

Pewsey Circular (via Avebury World Heritage Site)			Windmill Hill Extension		
1 <sup>st</sup> walk check	2 <sup>nd</sup> walk check	3 <sup>rd</sup> walk check	1 <sup>st</sup> walk check	2 <sup>nd</sup> walk check	3 <sup>rd</sup> walk check
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## Pewsey Circular (via Avebury)

**Start & Finish:** Pewsey Station

Pewsey Station, map reference SU 161 603, is 25 km south of Swindon, 116 km west of London, 116m above sea level and in **Wiltshire**.

**Length:** 36.5 km (22.7 mi), of which 6.5 km (4.1 mi) on tarmac or concrete.

**Cumulative ascent/descent:** 616m.

For a shorter or a longer walk, *see below* **Walk Options**.

**Toughness:** 9 out of 10

**Time:** 8 ½ hours walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 12 ½ hours.

**Transport:** Pewsey Station is on the Berkshire and Hampshire line, served by Intercity trains between London and the West Country. The journey time is about 60 minutes. Pewsey is outside the Network South East Area, necessitating split journey tickets at either Reading or Newbury if using the Network Railcard.

**Saturday Walkers' Club:** Take the train closest to 08.00 hours for the full walk; the train closest to 10.00 hours is an option for the Avebury Endings.

**OS Landranger Map:** 173 (Swindon & Devizes)

**OS Explorer Map:** 157 (Marlborough & Savernake Forest)

### Walk Notes:

This is a strenuous excursion into the heart of Neolithic Wiltshire, a mysterious landscape full of pre-historic earthworks, standing stones, sarsen fields and hillforts as well as barrows – burial mounds of kings and warriors. The route passes through or past four of the most important prehistoric sites in Britain: Fyfield Down Sarsen Stones Field, Avebury Standing Stones and Bank & Ditch Earthworks, Silbury Hill and West Kennett Long Barrow (two other sites, The Sanctuary and Windmill Hill, can be explored on extensions). You walk out of the beautiful Vale of Pewsey over the southerly ridge of the Marlborough Downs, from where there are stunning far views over this land of wave-like hills, with its scarps, ridges and valleys, before heading through West Woods, one of England's best bluebell woods, to Fyfield Down and Avebury. Later the walk leads along the Wansdyke, a 5<sup>th</sup> century earth bank and deep ditch. It was built by the beleaguered Romano-British Celts as a fortification to stem the Saxon advance. From there it is just a short walk to Wiltshire's highest peak (Milk Hill) with its stunning Down. After a scenic descent into the Vale of Pewsey an undemanding stretch along the Kennet & Avon Canal leads back to Pewsey.

There are four different options to finish the walk in Avebury, with a rating of between 4/10 and 8/10. Buses to Swindon or Marlborough (for connections to Bedwyn station) are then needed.

### Walk Options:

**Buses 42 and 49 serve Avebury**, enabling a finish there on a shorter walk:

**Line 42** (Calne - Marlborough) runs 7 buses on weekdays and 6 on Saturdays (in Marlborough connect to below lines 20/22 to Bedwyn Station); **Line 49** (Devizes-Swindon) runs hourly Mon-Sat and two-hourly Sun (this requires a separate train ticket Swindon-Reading!).

The resultant walk options are as follows:

- **Pewsey to Avebury** is 18.1 km long with 352m height gain and rated **4/10**;
- **Pewsey to Avebury plus Windmill Hill** is 23.5 km long with 405m height gain and rated **6/10**;
- **Pewsey to West Kennett Long Barrow and back to Avebury via The Sanctuary** is 27.1 km long with 526m height gain and rated **7/10**;
- **Pewsey to West Kennett Long Barrow and back to Avebury via The Sanctuary plus the Windmill Hill loop** is 32.4 km long with 578m height gain and rated **8/10**.

**Buses 20/22** (Mon-Sat only) **from Bedwyn Station** (or the nearby Great Bedwyn Square) **to Marlborough** sometimes connect well with trains (and it will wait for up to 10 minutes for a delayed train). Marlborough is closer to Avebury than Pewsey and Bedwyn Station is inside the Network SE and has an hourly service. A valid train ticket to/from Bedwyn reduces the cost of the bus to £1.30 each way.

### B&B's close to the route (details last updated 09/08/2020)

**Avebury Lodge** High Street, Avebury (01672 539 023, <http://aveburylodge.co.uk/>)

**Dorwyn Manor** Swindon Road, Avebury (01672 539 098, <http://dorwynmanor.com/>)

**The Haven** 13 Truesloe Cottages, Avebury Truesloe (01672 539 846)

**Avebury Life** 5 Truesloe Cottages, Avebury Truesloe (01672 539 644, <http://aveburylife.com/>)

**The Old Forge** East Kennet (01672 861 686)

### Lunch (details last updated 09/08/2020)

**The Who'd A Thought It** Lockeridge, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 4EL (01672 861 255, <http://www.thewhodathoughtit.co.uk/index>). The Who'd A Thought It is located 9.7 km (6.0 mi) into the walk. Open 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-23.00 Mon & Thu-Fri, Sat 12.00-23.00 and Sun 12.00-21.00. Food served 12.00-15.00 & 18.00-21.00 Mon and Thu-Sat and Sun 12.00-16.00. A traditional English village pub.

**The Red Lion** High Street, Avebury, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 1RF (01672 539 266, <https://www.greeneking-pubs.co.uk/pubs/wiltshire/red-lion/>). The Red Lion is located 18.1 km (10.7 mi) into the walk. Open all day every day. Food served all day every day. The Red Lion was first licensed in 1802 and is nowadays managed by The Old English Inns-chain. It is famous for its 86ft deep well inside the pub which dates back to the 1600's. The Well Room is named after Alexander Keiller who excavated the ancient stone circle surrounding the pub.

**Circles Restaurant (at Avebury Museum)** Avebury, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 1RF (01672 539 250, <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/avebury/features/circles-restaurant>). The Circles Cafe is located 17.5 km (10.9 mi) into the walk. Opening Times: Wed-Mon 10.00-16.30 in summer and 10.00-16.00 in winter.

### Tea (details last updated 19/07/2021)

**The Golden Swan** Wilcot, Pewsey, Wiltshire, SN9 5NN (01672 562 289, <http://www.thegoldenswan.co.uk/>). The Golden Swan is located 3.1 km from the end of the walk, 320m off-route. Open Mon-Fri 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-Close, Sat-Sun 12.00-Close. Food served 12.00-13.45 and 18.15-20.45 daily.

**The Waterfront Bar & Bistro** Pewsey Wharf, Pewsey, Wiltshire, SN9 5NU (01672 564 020, <https://waterfrontbarandbistro.co.uk/>). The Waterfront is located 800m from the end of the walk.

**The Crown Inn** 60 Wilcot Road, Pewsey, Wiltshire, SN9 5EL (01672 562 653, <https://www.thecrowninnpewsey.com/>). The Crown Inn is located 320m beyond the station at the end of the walk. Open at least to 22.00 Mon-Sat and to 18.00 Sun. Food usually served Fri-Sat 18.00-21.00 and Sun 12.00-14.00.

**The Royal Oak** 35 North Street, Pewsey, Wiltshire, SN9 5ES (01672 563 426, <http://www.theroyaloakpewsey.co.uk/>). The Royal Oak is located 620m beyond the station at the end of the walk. Open 12.00-23.00 Tue-Fri, 13.00-22.00 Sat and 13.00-20.00 Sun. Food served 12.00-14.30.

**The Shed Alehouse** 20 North Street, Pewsey, Wiltshire, SN9 5EX (07769 812 643, <http://theshedalehouse.com/>). The Shed is located 660m beyond the station at the end of the walk. Open 17.00-21.30 Wed-Thu, 16.00-22.00 Fri, 14.00-22.00 Sat and 13.00-17.00 Sun.

**The Moonrakers** 57 High Street, Pewsey, Wiltshire, SN9 5AF (01672 562 585). Moonrakers is located 1.0 km beyond the station at the end of the walk. A sports pub without Real Ales.

## Notes:

### **Pewsey/Vale of Pewsey**

Pewsey Vale is an extent of lower lying ground separating the chalk downs of the Salisbury Plain to the south from the Marlborough Downs to the north. It is around 30 km long and around 5 km wide. At the western end is the town of Devizes. Although not itself part of the downs, the vale is included in the North Wessex Downs AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The area is not believed to have been glaciated.

Pewsey (Saxon: Pefisigge) has about 3,500 residents and boasts the 'Oldest Carnival in Wiltshire', held annually for two weeks in mid-September. Pewsey was once owned by the Saxon King, King Alfred. The crossroads of Pewsey is home to a prominent stone statue of the King, unveiled in June 1913 to commemorate the coronation of George V.

### **The (Hampshire) Avon River**

The Avon is 96 km (60 mi) long and begins as two separate rivers. The western Avon rises to the east of Devizes, draining the Vale of Pewsey, and the eastern Avon rises just east of Pewsey adjacent to the Kennet and Avon Canal. These two merge at Upavon, flowing southwards across Salisbury Plain through Durrington, Amesbury and Salisbury. To the south of Salisbury it enters the Hampshire Basin, flowing along the western edge of the New Forest before meeting up with the river Stour at Christchurch, to flow into Christchurch Harbour and the Channel at Mudeford.

All the significant direct and indirect tributaries of the Avon, including the Nadder, Wylde, Bourne and Ebbel, converge within a short distance around Salisbury.

The Avon is thought to contain more species of fish than any other river in Britain.

### **White Horse Trail**

The WHT is a 146 km (90 mi) waymarked circular Long Distance Path. It provides views of eight white horses which are cut into the turf of the chalk hillsides of Wiltshire, as well as visiting many other historic and prehistoric locations.

### **The Kennet and Avon Canal**

The Kennet and Avon Canal is 140 km (87 mi) long and is made of two lengths of navigable river (Avon and Kennet) linked by a canal. It links the Bristol Channel to the Thames.

### **Mid Wiltshire Way**

The MWW is a 109 km (68 mi) waymarked linear Long Distance Path. It takes in some of Wiltshire's finest countryside and downland areas.

### **North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)/Marlborough Downs**

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located in the counties of West Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire. The name North Wessex Downs is not a traditional one, the area covered being better known by various overlapping local names, including the Berkshire Downs, the North Hampshire Downs, the White Horse Hills, the Lambourn Downs, the Marlborough Downs, the Vale of Pewsey and Savernake Forest.

The AONB covers an area of some 1,730 km<sup>2</sup> (670 sq mi). It takes the form of a horseshoe on its side, with the open end facing east, surrounding the town of Newbury and the River Kennet watershed. The northern arm reaches as far east as the suburbs of Reading in mid-Berkshire, whilst the southern arm similarly reaches Basingstoke in northern Hampshire. The western extreme of the AONB reaches as far as Devizes. The highest points are the 297m summit of Walbury Hill, situated southwest of Hungerford in West Berkshire (and the highest point in southern England east of the Mendip Hills), and the Milk Hill-Tan Hill plateau northeast of Devizes in central Wiltshire, at 295m above sea level.

At its northeast extreme, the North Wessex Downs AONB faces across the Goring Gap to the Chilterns AONB on the other side of the River Thames.

Beyond the town of Marlborough the downs (now called the Marlborough Downs) sweep in a semicircle to the south around the headwaters of the River Kennet, with the Vale of Pewsey cutting through these downs carrying the headwaters of the Hampshire River Avon.

The downland is part of the Southern England Chalk Formation which runs from Dorset in the west to Kent in the east and also includes the Dorset Downs, Purbeck Hills, Cranborne Chase, Wiltshire Downs, Salisbury Plain, the Isle of Wight, Chiltern Hills and the North and South Downs.

Geologically, its chalk downs, dry valleys and sarsen outcrops are of note, the last in the area around Marlborough providing material for many of the Neolithic and Bronze Age sites such as Avebury Henge. Horse racing forms a major industry in the area, largely because of the good quality turf that comes with the chalk underlay, and much of the upland area is made over to gallops and other training areas.

### **Tan Hill Way**

The THW is a 19 km (12 mi) waymarked linear path. It starts at Clench Common and meets the Wansdyke Path above the Pewsey Downs National Nature Reserve.

### **Wansdyke/Wansdyke Path**

Wansdyke (from Woden's Dyke, Woden=a Saxon God) originally was a long deep ditch and bank, a linear defensive earthwork. The bank is up to 4m high with a ditch up to 2.5m deep. It runs from the Avon valley south of Bristol to Savernake Forest near Marlborough in Wiltshire and it is one of the largest linear earthworks in the UK. It is 72 km (45 mi) long with the middle being formed by the remains of the London to Bath Roman road. It was probably built in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. That is after the withdrawal of the Romans and before the complete takeover by the Anglo-Saxons. The ditch is on the north side, so presumably it was used by the Romano-British Celts as a defence against West Saxons encroaching from the upper Thames Valley westward into what is now the West Country.

The Wansdyke Path is a 21 km (13 mi) waymarked linear path. It follows the Wansdyke for a short stretch.

### **(Upper) Kennet River**

The Kennet is a 72 km (45 mi) long Thames tributary and has an extensive range of rare plants and animals that are unique to chalk watercourses. One of the sources is Swallowhead Spring near Silbury Hill in Wiltshire, the other being a collection of tributaries north of Avebury near the rural settlements of Uffcott and Broad Hinton which join up with the waters from Swallowhead Springs near West Kennett Long Barrow.

### **Fyfield Down National Nature Reserve/Sarsen Stones/Grey Wethers**

This is one of the country's oldest National Nature Reserves, created in 1955. The site is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of the landforms it contains and the wildlife it supports. The whole site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and its historical importance was recognised when it was made part of Avebury World Heritage Site. The sarsen "train" dominates Fyfield Down, which has the best assemblage of sarsens in England. The stones support a nationally important lichen flora and are sometimes called grey wethers as from a distance people have mistaken them for sheep. These stones were used to build famous monuments like Avebury Stone circle and Stonehenge, getting there using levers, rollers and sledges. They are the post-glacial remains of a cap of Cenozoic silcrete that once covered much of southern England – a dense, hard rock created from sand bound by a silica cement, making it a kind of silicified sandstone. The word 'sarsen' is a shortening of "Saracen stone" which arose in the Wiltshire dialect. "Saracen" was a common name for Muslims, and came by extension to be used for anything regarded as non-Christian, whether Celtic, Mohamedan, or Pagan. What remains has been heavily quarried in antiquity through to recent times leaving us with a much reduced scatter in the landscape.

### **Wessex Ridgeway**

A waymarked linear 220 km (137 mi) long-distance footpath, part of The Great Ridgeway, a prehistoric trade route which once stretched right across England linking the Norfolk coast to the Devon coast. It basically extends the Ridgeway National Trail to the south-west, crosses the glorious downlands of Wiltshire and Dorset and links the ancient stone circle at Avebury to the sea, following as near as possible the line of the ancient route. Passed on the way are the stone circles at Avebury, the Vale of Pewsey, the northern edge of Salisbury Plain, the Wylye Valley and Win Greene Hill in Wiltshire and Cranborne Chase, Cerne Abbas and Pilsden Pen in Dorset.

### **Avebury World Heritage Site/Stone Circle/Manor/Church**

Avebury is the largest, most impressive and most complex prehistoric site in Britain, enclosing an area of 11 ½ hectares. The bank and ditch and the stone circles were constructed between 2600 and 2400 BC, during the Neolithic, or 'New Stone Age', which is around the same time as the first phase of Stonehenge. As originally constructed, Avebury Henge consisted of a large stone circle (the largest in Britain) of at least 98 stones (but now having only 27) inside a grass-covered, chalk-stone bank and ditch, having four entrances at the cardinal compass points, and with two smaller inner circles. The northern circle is 97m in diameter and originally had 27 stones of which only 4 remain; the southern circle is 104m across and once contained 29 stones, of which only 5 remain. Inside the Northern Inner Circle was the Cove (3 very large megaliths), which may have been aligned on the summer solstice sunrise. The Southern Inner Circle had a great Obelisk in the centre (now lost).

The ditch was originally 21m wide and 9-11m deep. The sarsen stones can exceed 40 tons weight. There were also two ceremonial avenues: the West Kennet Avenue (made of 100 pairs of stones), entering on the south side; and the Beckhampton Avenue, entering the west causeway. It would have taken as many as 1.5 million man-hours to construct the bank and ditch and place the sarsen stones. Phases of construction are not known, but the outer circle and West Kennet Avenue may have been a later addition. By the Iron Age, the site had been effectively abandoned, with some evidence of touristic activity on the site during the Roman occupation. By about 600 AD, in the early Saxon period, a settlement had been built inside and just outside the henge. The site was probably seen as a convenient, semi-fortified site for a settlement. In 1114 AD, a small Benedictine priory and church was built on the site. Many of the 'pagan' stones were toppled and buried for this. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century the villagers began breaking apart the standing stones and using them for walls, houses and churches, possibly spurred on by a resurgent religious puritanism. Only the marmalade heir Alexander Keiller, in the 1930s, while excavating the site, extensively restored it by putting buried and fallen stones back into their original upright positions.

The Avebury Henge is in the freehold ownership of The National Trust and in English Heritage guardianship and part of a much larger prehistoric sacred complex, which includes Silbury Hill, the West Kennet Long Barrow, Windmill Hill and the Sanctuary.

'It does as much exceed in greatness...the so renowned Stonehenge...as a Cathedral doeth a parish church.'  
John Aubrey, Monumenta Britannica, 1663

### **Ridgeway**

The Ridgeway National Trail follows parts of the ancient Icknield Way for 139 km (87mi) from Overton Hill (near Avebury) in Wiltshire to Ivinghoe Beacon in the Chilterns.

### **Great Stones Way**

The GSW is a 73 km (46 mi) waymarked linear Long Distance Path. It covers the route from Barbury Castle (just south of Swindon) to Old Sarum (just north of Salisbury) through the North Wessex Downs AONB, and visits the Avebury Ring, Stonehenge and other prehistoric sites.

### **Windmill Hill**

Windmill Hill is the largest known causewayed enclosure in Britain (8 ½ hectare/21 acres) and one of the earlier monuments in the Avebury landscape, probably from around 3800 BC. Evidence from excavations here suggests it was not a permanent settlement, but was used as a ceremonial and feasting site during the earlier part of the Neolithic period. During a later phase, c. 3300 BC, three concentric segmented ditches were placed around the hilltop site; they can still be detected from the air. The area was reused as a cemetery in the Bronze Age and several prominent burial mounds here can be seen from miles around.

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/windmill-hill/>

### **Silbury Hill**

Silbury Hill is a prehistoric artificial grass-covered chalk mound in the shape of a flat-topped cone near Avebury in Wiltshire. It is part of the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites UNESCO World Heritage Site and the biggest prehistoric artificial mound in Europe, similar in size to some of the smaller Egyptian pyramids of the Giza Necropolis. Access to the hill is not permitted. The height of Silbury is 40m, the diameter 160m at the base and 30m at the summit and the monument covers 2.2 hectares. Archaeologists calculate that Silbury Hill was built about 4,500 years ago and that it took 18 million man-hours, or 500 men working for 15 years to deposit and shape 248,000 m<sup>3</sup> of earth and (chalk) fill on top of a natural hill. Various tunnels and excavations over the years have failed to produce any solution as to the purpose of Silbury Hill and its context within the associated sites (West Kennet Long Barrow, the Avebury henge, The Sanctuary and Windmill Hill), from which the summit of Silbury Hill is visible, but they have revealed that the hill was built in three stages. The first phase, carbon-dated to 2400 BC ±100 years, consisted of a gravel core with a revetting kerb of stakes and sarsen boulders. Alternate layers of chalk rubble and earth were placed on top of this: the second phase involved heaping further chalk on top of the core, using material excavated from an encircling ditch. At some stage during this process, the ditch was backfilled and work was concentrated on increasing the size of the mound to its final height, using material from elsewhere. The step surrounding the summit dates from this phase of construction, either as a precaution against slippage, or as the remnants of a spiral path ascending from the base, used during construction to raise materials, and later as a processional route.

Remnants of a Roman village the size of 24 football pitches have been found at the foot of Silbury Hill.

### **West Kennett Long Barrow**

The second longest, most impressive and most accessible Neolithic chambered tomb in Britain, situated on a prominent chalk ridge, near Silbury Hill. Built in around 3650 BC, which is centuries before Stonehenge or Silbury Hill, it was in use until around 2500 BC. Nearly 50 people have been buried here before the chambers were blocked. Aligned to the east, the interior would've been illuminated by the morning sun. Originally, two ditches 3m wide and 6m deep flanked the length of the barrow. In total it is estimated that 15,700 man hours were expended in its construction.

### **The Sanctuary/Overton Hill**

The Sanctuary is a monument believed to date back to around 3000 BC, but constructed and modified in a number of phases, with eight rings in total (six wooden post rings and two stone circles). The last of these were destroyed in approximately 1725, their original locations now marked by concrete posts and blocks. As with Stonehenge, the function of the Sanctuary remains a mystery, although archaeologists believe it was a ceremonial site, probably used for burial rituals. This theory stems from the fact that large quantities of human bones and food remains have been found at the site.

A barrow cemetery known as Overton Hill sits right next to the Sanctuary and consists of 7 barrows. A further stone circle (now destroyed) was reported in the field behind it – the site can still be seen when the field has been ploughed. <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/the-sanctuary/>

### **Pewsey Downs Nature Reserve**

A sweep of chalk downland located to the north of the Pewsey Vale. The reserve covers three hills and includes Alton Barnes White Horse cut into the hillside.

## WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train in **Pewsey Station** on platform 1 and exit into the car park. *Turn left* along the station drive and in 65m continue along a descending stepped path, ignoring the tarmac drive forking right. In 25m carefully *turn left* through the railway arches (no pavement) and on the other side in 40m *turn right* along a narrow tarmac path between trees (**Way's Way**, with a **King Alfred's Trail** signpost) parallel to the railway embankment. In 80m *turn left* along a tarmac lane at a bend. In 50m ignore a drive turning left and continue in the same direction to the right of **Buckleaze Mill's** garden fence. In 80m *turn right* with the path to cross the (Eastern) **Avon River**, close to its source and just after its confluence with **Ford Brook**.

In 160m you emerge in a meadow and *fork left* along its left-hand boundary with a hedge on the left (this path can be overgrown in summer, in which case continue in the same direction along the railway bank and *turn left* at the end of the meadow). In 170m continue in the same direction along a tarmac lane in **Knowle** hamlet and in 90m *turn left* down a holloway with a Bridleway (Quiet Lane) signpost and a **White Horse Trail** marker, where the lane turns right. In 180m you cross **The Avon River** on a brick bridge and in 220m cross the arched **Pains Bridge** (on the OS map) over the **Kenet & Avon Canal**, now with first views of a whaleback shaped ridge (**Oare Hill**) on the half right. Continue along a car wide farm track, in 300m ignoring a tarmac drive joining on the left from **Inlands Farm**.

In another 85m you [!] *turn left* over a stile in a hedge gap with a **White Horse Trail** marker and *bear right* across a field towards a stile in a fence to the right of a tree 65m away (330°). Continue on a usually well-cleared path through an arable field (340°) with views of **Huish Hill** towards a hedge gap to the right of two large oak trees (with a single crown) and in 480m continue in the same direction through the next field to the right of a solitary tree. In 140m leave the field through a gap to the right of a stile, cross a lane and continue in the same direction through a hedge gap and along a farm track along a left hand field boundary. You have good views on this stretch of the **Strip Lynchets** (ancient agricultural terracing) on **Oare Hill**.

In 450m ignore a footpath turning left through a wide hedge gap and in 50m *bear right* with the field boundary. In 40m leave the field and *turn left* along an earthen path where the car wide gravel track turns right. In 180m this continues as a tarmac lane (Pound Lane). In 250m *turn right* on the opposite pavement at a T-junction with **Oare Hill**, the main road through **Oare**, pass a **bus stop** (5/X5 from Salisbury to Swindon) and **The White Hart** (long closed), and in 140m *turn left* up a road. The road turns right, then left around a school and 80m after that – at the end of a row of cottages on the right – *turn right* along a car wide gravel lane with a footpath signpost and a **Mid Wiltshire Way** marker on it. In 30m emerge into a field corner and continue in the same direction up its right-hand boundary towards **Huish Hill**, the south-facing edge of the **Marlborough Downs**, part of the **North Wessex Downs AONB**.

In 350m leave the field through a metal gate and start the steep ascent up the hill, along a stepped path through the grass. On the way you pass a bench ideally located for a short break, at a point where ancient earthworks turn left along the slope (as does the Mid Wilts Way) while enjoying the stunning views south across the **Vale of Pewsey**. From here you can just about spot the outlines of **Huish Heart** a couple of fields to the west at the bottom of Huish Hill: two types of hawthorn trees planted in 1999 so that their differently coloured blossoms (from above) form the outline of a heart in spring. At the top of the rise walk through a wooden gate and continue in the same direction along a grassy path between a hedge and a fence. In 110m *turn left* along a gravel lane at a bend (you are now following the **Tan Hill Way**) and in 60m *turn left* with the lane (ignoring another lane continuing through a wooden gate) and in another 40m *veer*

*right* along a wide grassy path between hedges, where the lane veers left into the car park of **Huish Hill House**. In 35m ignore a bridleway turning left through a metal gate and in 150m walk through another metal gate into an open area on top of the Downs, with far views on the left south across the **Vale of Pewsey** and on the right north across the **Marlborough Downs**.

In 260m you walk through the right of two metal field gates with a **White Horse Trail** marker and continue in the same direction with a fence on the left. In 150m ignore a footpath turning left through a metal gate and in 400m *curve right* in the far left corner of the grassy field. In 110m walk through a metal gate to the left of a double metal field gate and *turn left* through a gate to the right of a metal field gate at a three-way junction of paths to follow a clear grassy path downhill with scattered trees on the left of the path (250°). In 375m go through a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate and in 25m you reach a T-junction of paths. *Turn right* with a **White Horse Trail** signpost along a car wide track.

In 50m you *fork right*, ignoring a left fork into an arable field, soon along a narrow path between hedges. [This path can be overgrown in summer along the first 700m before widening a little, but you can avoid all of it on the right hand side along a field boundary, from where you re-join the path after 735m by negotiating a low barbed wire fence, just before the corner of the large arable field]. In 1.1 km (by now on the fringes of a large wood – **West Woods**) you reach a four-way junction with an ancient – more than car wide – track. This is the course of the **Wansdyke**, a 72 km long defensive dyke built in the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Century by the Romano-British Celts against the Saxons, a much more impressive part of which will be walked along later on. Cross the Wansdyke and continue in the same direction along a forest track.

In 500m a bridleway joins from the right, in 40m after that **[!]** you *bear left* along a signposted bridleway. [This **can be overgrown** in which case continue along the forest track and *turn left* in 50m or so (just before it curves right) along a broad grassy track.] In 25m you *turn right* along another wide grassy track (340° initially) to reach a large clearing in the wood (**Hursley Bottom**), with a wooden bench on it. This is a very tranquil setting at any time of the year. In 50m from the bench *turn right* along a car wide gravel track at a T-junction and in 15m *turn left* and continue uphill. In 90m continue between trees – still ascending – and in 30m continue in the same direction up a wide forest track at a bend. In 170m continue in the same direction at a four-way junction of wide forest tracks and in 25m the track continues as a grassy path.

In 400m leave the wood through a wooden field gate into a grassy field, where you continue in the same direction along its right-hand boundary (with a large **Poultry Farm** on the right and with views ahead of **Fyfield Down** on the other side of the **Upper Kennet Valley**). In 230m walk through a metal field gate in the bottom right corner of the field and continue along an initially car wide track between fences. In 360m walk through a 'lost' wooden gate onto a road by a signpost for Huish (opposite a meadow containing some sarsen stones) and *turn right* along a road into **Lockeridge** village (signposted **Marlborough** and **Fyfield**, i.e.: *ignore the right fork* signposted Manton and Clatford). Pass the village green on your right – an ideal picnic spot in this early lunch destination – and continue along the road through the village. In 340m you continue in the same direction at a three-way junction, and in 150m reach the early lunch stop **The Who'd A Thought It** (leave muddy boots at the rear door entrance).

After lunch *turn left* out of the pub (i.e.: continue in the pre-lunch direction) along the road. In 120m switch to the left-hand pavement as the one on the right ends, and in 110m you cross the – here often dry – **River Kennet**. Immediately after the river crossing you **[!]** *turn right* through a wooden gate to the right of a wooden field gate by **River Cottage**. Walk through a few kissing gates, always keeping to the same

direction, and in 340m again continue in the same direction along a tarmac lane at a bend. In 150m reach **St. Nicholas, Fyfield** church (usually open) and *fork to the left of the church* with the lane. In 120m cross the **A4** (on the course of a Roman Road) and ascend a tarmac lane up **Fyfield Hill**. In 530m the lane levels out and in 250m you walk past **White Acre Farm**, as you enjoy far views to some gallops on **Fyfield Down** and the lane continue as gravel. In 50m *turn left* with the lane, but in 30m *turn right* off it downhill along a wide grassy path between hedges (10°).

In 350m you walk through a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate into **Fyfield Downs National Nature Reserve**. The fenced area is **Access Land**, you can walk anywhere, but this is the recommended route through it: continue in the same direction along a left-hand side hedge and in 70m you reach a hedge corner. The route continues by **[!]** *turning left* along the hedge, but 600m to the right along **Clatford Bottom** – and with permissive access to it – you'll find **The Devil's Den**, remains of a Long Barrow consisting of three large sarsen stones, one resting on the other two in a door-shape.

In 75m ignore a right forking wide track, but in another 220m *fork right* by a solitary tree along an initially faint grassy track towards the bottom of this valley, leaving the footpath, which now ascends with the left-hand rim of the fenced-in area. For the next 790m (very slowly ascending) you walk along the edge of a very large field of scattered **Sarsen Stones (or Grey Wethers)**, the stones used in Stonehenge and Avebury. This is just one of several such locations in this part of Wiltshire. Near the end of the fenced bottom of the valley, where the wide track turns right, *turn left* up to a stile to the left of a metal field gate in the fence 30m away. From the stile (you have **left the Access Land**) *veer left* uphill on a clear path towards a fence corner 150m away (215°), where you **[!]** *turn right* further uphill along a clear path through the grassy slope (285°).

In 360m go over a set of stiles either side of the white fence bordering a horse gallops 50m to the left of the '4 Furlongs'-sign and *turn right* on the other side. In 530m a combined cycle-/footpath joins from the right through a set of gates and you *turn left* along a clear track. You now walk for the best part of 3 km in a straight line along the **Wessex Ridgeway**, initially along the top of first **Overton Down**, then **Avebury Down**, then descending all the way to **Avebury, World Heritage Site** and late lunch destination. Grand views accompany you to the Downs behind Avebury (with **The Lansdowne Monument**, a 37m obelisk near Cherhill, on top of one of them, built as an 'eye-catcher' in 1845 by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquis of Lansdowne in memory of Sir William Petty (1623-87), statistician and economist) and to **Waden Hill** to the left of **Avebury** (behind which lies **Silbury Hill**, passed later), as well as down into the **Upper Kennet Valley** on the left.

In 520m you cross **The Ridgeway** Long Distance Path, not far from its end a few km to the left (and concurrent here with the **Great Stones Way**) and in 1.5 km ignore a left turning bridleway (signposted **Overton Hill** and **Bath Road**), before passing **Manor Farm** in 150m. In 570m walk through the earth banks encircling **Avebury**.

The banks and grassy fields with standing stones can be freely walked in most parts of the village, but **a suggested route covering ALL noteworthy sights** goes as follows:

*Turn right* through a gate (the fallen megalith 30m away on your left is what remains of the '**Eastern Gateway**') and either walk up the earth bank (it used to be 5.5m high and of exposed chalk, a stunning sight from as far away as the ridgeway) and follow it around or walk to the left of the still impressive ditch (originally twice as deep and 21m wide). There are only a few megaliths visible in this quartile, but at least 15 have been confirmed by geophysical survey to be buried under the soil, a practice encouraged by the medieval church in their campaign against any signs of paganism.



Eventually walk to the two prominent megaliths standing at right angles to each other near the centre of the village. This is '**The Cove**', once made up of three stones set with the open side facing north-east, where the sun rises at its most northerly point. An outlying stone is thought to have been aligned so its long shadow would penetrate The Cove at the moment of solstice. The broader of the two stones in fact reaches for another 3m below ground (a fact discovered during works to stabilise the then leaning stone), it weighs about 100 tons and was – amazingly – one of the first to be put in place. The 2 stones are a good example of the male/female principle applied in several places in Avebury: a pillar-shaped 'male' stone paired with a diamond-shaped 'female' stone. Of the circle of 27 stones that surrounded The Cove, only 4 are still visible.

Have a look at the nearby barn, partly built from broken Sarsen stones. Leave this quartile through a wooden gate nearby to cross **Swindon Road** and on the other side *turn right* along a paved path parallel to the road. In 80m walk through a wooden gate and *turn left* to follow the curving line of standing stones in the north westerly quartile. The first one, almost reaching out over the road, is the '**Swindon**' or '**Diamond Stone**', one half of what was the '**Northern Gateway**' (the missing straighter 'male' stone was destroyed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century). It is also one of the few stones to have remained standing for 4500 years; a lot of the others have only been re-erected in the last centuries. Smaller concrete pillars denote proven but missing earlier standing stones.

Leave this quartile through a wooden gate in 180m and *turn right* down a few steps and continue along a gravel path at a bend. In 25m reach an open area by the NT-run **Avebury Museum** and its **Circles Restaurant**. Continue past the dovecote (built between 1533-69) to **Avebury Manor & Garden** 120m away and *turn left* to enter the church yard of **St. James', Avebury** through a metal kissing gate.

**In 40m** – at the church entrance – **you have a choice:**

**For the extension loop via Windmill Hill** (either now or at the end of the Avebury part of your walk, when you know whether you have enough time and energy left for it, as it adds 5.3 km) *veer right* along a tarmac path (215°) towards a metal gate 30m away at the corner of a thatched wall, and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Extension Loop via Windmill Hill**.

**For the Main Walk** you continue in the same direction towards the lychgate 60m away.

**\*)** Go through the lychgate to *turn left* along a lane. In 90m – just before reaching the **Avebury Community Shop** and the **Henge Shop** – *turn right* through a wooden gate into the south westerly quartile of standing stones. The first megalith is the '**Blacksmith's Stone**', so dubbed as it had been taken to the forge for breaking up, a task only half-achieved, but you can still spot where it has been cemented back together in the 1930s before returning it to this spot. The sixth megalith 150m along is the '**Barber's Stone**', so dubbed for crushing a barber-surgeon during the efforts to topple and bury it underground. That practice was subsequently discontinued. Notice a **hollow in the earth bank** on your right near the road; this is damage done by 19<sup>th</sup> century road builders. They used the soil to fill in the ditch to let the road run across it. *Turn left* through a wooden gate to cross the road and go through another wooden gate into the south easterly quartile of standing stones. For lunch, you *turn left* and in 100m reach **The Red Lion** by a **bus stop for services to Swindon**.

From the pub retrace your steps across the **A4361** through a wooden gate to follow the stone circle. This consists of 5 stones and 4 concrete pillars. Although incomplete, it allows you to imagine the rest of the circle of 29 stones. At its centre is a large fluted marker stone (similar to a trig point) that shows where the mighty '**Obelisk**' once stood, believed to having towered over the smaller stones by more than 2m. The two

very large megaliths in the right-hand corner are the '**Southern Gateway**', the right-hand stone having been dubbed the '**Devil's Chair**', as one can indeed sit on a seat-like ledge on the back side of the megalith. Follow a gravel path up the earth bank to appreciate the view from the top across the southerly quartiles and – on the outside of the bank and ditch, on your right as you turn around – the beginnings of the remains of the ceremonial **West Kennett Avenue** of standing stones.

Descend from the bank **in the direction of the West Kennett Avenue** towards a wooden gate in the fence corner 40m away and cross a tarmac lane to walk through another wooden gate on the other side into the fenced grassy area of the Avenue. Walk along a clear path curving left and then following the Avenue (again: smaller concrete pillars denote proven but missing earlier standing stones). The first pair of standing stones in 250m is another example of the male/female principle mentioned earlier. In 550m leave the fenced area in the far-left corner through a wooden gate. By a three-way signpost *turn right* along the fence on your right, gently up **Waden Hill**. In 350m – at the brow of the rise – you get first glimpses of **Silbury Hill**, Europe's largest man-made mound, majestic and mysterious in its beauty, as well as of the **West Kennett Long Barrow**, visible on the ridge of the Down to the left.

Continue in the same direction to the bottom of the **Upper Kennet Valley** and in 300m *turn left* at a footpath T-junction, by a wooden gate on the right. In 350m walk through a wooden gate to the right of a wooden field gate onto the **A4** (on the course of a Roman Road), which you cross to then *turn left* along its opposite pavement. In 30m *turn right* through a metal kissing gate along a wide gravel track leading towards. In 160m cross **The Kennet River** on a bridge and in 40m *turn left* with the path through a kissing gate. In 50m *turn right* up a wide grassy path for an out-and-back to the **West Kennett Long Barrow**. Afterwards continue in the same direction.

In 430m go over a stile to the left of a metal field gate and continue in the same direction with a barbed wire fence on the left. In 110m you cross a tarmac lane and continue in the same direction over a stile to the right of a double wooden field gate. Walk along a field boundary and in 350m *turn right* with the fence on the right. In 170m – in the right hand corner of this field – go over a stile and continue in the same direction along a narrow path. In 120m you *turn left* for 15m along a gravel farm track to where a grassy bridle path turns up right.

**Here you have a choice:**

**For a finish in Avebury via The Sanctuary** (or – while still finishing in Pewsey – for an out-and-back to The Sanctuary (this adds 2.2 km)), you continue in the same direction along the farm track and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Return to Avebury via The Sanctuary**.

**For the Main Walk** you *turn up right* along the grassy bridle path. This is the beginning of a long but gentle ascent to the highest point of this walk (also the **highest point in Wiltshire**): 140 height meters over 4.5 km, so not too steep, but not always on easy ground either and mostly with splendid views to the right from **Harestone Down** along the rolling landscape of the **Wessex Downs**, full of the earthworks, tumuli, enclosures, strip lynchets, barrows, causeways, burys, dykes and cross dykes that are the remnants of settlements from thousands of years ago.

*But in more detail:* in 310m *turn right* along a farm track at a T-junction and in 10m *turn left* along a rough car wide track. In 1.0 km you walk through an unusual (but usually open) metal gate and follow markers on the gate posts to continue in the same direction, now with a barbed wire fence on the left. In 700m go through a fence gap and *turn right* along a car wide grassy field boundary. In 90m exit from the field and *turn*

*left* at a T-junction with a grassy car wide track. In 960m you cross a gravel car wide track and continue in the same direction along a grassy field boundary with a fence on the left. In 20m stay to the right of remnants of a barbed wire fence along the left-hand side of a large arable field and in 250m – in the far-left corner of the field – *veer left* to continue in the same direction along the right-hand boundary of the adjacent field.

In 260m (after walking through a dip) you **[!]** *turn left* in a field corner, ignoring the right forking grassy path. In 30m leave the field on the right through a wooden gate. In 20m walk up to the rim of the magnificently kept **Wansdyke**, a 72 km long defensive dyke built in the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Century by the Romano-British Celts against the Saxons. From here you have magnificent views of the continuation of the dyke further west. Descend through the dyke and up on the other side on a steep path, to then *turn left* along its top. In 120m go through a wooden gate to continue along a gravel car wide track for a short stretch and re-join the Wansdyke over a stile (with **Wansdyke Path**, **White Horse Trail** and **Mid Wiltshire Way** markers) to continue along the dyke. In 180m *turn right* off the dyke over two adjacent stiles, cross the gravel track that has run parallel for a while and walk through a wooden gate 20m away into **Pewsey Downs National Nature Reserve**.

Follow its left-hand boundary fence and in 170m walk through a wooden gate to the left of a metal field gate and *turn left* along the rim of an arrestingly beautiful steep serrated Down (often frequented by hang gliders) towards **Milk Hill**. In 460m you walk through a wooden gate to the left of a wooden field gate and *veer right* along the rim towards the right hand corner of the clump of trees on the hilltop. Past the clump cross a **Cross Dyke** and *curve left* around the hilltop's scattered trees and bushes. In 170m on the other side of the top continue on a bearing of 80° along a clear path along the side of the hill. In 580m – having walked through a metal gate along the way – you pass a fence corner at the top of the chalk figure of the **Alton Barnes White Horse** (cut in 1812 and at 49 x 55m the third largest of the eight white horses in Wiltshire).

The path curves right and in 250m from the White Horse, as you walk through some bramble and gorse bushes, is a good spot to look back at the hill figure (and the stunning Downs scenery in general). 20m beyond the bushes *turn left* to follow the path along **Walkers Hill**, in 180m (unless you have spare energy and time) ignore a path leading up to a knoll harbouring **Adam's Grave** (the highest barrow in Wiltshire), in 160m cross another (faint) **Cross Dyke** and immediately *fork left* (55°) downhill towards a metal kissing gate in a fence 150m away, ignoring the right fork to a road. **Knap Hill** with its Neolithic Camp remnants is on the other side of the drop.

Go through the kissing gate and aim for a small car park. In 170m *turn right* through a metal kissing gate and continue in the previous direction (ignore a metal kissing gate a little to the right, leading onto the road) and in 140m go through a metal kissing gate and *turn right* through a metal gate at a three-way junction of paths. Cross the road and continue along a gravel track through the small car park and in 70m continue in the same direction along a fenced-in grassy path. In 100m ignore a footpath joining on the left through a gate down from **Knap Hill**. In 40m walk through a wooden field gate and in 50m the path starts its descent down the steep flank of Knap Hill along **Workway Drove (Track)**. In 180m you walk through a wooden gate.

[This next section can be unpleasantly overgrown, and is also very long indeed. An early escape is provided on the right-hand side across a stile into the neighbouring field. Continue along its left hand boundary, going over another stile in 25m. There is a further option to escape – this time to either the left or the right – after another 150m. In 1.0 km, in the far left/right corner of the field, *turn back* through a gap or a gate respectively into the Drove and continue along it as it bears left.]

In 1.2 km the path bears left, in 200m you continue in the same direction along a busy road at a bend and in 190m *turn left* along a lane, signposted **West Stowell**. In 320m cross a farm track and in 410m *turn right* along a tarmac lane (with **West Stowell Farm Office** on your right). In 200m the farm track crossed earlier joins from the right and in 70m you ignore a footpath turning left through a metal gate at a corner of the hedge on the left. In 120m enter a large arable field through a metal field gate, where the lane turns right and follow its left hand boundary. In 40m continue in the same direction across the field at a corner along a usually well-cleared path. In 210m go over a set of badly maintained stiles either side of an un-railed wooden plank bridge into the next field and follow its right-hand side. In 270m *turn right* through a metal field gate onto a road and *turn left* along it (**Alton Road**) towards the village of **Wilcot**. In 290m you reach an arched bridge over **The Kennet & Avon Canal**. [Here a 320m walk along the road into the village gets you to an early tea stop: **The Golden Swan**.]

Else walk down to the towpath to the right of the bridge and *turn left* to follow it in an easterly direction (i.e.: with the water on your right) **for 1.9 km**. This stretch of the canal is one of the most beautiful and 'wild' ones and is part of what is called **The Long Pound**, the lock-free 24 km between Pewsey and Devizes. **In more detail:** In 460m you walk under **Stowell Park Suspension Bridge**, in 330m the canal and path curve right and in 190m **[!]** you leave the towpath, *turn right* over the red brick bridge #115 and *turn left* over a stile on the other side to continue along the towpath with the canal now on your left. In 820m – at the next bridge (#114) – you *turn right* up some steps onto the **A345** opposite **The Waterfront Bar & Bistro**. *Turn right* along the road, in 50m past the car park entrance of the Inn, where you cross over to the other pavement.

In 520 cross **Ford Brook** on the road and in 30m *veer left* with the road at a mini-roundabout. In 120m *turn right* along a lane and in 60m reach **Pewsey Station**. London bound trains depart from the near platform.

For other **recommended tea options** cross the tracks over the footbridge, leave the station into the car park, *turn right* through it and in 30m *turn left* along a narrow tarmac path (signposted **King Alfred Trail**) to in 110m emerge on **Wilcot Road** at a T-junction.

- *Turn right* and in 70m reach the **Crown Inn**;
- *Turn left* for all other options *into the centre of Pewsey*: in 225m *turn right* along **Marlborough Road**, in 100m *turn right* at a roundabout along **North Street** (signposted **Amesbury**), in 40m pass **The Royal Oak** on the right, in another 40m you have **The Shed Alehouse** on the left, in 20m pass a bus stop on the right (Pewsey Methodist Church), in 100m *turn left* at a three-way junction with **High Street** (and with a **Statue of King Alfred** in the centre of the junction, now briefly with **The Avon River** on the right, in 250m you reach **The Moonrakers** on the left.

## Extension Loop via Windmill Hill (add 5.3 km and 52m ascent/descent)

You walk through the redundant metal gate and follow a narrow tarmac path between high brick walls. In 50m continue in the same direction along a tarmac lane at a bend, with **Wessex Ridgeway** and **White Horse Trail** markers a little further along on the right. In 110m cross a ditch on a car wide bridge by a pumping station on your left and in 40m pass a couple of benches on your right (from which you have splendid views of **Silbury Hill** more than a kilometre away). In 20m cross a tarmac bridge over the **River Kennet** and in 10m **[!]** *fork right* with a **National Cycle Network 403** marker on a metal railing along a wide ditch on your left. **[!]** In 35m you *turn right* with the White Horse Trail over a stile by a footpath signpost (Windmill Hill 1 ¼) into the first of several pastures, which you cross generally in the same direction.

**In more detail:** in 75m *turn right* over a stepped two-railed wooden bridge and *turn left* on the other side to follow a usually clear path through the grass (20°), now with the **Kennet River** on your right. In 180m cross a stile in the boundary tree line, continue in the same direction and in 140m cross a set of stiles in a hedge to continue in the same direction in the next field, close to its right-hand boundary. In 400m – and 20m left of the far-right corner – leave this field over a stile into a narrow, wooded strip (**Sloe Copse** on the OS map) to go over a double stile in 10m and continue in the same direction through the next field, close to its left-hand boundary. In 450m, in the far-left corner of the field, go over a stile to the left of a double metal field gate onto a car wide farm track at a T-junction.

*Turn left* with a 'Windmill Hill 1 mile' signpost along this bridleway through an often-open metal field gate to continue along a tree-lined right hand field boundary, gently uphill. In 250m leave the field in its top right corner through a rusty metal gate and continue in the same direction along the adjacent narrower field. In 170m the terrain levels out where there is a field boundary on the right hand side behind the trees. It is worth turning around here for the views of Avebury, Silbury Hill and the surrounding Downs. Ahead, you get first sightings of the remnants of the earth banks, ditches and barrows on **Windmill Hill**, the largest known causewayed enclosure in Britain. In 370m you walk through a wooden gate in the top-right field corner and continue in the same direction over or around the first barrow and in 100m go through the outer ditch past a cluster of more barrows and in another 110m reach the central barrow, surrounded by a smaller ditch. The area is **Access Land**, so explore it as you wish and leave it through a wooden gate to the right of a wooden field gate in the south west corner 300m from the central barrow by a fine info panel (i.e.: *turn left* from the central barrow, 225°).

*Turn left* along a car wide gravel track, gently downhill back towards **Avebury**. In 1 km, **[!]** just after passing a double metal field gate on your left and **[!]** before crossing **Horslip Bridge** (on the OS map), *turn left* with a bridleway signpost on the left through a metal kissing gate to the right of a metal field gate. In 20m you walk through a usually open metal field gate into a narrow field to follow its left-hand boundary, but in about 150m **[!]** you *veer right* towards a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate 80m away. Go through the gate and *turn right* along a grassy path between trees. In 220m this becomes a wider turfed path by a house on the left and in 50m you cross a concreted area just before a tarmac lane by a three-way junction. *Turn left* along the more minor lane (**Bray Street**), signposted 'Avebury', past several large old houses. In 370m continue in the same direction along a narrow tarmac path by the last house on the right and in 100m you pass a stile on the left (the outward route). Retrace your steps to the churchyard and *veer right* through it to the lychgate 50m away.

Pick up the directions in the main text at the asterisk \*).

## Return to Avebury via The Sanctuary

The track bends to the right and in 170m meets a road at a T-junction. *Turn left* along it and in 40m cross a road bridge over the **Kennet River** to *turn right* on the other side (with a bridleway signpost attached to the bridge railing) through a car wide gap in the road side bank and along a right hand grassy field boundary. In 400m leave the field in its far corner and *turn up left* along a car wide farm track between trees, ignoring a right turn towards a two-way signpost 30m away. You steadily ascend the byway up **Overton Hill**, in 180m the track levels out, in 20m you get first views of some of the seven barrows on the half right, and in 170m you reach the **A4** at a T-junction.

*Turn left* through a wooden gate to the right of a wooden field gate into the fenced site of **The Sanctuary**, none of whose original rings of wooden or stone posts remain, yet their replacement concrete posts and blocks still create an evocative site. The **West Kennet Avenue** of standing stones used to lead here. After studying the site and its info panels and views, return back through the gate to cross the **A4** and continue along a car wide track past Overton Hill car park. You pass a signpost marking one end of **The Ridgeway National Trail** (the other end at **Ivinghoe Beacon** is 139 km/87 mi away), an info panel in the field on the right about the **Overton Hill Round Barrows**, and another couple of info panels about The Ridgeway (one more general, one referring in more detail to the stretch from here to **Wantage**), to then continue in the same direction through or past a wooden field gate.

In 320m pass another barrow in the field on your right behind the fence and in 260m (at the corner of the fence on your left) *turn left* at a three-way signpost along a car wide byway. In 190m – by a clump of low trees on your right – you *turn left* through a wooden gate to the right of a wooden field gate and immediately pass a **typical beech-topped tumulus (or barrow)**, locally dubbed 'hedgehog'. Continue along a car wide grassy track downhill towards more tumuli/barrows 160m away (230°). The track *veers left* around the next tumulus and then straightens out again to descend the hill more steeply (half left ahead on a bearing of 230° you can recognise **West Kennet Long Barrow** on its ridge: a greenish whaleback hump with some large rocks on the left-hand side). In 200m *turn right* through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a double wooden field gate (with a **Permissive Footpath** marker on a gate post) and continue along a right hand field boundary (320°). In 300m you *veer left* along a usually clear path towards a wooden kissing gate 50m away by a road.

Past the gate you walk up a ramp to the road and cross it to go through an opposite wooden kissing gate and *turn right* (signposted **West Kennet Avenue**) along a sloping grassy field boundary, parallel to the road on your right. This is **Waden Hill** again, crossed earlier on the way from Avebury to Silbury Hill. In 400m – by a four-way signpost – continue in the same direction through a wooden kissing gate back into the fenced area of the West Kennet Avenue's standing stones. Re-trace your steps from earlier back to Avebury and in 1.1 km reach **The Red Lion** pub and the bus stop for **services to Marlborough** (for connecting buses to Bedwyn Station), or to **Swindon Rail Station**.

In Swindon you will find a **Costa Coffee** to the left of the station entrance, and **two pubs** on the other side of **Station Road**: the **Queens Tap** and **GW** (The Great Western Hotel). London bound trains usually depart from one of the far platforms.