Dawson, Linda Watson
- **Stone Masonry:** Alec Peever
- **Wrought Iron Work:** Matthew Prickett, MP Welding
- **Photography:** Antony Colliou
- **Writer/Continuity:** Ralph Windle

The Team acknowledges with thanks the personal contribution and support of:

- **Caroline Bellanger** Leader+ Programme Manager, and those involved with the West Oxfordshire Network
- **Alison Hopewell** Lower Windrush Valley Project
- **Professor David Macdonald** Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, Oxford University

## OUR SPONSORS



Fired Earth, The Black Horse PH,  
The Rose Revived PH, The Three T's,  
Suzy Webster, Sheila Kitzinger, Bernie Craig

## THE COMMUNITY OF STANDLAKE

Every piece, of every mosaic, has been lovingly put in place by the people of this community, its neighbours, friends or visitors, and of all ages.