

Salisbury Circular (Full Walk)			Salisbury Circular (Short Walk)		
1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check	1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check
01 st August 2015					
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Salisbury Circular

Start: Salisbury Station

Finish: Salisbury station

Salisbury Station, map reference SU 136 301, is 125 km south west of Charing Cross, 51m above sea level and in **Wiltshire**.

Length: 32.4 km (20.1 mi), of which 8.2 km (5.1 mi) on tarmac or concrete (about half of it in Salisbury).

Cumulative ascent/descent: 460m.

For a shorter walk, see *below* **Walk options**.

Toughness: 9 out of 10

Time: 7 ¼ hours walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 11 ½ hours.

Transport: Salisbury Station is on the London Waterloo to Exeter St. Davids West of England Main Line. Journey times are 82 or 90 minutes Monday to Saturday (half-hourly) and 90 minutes on Sunday (hourly).

Saturday Walkers' Club: Take the train closest to 9.20 hours.

OS Landranger Map: 184 (Salisbury & The Plain)

OS Explorer Map: 130 (Salisbury & Stonehenge)

Walk Notes:

This long walk explores the Chalke Valley in the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the South West of the quintessentially English Cathedral City of Salisbury. It leads out of town along the Nadder and Avon Rivers through the Cathedral precinct, past some of England's finest historic houses and through the Harnham Hill suburb into open fields with far views over the Chalke Valley to distant Downs. The morning route then largely follows the Ebbel River upstream in the Chalke Valley through several pretty villages in this picturesque part of Wiltshire, with three good lunch pubs and two award-winning community stores conveniently spaced out along the route.

Most of the climbing is left for the afternoon, starting with a steady ascent with splendid views into pretty coombes, from Broad Chalke up to an ancient Ox Drove on top of the Downs. A long stretch with more views from the Down into coombes and valleys follows, largely along the course of a Roman Road, before the descent back into the Chalke Valley, followed by an immediate re-ascent up another Down.

A Drove Track with views into the Nadder and Wylve Valleys leads past Salisbury's Race Course and through the steep Harnham Slope Nature Reserve to tea at Harnham's charming Old Mill.

From there the route back to the station goes through the town's Water Meadows and provides 'Britain's Best View' (Country Life magazine): Salisbury Cathedral across the meadows.

Shorter routes, reducing the length considerably, are described.

Walk options:

There are **two mutually exclusive Shortcuts** around lunch:

Shortcut I reduces the walk by 5.4 km (3.4 mi), the ascent/descent by 20m and the rating to **8/10**;

Shortcut II reduces the walk by 7.2 km (4.5 mi), the ascent/descent by 32m and the rating to **7/10**.

Bus 29 Shaftesbury to Salisbury City Centre (10 mins walk from the train station) runs through the Chalke Valley and stops outside all three lunch pubs as well as in the village of Stratford Tony (opp. Manor Farm), half-way through the afternoon (about every 90 mins, but Mon-Sat only).

Cutting out the outer loop of this figure-of-8 walk and turning back in Stratford Tony, reduces the length to 17.0 km/10.6 mi.

Lunch:

The Fox & Goose Blandford Road, Coombe Bissett, *Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP5 4LE* (01722 718 437, <http://www.foxandgoose-coombebissett.co.uk/>). The Fox & Goose is located 7.1 km (4.4 mi) into the walk. Opening Times: Mon-Sat 11.00-23.00 and Sun 12.00-22.30. Food Service: Mon-Sun 12.00-21.00. Home cooked food with daily chalkboard Specials is served in this Village Freehouse.

Coombe Bissett Stores Homington Road, Coombe Bissett, *Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP5 4LR* (01722 718 852, <http://www.coombebissettstores.co.uk/>). The stores are located 7.2 km (4.5 mi) into the walk. Opening Times: Mon-Fri 07.00-18.30, Sat 07.00-13.00 and Sun 08.00-11.30. Built in 1957, a consortium of village residents bought the freehold in 2007/8.

The White Hart Butts Lane, Bishopstone, *Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP5 4AA* (01722 780 244, <http://www.thewhitehart-bishopstone.co.uk/>). The White Hart is located 11.9 km (7.4 mi) into the walk. Opening Times: Tue-Thu 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-late, Fri 12.00-15.00 and 16.30-late, Sat 12.00-24.00, Sun 12.00-21.00. Food Service: Tue-Sat 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-21.00, and Sun 12.00-15.00.

The Queen's Head North Street, Broad Chalke, *Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP5 5EN* (01722 780 344, <http://queensheadbroadchalke.co.uk/>). The Queen's Head is located 15.4 km (9.6 mi) into the full walk. Opening Times: Mon-Sat 11.00-23.00, Sun 12.00-22.30. Food Service: Mon-Sat 12.00-14.30 and 17.30-21.00, and Sun 12.00-17.00. A delightful 18th Century pub brimming with charm and character in this quintessentially English village.

Chalke Valley Stores North Street, Broad Chalke, *Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP5 5EN* (01722 780 344, <http://www.chalkevalleystores.co.uk/>). The Stores are located 15.4 km (9.6 mi) into the full walk. Opening Times: Mon-Fri 08.30-18.00 and Sat 08.30-16.00. Chalke Valley Stores opened in 2013 in the United Reformed Church in Broad Chalke, and have become the hub of the valley, also providing a Post office and a Coffee Shop. In May 2014, less than a year after opening it won the Daily Telegraph/Countryside Alliance award for Best Village Shop/Post Office in the UK.

Tea:

The Old Mill at Harnham, West Harnham, *Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP2 8EU* (01722 327 517, <http://oldmillhotelsalisbury.co.uk/>). Open 10.00-23.00 daily. Food served 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-21.00 daily. The Old Mill Hotel is located 1.0 km from the end of the walk, in a 15th century building with features dating back to 1250. From its early ecclesiastical beginnings, it was transformed in the 16th century to a paper mill. The hotel is Grade I-listed in parts and stands in a most peaceful and stunning location above 3 mill-runs off the River Nadder. It has a large garden at the back along the millstream.

Bell Tower Tea Rooms The Close, *Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 2EF* (<http://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/visit-food-and-drink/bell-tower-tea-rooms>). Open summer only 10.00-17.00. The Bell Tower Tea Rooms offer refined British fayre with high teas overlooking the North Lawn of the Cathedral.

Notes:

Salisbury

Known as 'the city in the countryside', Salisbury is surrounded by a landscape so quintessentially English it's almost too good to be true, with timbered buildings, an Early English Gothic Cathedral home to the famous Magna Carta, a thriving market, a buzzing arts scene, museums and some of England's finest historic houses. Within the celebrated Cathedral Close you'll find Arundells, Mompesson House, The Rifles Military Museum and the award-winning Salisbury Museum with its new Wessex Gallery. The city is located in the southeast of Wiltshire, near the edge of Salisbury Plain. Its cathedral was formerly located to the north at Old Sarum; following its relocation, a settlement grew up around it, drawing residents from Old Sarum and Wilton. The new town received its city charter in 1227 under the name New Sarum, which continued to be its official name until 2009. It sits at the confluence of five rivers: the Nadder, Ebble, Wylye, and Bourne are tributary to the Hampshire Avon, which flows to the south coast and into the sea at Christchurch in Dorset.

River Nadder/Vale of Wardour

The River Nadder is one of the chalk streams of southern England, much sought after by fly fishermen because of its clear waters and abundance of brown trout. It is one of the main tributaries of the River Avon, rising from a number of springs and small streams at Donhead St. Mary in south Wiltshire. During the course of its 32 kilometre journey the Nadder meanders and widens gradually until it flows through the park of Wilton House after which the river joins the River Wylye, another tributary of the Avon. For its last few kilometres it passes through the unspoilt water meadows at Harnham on the outskirts of Salisbury, and finally into the River Avon beneath a backdrop of Salisbury Cathedral.

The origin of the name is from Ancient British nootr, "flowing water". Folk etymology derives it from the perceived likeness of its meanderings to an adder, the original Middle English name for which was "nadder". The western end of the Nadder valley is called the Vale of Wardour, and is distinguished by outcrops of oolites (limestone formed during the Jurassic period, found predominantly in the Cotswold Hills and on the Isle of Portland). Outcrops of Portland and Purbeck rocks form the high ground north and south of the Nadder and are extensive, especially those of Upper Portland limestone which have been much quarried for building stone. Outcrops of Lower Greensand, Gault, and Upper Greensand form even higher ground to the north and south. The underlying clay has been exposed by the Sem and the Nadder as far east as Tisbury village.

Salisbury Cathedral

The first Salisbury Cathedral was completed at Old Sarum, to the North of present day Salisbury, in 1092 under Osmund, the first Bishop of Salisbury. The Domesday Book is thought to have been presented to William the Conqueror at Old Sarum a few years earlier, in 1086. Disputes with the military and scarce water supplies led to an alternative location being sought and in 1220 a new site for the Cathedral was consecrated at New Sarum on the banks of the River Avon. It is formally known as the Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and one of the leading examples of Early English architecture. The main body of the cathedral was completed in only 38 years and is therefore the only English cathedral built in one go. It is one of England's finest Gothic cathedrals with Britain's tallest spire (123m/404 ft). The cathedral also has the largest cloister and the largest cathedral close in Britain (80 acres/320,000 m²). It contains the world's oldest working clock (from AD 1386) and has the best surviving of the four original copies of Magna Carta.

Open 09.00-17.00 Mon-Sat and 12.00-16.00 Sun.

<http://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/>

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, Wylye, Bourne and Ebble, converge within a short distance around Salisbury.

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

Mompesson House

Mompesson House, 'The House in The Close', is a perfect example of Queen Anne architecture and was built for Charles Mompesson in 1701. It is noted for its elegant and spacious interior, especially the magnificent plasterwork and fine oak staircase. In addition, the Turnbull collection of 18th-century drinking glasses is of national importance. The delightful walled garden has a pergola and traditionally planted herbaceous borders. Mompesson House featured in the 1995 award-winning film adaptation of 'Sense and Sensibility'.

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mompesson-house/>

The Wardrobe

The Wardrobe, which contains traces of a substantial medieval hall, was once the Bishop's storehouse and so got its name. It has been a house since before 1600, mostly let by the Dean and Chapter to laymen, who formed in it some very handsome rooms. Nowadays used by The Rifles Berkshire and Wiltshire Museum.

Arundells

Arundells – the home of former Prime Minister Sir Edward Heath KG MBE – reflects his time in public office and contains his collections of paintings, (including Wyllie, Singer Sargent, Piper, Churchill, Sickert, Augustus and Gwen John, John Nash, Lowry and many more), sailing and musical memorabilia, Oriental and European ceramics, cartoons, bronzes, Chinese and Japanese artworks, photographs and much more, just as they were when he lived there, along with access to the beautiful two acre garden.

<http://www.arundells.org/>

Avon Valley Path

The AVP is a 55 km (34mi) waymarked Long Distance Path from Salisbury to Christchurch Priory and the sea. The Path follows the lower reaches of one of England's best-known chalk rivers, through a valley much of which is designated as an SSSI and of great botanical interest, besides being known for its salmon.

Though much of the Path does not follow the riverbank, it aims to keep as close to it as possible.

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/longdistance/avon-valley-path.htm>

The Ebble River/The Chalke Valley

The River Ebble is one of the five rivers of Salisbury (the others being the Avon, Nadder, Bourne and the Wylde). Rising at Alvediston 19 km to the west, it joins the Avon at Bodenham, after flowing through – amongst others – Ebbesbourne Wake, Little London, Mount Sorrel and Broad Chalke. It is also known under the name The Chalkebourne, lending its name to the Chalke Valley.

Middleton Down Nature Reserve

The 25 hectares/63 acres chalk downland reserve is formed by two very steep-sided coombes linked by a much larger valley in the shape of a squared off U. The curves and dips of the land were formed by the meltwaters from ancient permafrost. From early May the slopes are a tapestry of yellow cowslips and early-purple orchids, continuing all summer with the intense blue chalk milkwort, the purple early gentian and many orchids.

Cranborne Chase

A chalk plateau, straddling the counties Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire, the plateau is part of the English Chalk Formation and is adjacent to Salisbury Plain and the West Wiltshire Downs in the north, and the Dorset Downs to the south west. The scarp slope of the hills faces the Blackmore Vale to the west, and to some extent the Vale of Wardour to the north. The chalk gently slopes south and dips under clays and gravels. An area of 981 sq. km (379 sq. mi) of the Cranborne Chase and the West Wiltshire Downs has been designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the sixth largest in the country. The highest point is Win Green, in Wiltshire, at 277 m (910 ft).

The downs are named after the village Cranborne, founded by the Saxons, which had a manor house and a small monastery. The word "chase" comes from the hunts, frequented by royalty, which took place on the downs. Much of the Chase is still owned by large estates such as Kingston Lacy.

The downland has a long history with many earthworks and archaeology from the Neolithic age onwards. The dense woodland originally covering the downs would have gradually been cleared by the first farmers, but would have grown back repeatedly over the centuries as soils became exhausted and the agricultural carrying capacity of the land was exceeded several times over the course of six millennia.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train in **Salisbury Station** and exit the station into the large car park. *Turn right* along the station building and in 50m *turn left* along a red-bricked pedestrian path through the car park. In 25m go down a ramp, cross **Churchfields Road** and *turn left* along the opposite pavement. In 130m *turn right* at a mini-roundabout and follow the road around to the left, cross a road to **Fisherton Island** and in another 60m **[!]**, where the road curves left, continue along a gravel path into a park.

In 50m ignore a bridge across **The Nadder River** on the right (the afternoon return route) and *turn left* instead. In 20m *turn right* along a tarmac path through the park (with the first sighting of a recurring feature of this walk: **Salisbury Cathedral's** tower), follow it curving left through a meadow and in 120m *turn right* across a two-railed wooden bridge over a side-arm of **The Avon River**. *Turn right* immediately after the bridge and follow a tarmac path along the Avon arm, then The Nadder, to its confluence with the main arm of The Avon in 150m.

Continue along the path and in 200m *turn right* at a T-junction with **Crane Bridge Road** over a road bridge across The Avon. In 130m *turn right* along **High Street** at a four-way junction. In 40m walk through the ancient gate to the **Cathedral Precinct** and in 50m pass by **Choristers Green** on the right, with **Mompesson House** (NT), **The Wardrobe** and **Arundells** (former home of PM Sir Edward Heath) around the green and to the left of it. In 60m you walk through a gap to the left of a white wooden gate and continue in the same direction to the right of the Cathedral (notice the **Bell Tower Tea Rooms** on the left for a possible tea stop on the return).

In 90m walk through a gap to the left of a white wooden gate and continue along a tarmac footpath or the grassy margin next to it (**Broad Walk**). In 210m *turn left* through another medieval gate along **De Vaux Place** and in 100m *turn right* at **De Vaux House** with an **Avon Valley Path** signpost along **St. Nicholas Road** at a bend. In 120m cross a side-arm of The Avon and in 20m the main arm, both on road bridges. On the other side of the second bridge *turn right* with **Harnham Road**, ignoring a minor road forking left. In 230m cross the **A 3094 (New Harnham Road/Harnham Road)** at pedestrian lights and *turn right* along it. In 40m *turn left* uphill along **Old Blandford Road**. In 140m ignore **Grasmere Close** turning right as well as the Avon Valley Path along a wooded slope, but in another 25m *fork left* up some steps with a metal railing on the right, with a footpath signpost on a lamp post.

In 100m you *fork left* with the stepped path at a garden fence corner (205°). In 90m you continue in the same direction at a bend along **Bouverie Avenue South**, a leafy residential street. Ignore all ways off and in 275m continue in the same direction along a narrow tarmac path where the road turns right and in 65m descend some steps to cross the busy **A 354** and re-ascend on the other side to continue along an (initially) tarmac path. In 120m you walk through a wooden bike barrier into an arable field corner and continue in the same direction down its left hand boundary. You are looking across some rolling fields and **The Chalke Valley** to some Downs beyond it.

In 100m at a corner of the garden fences on the left continue in the same direction down a usually clear path across the field and in 140m continue in the same direction through a gap in the boundary growth to cross a path (**The Avon Valley Path** again) and then through a metal kissing gate in another boundary gap into another field to continue down its left hand grassy verge. In 340m cross a footpath at the opposite field boundary, walk through a redundant metal kissing gate, and continue in the same direction along a left hand boundary through a dip towards some buildings 560m away. *Turn right* at a T-junction with a tarmac track with **Dogdean Farm** on the left behind trees and follow it past some more buildings to a road.

In 470m cross **Homington Road** and go over a step-less stile to the left of a double metal field gate into an arable field's corner. *Bear left* through the field on a usually well-cleared path towards a clump of trees on the opposite side of it (230°). In 480m walk through a gap in the trees and a grassy area and then through a metal kissing gate into a grassy field sloping down to the **Ebble River** and to **Homington** village on the other side of the river. *Veer right* down the slope of **Homington Down** on a clear path towards the bottom right hand corner. There you walk through a metal kissing gate and continue along a clear path for 800m through a couple of meadows (while walking through one metal kissing gate along the way) and eventually curving right with the path to walk to the right of a row of trees and then to a wooden gate with a four-way footpath signpost to the right of an off-white house on the fringes of **Coombe Bissett**.

Walk through the gate and along a narrow path past the house and then through another gate to continue along a grassy strip with a hedge on the right (and **Homington House** hidden behind it on a rise). In 75m the path narrows and soon you walk between trees and in 160m descend through a wooden gate and *turn right* along a car wide track (**Marsh Lane**). In 200m *turn left* at a T-junction with the **A 354 on the near side** (there is a gravel path just a few steps away) to pass **The Fox & Goose** after 110m, opposite the noteworthy **Mill Barn**. In 40m you *fork right* with the road (the left forking tarmac path gets you to the recommended **Coombe Bissett Stores** in 90m).

Cross **The Ebble** and continue with Blandford Road past **Homington Road** joining from the left, and then past **St. Michael and All Angels, Coombe Bissett** on the left on a rise. 40m beyond Homington Road *fork right* across the A-road and continue along a rising tarmac lane (**Old Blandford Road**), where – in 20m – you **[!]** *fork right* along a gravel lane with a signpost towards **Stratford Tony**, ignoring the tarmac lane uphill. In 190m walk through a metal field gate with a footpath marker and in 50m continue in the same direction along a grassy path where the lane turns left towards a house. In 240m walk through a metal gate (or a gap to the side of it), where there is a bench on the right on the river bank by interesting remnants of a bridge across the river.

Continue along a right hand grassy field boundary and in 300m *turn right* at a corner of the fence on the right. In 270m in the far corner of this field go over a stile into a grassy sloping river meadow with mature trees on the right along **The Ebble** and continue along a clear path through the meadow. In 390m in the narrow end of the field you *turn left* over a stile onto a lane and *turn right* along it towards **Stratford Tony** village. In 60m go over a stile to the right of a double metal mesh gate and in 20m ignore a bridge over The Ebble on your right but in 20m **[!]** *turn left* uphill along a gravel lane away from the river. In 120m *fork right* (i.e.: ignore a left turning gravel track) but then in 35m **[!]** *fork left* off the lane up a grassy path (290°). In 80m ignore a stile on the right in a fence with a meadow behind it and in 10m the path continues between trees.

In 260m emerge from the holloway and walk down a grassy area and in 30m continue along a left hand tarmac lane past **Throope Farm**. In 50m *turn left* at a T-junction, with **Throope Manor House** on your right. In 70m *turn right* at a three-way junction of tarmac lanes, and in 90m **[!]** *turn right* with a footpath signpost through a metal field gate and then, with the Manor House and its ha-ha on the right, *bear left* diagonally across a meadow towards the right of a house. In 240m you go over a stile in a fence in the bottom right corner of the meadow, with **The Ebble River** on your right. Continue through the house's garden and in 40m leave it along a narrow path between trees.

You emerge onto a road where you *turn right* and cross a bridge over the river. In 100m pass by the lychgate entrance to the churchyard of **St. John the Baptist Church, Bishopstone** (located far away from modern-day Bishopstone village as the old village had been decimated by the Plague) and in 20m *turn left* with a footpath signpost through a white wooden gate along a lane to the **Manor Farmhouse**. In 30m continue

in the same direction over a stile to the right of a wooden field gate, where the concrete lane turns right, in 60m walk past a redundant stile and *veer right* and in 35m go over a stile into an uneven livestock field (the sole reminder of the old village) and continue without a clear path along its left hand boundary. In 360m leave this field over a stile and *veer right* towards the left corner of a white house.

In 100m continue to the left of the house along a hedge and in 90m continue in the same direction in another livestock field towards its far right corner. In 175m leave the field through a metal field gate and in 15m enter another field over a stile on the left. You head for the left end of a row of trees on the opposite side of the field 300m away (210°) to then *veer right* around the trees to leave the field through a metal kissing gate. In 20m emerge onto a gravel lane at a bend (**Pitts Lane**), where you *turn left*. In 150m ignore a footpath forking right and in 40m go through a double wooden field gate to the right of a house to go along the right hand side of a grassy garden, then a grassy field. In 200m you continue in the same direction along **Harvest Lane** at a bend, just before a three-way junction (the road continues as **Netton Street**).

In 250m – at another three-way junction – **you have a choice:**

For the shortcuts (or for an early lunch stop on the full walk) *turn right* along **Butts Lane** to the lunch stop **The White Hart, Bishopstone** and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Shortcuts I** or **II**.

For the main walk continue in the same direction along **The Alley** and in 70m *turn left* through white bollards across a footbridge over a stream along a tarmac path. In 100m *turn left* at a T-junction with a lane. In 60m **[!]** *turn right* with a footpath signpost off the lane to walk along a narrow grassy path beside an arm of The Ebbles. Continue between streams and ponds and in 230m *turn left* at a T-junction of paths. In 60m this continues as a tarmac lane and in 110m you *turn right* at a three-way junction of lanes with some large buildings on the right hand side. Continue in the same direction for 1.2 km, initially between trees and then along a couple of right hand field boundaries to the far right corner of a large field (with **Knighthill** on the left all the time and also with good examples of **Strip Lynchets** on the hill side).

[The right-of-way on the OS map cuts across the last field, this is not obvious on the ground though, and the farmer clearly wants you to follow the right hand boundary).

In the field corner *turn left* with the boundary and in 40m *turn right* along the hedge on a gravel track. In 25m ignore a footpath turning left along an overgrown path, in 15m continue in the same direction along a road at a bend and in 160m **[!]** *fork right* along a gravel lane where the road curves to the left. In 100m continue along a path between **Hatchfield House** on the left and **Knighthill Mill** on the right and in 50m The Ebbles is on your right. In 60m go over a stile into a grassy field to follow its right hand side and in 270m in the far corner walk through an often overgrown area and go over a stile to continue along a fenced-in path. In 75m emerge onto a road and *turn left* along it. In 55m **[!]** *turn right* through an easily missed narrow gap in the hedge with a footpath signpost in the hedge and continue along a narrow fenced-in earthen path. In 25m go over a stile into a grassy field and continue along its right hand boundary for 180m.

Go over a stile and through a meadow to the left hand corner, and in 150m enter the next field over a stile to the right of a metal field gate. Continue to the left of a large solitary tree, and in 100m ignore a path turning right towards a wooden field gate and continue with trees on the right towards the right corner of the field. In 80m leave the field through a metal kissing gate and continue along an earthen path, then down some steps, to emerge onto a road in **Broad Chalke**. *Turn right*, cross **The Ebbles** on **Causeway Bridge** and in 280m reach the **The Queen's Head** at a three-way junction, with **Chalke Valley Stores and Café** (in a converted church) and a **bus stop** to the right.

After lunch re-trace your steps (i.e.: follow the road back over The Ebbles, signposted **Bowerchalke**) but in 280m continue in the same direction along the road and past the church where the morning route joins from the left. In 60m you continue in the same direction up a tarmac lane where the road turns right (signposted **Martin Blandford**) and in 170m you cross a road and continue in the same direction up a gravel track. In 110m ignore a footpath turning left over a stile and stay on the main track, which dips briefly, then slowly ascends for 2.4 km. On the way several **pretty coombes** are being passed on either side (many of which are **Open Access Land**), the narrow **Church Bottom** is walked through and **Middleton Hill** is passed. **Middleton Down Nature Reserve** stretches along on the right just before the final ascent.

At the top of the rise *turn left* at a four-way track junction along the **Ox Drove (Track)** [as on the OS map], mostly between trees, but occasionally with superb views to the left and right into **The Chalke Valley** and **The Cranborne Chase**. In 800m *turn right* at a T-junction with a tarmac lane and in 50m *turn left* along a car wide track between trees. In 150m ignore a bridgeway marker on a pole on the left (can be overgrown in summer), but in another 50m **[!]** *turn left* through an easily missed narrow gap (there is a corresponding gap on the right hand side as well) onto a large arable field's boundary. The onwards route leads half-right (50°) and is usually well-cleared.

You are now walking **on the course of a Roman Road** (from Old Sarum to Blandford) and will follow its route for most of the return stretch to Salisbury. In 60m *bear right* (80°) and in 490m reach the opposite field boundary where a car wide grassy track joins from the left out of the valley. This is Shortcut I. Continue through a gap in the boundary growth into another large arable field.

***)** Continue through the field (which descends to the left towards a narrow anvil-shaped Down) on a usually well-cleared path (80°) and in 270m *bear left* with the path towards a fence corner 120m away (35°). Walk to the left of the fence post (with a bridgeway marker on it) and continue broadly in the same direction towards the right of what looks like a clump of trees (but is in fact a pond) 290m away (45°). Cross a broad bridle path just before the pond and continue in the same direction through the next field on another usually well-cleared path. In 260m walk through a wooden gate into an adjacent field and continue in the same direction through it through a dip, with an unnamed – but strikingly beautiful – down curving away on the left. If the path is not clear: stay away from the rim of the down and head for a gap just to the left of the boundary hedge row (40°). In 300m at the opposite field boundary, Shortcut II joins from the left along its grassy margin.

****)** Leave the field through the hedge gap with a bridgeway marker on a gate post and continue in the same direction through another field on a usually well-cleared path (40°). In 160m at the brow of this field – and with a tree a little to the right – continue towards a solitary large tree (you get far views on the half right [40°] of the spire of **Salisbury Cathedral** on this stretch, foliage permitting) and in 170m continue in the same direction to the left of the tree along the field boundary. In 60m *turn right* through a metal gate onto a parallel-running farm track and *turn left* down it (i.e.: walk in the previous direction). Through the trees on the left you can occasionally glimpse a steeply dropping down (**Faulston Hole**).

In 360m continue to the right of a row of beech trees, where the farm track veers left into an arable field, and where another track joins from the right [**Faulston Drove (Track)**]. In 20m walk through a usually-open metal field gate and continue past some heavily graffitied beeches. One graffito about 100m from the gate (on the back of the beech with one of the largest circumferences) commemorates **King George III's Golden Jubilee**. Another one is supposed to commemorate **the sinking of the RMS Lusitania** by the Kaiser's Navy on 7 May 1915, but I have yet to find it.

Occasional gaps in the hedge on the right give you views of **Throope Down**. In 410m [!] *turn right* through an unmarked metal field gate and continue to the right of some young trees along a Restricted Byway towards the black roofs of **Throope Bottom Cottages** at the bottom of **Throope Down** (80°). In 360m cross a concrete track leading to barns on the right and in 10m *turn left* along a wide grassy path running parallel to the track. In 140m at a field corner you continue in the same direction along a wooded strip along the left hand field boundary [depending on the growing season this strip may be tough to walk through, in which case it may be better to follow the concrete track instead].

In 600m leave the field in the far corner through a wide gap to continue along the concrete track. In 290m walk through a gap to the right of a metal field gate and in 20m continue in the same direction at a three-way junction. For the next 430m you are now reverse-walking a part of the morning route: walk past **Throope Manor House** on your left, in 70m *turn right* past **Throope Farm**, in 50m continue along a rising grassy path, which in 30m runs between trees, in 260m emerge from the holloway with a grassy field on the left behind a fence. In 10m [!] *turn left* over a stile into that small meadow and cross it diagonally to the right. In 50m go over another stile onto a gravel lane and *turn right*, but in 5m *turn left* at a three-way junction of tracks passing **St. Mary & St. Lawrence Church, Stratford Tony** on the left (a Grade I listed building in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust with a canonical sundial on its south wall).

Follow the track down to the **Ebble River** and *turn right* along the river. Pass some riverside cottages and in 90m ignore a track turning right uphill between trees (the morning route), by a ford on the left. In another 20m *turn left* at a three-way junction to cross **The Ebble** on a road bridge. In 110m *turn right* along a lane at a T-junction through the hamlet of **Stratford Tony** and in 260m cross a main road to continue in the same direction uphill along a lane (signposted 'Wilton 4'). In 250m, just after another lane joins from the left, *turn right* and walk through a gap to the left of a double metal field gate and continue uphill along a track between trees (again on the course of the **Roman Road** walked along earlier). In 50m you walk through a usually-open metal field gate and in 110m the track levels out. In 30m you continue in the same direction along a narrow path between trees.

In 340m you walk through a usually-open rusty metal field gate where the trees on the left discontinue and you now walk along a wide grassy field boundary. In 280m – where a track joins from the right – you get the first views of the **Grandstand of Salisbury's Race Course** on the left. Continue in the same direction for 820m along field boundaries, eventually with views to the right into the **Chalke Valley** and behind to the Downs walked along earlier in the afternoon. Walk through a gap to the right of a lean-to metal field gate onto a tarmac lane (**Drove Lane** on the OS map), where you *turn left*. In 100m this turns to gravel and in 40m you *turn right* along a car wide (rubbish-strewn) gravel-and-earth lane 40m before a T-junction. You now have the race course on your left behind a row of trees and a golf course beyond that.

In 230m the trees on the left discontinue as you join a car wide gravel track along the race course, opening up **views into the Nadder Valley as well as** (in another 40m) **to the Cathedral**, dominating the cityscape in Salisbury, and in another 660m the white race course fence ends. [!] In 135m – and 60m **before walking under a HV electricity line** – you *turn left* through an **easily missed and unmarked narrow gap** in the boundary growth and continue along an often overgrown path between bushes and small trees (30°). In 50m the path widens a little and in another 50m you emerge from the growth into an open area, where you continue in the same direction along an arable field's grassy boundary, now also with far views into the **Wylve Valley** half left.

In 280m you continue in the same direction along a farm track at a bend. The large building half left at the bottom of the valley is a **Livestock Market**. In 470m *turn right* along a field boundary, where the farm track curves left around a low-lying area. Walk to the left of the line of a former boundary hedge (115°) and in 450m *turn left* in the far field corner along the boundary. In 105m *turn right* at the corner of the field on the right along its boundary verge and in 275m leave this field in its far corner to continue in the same direction along a grassy path, with **West Harnham Chalk Pit (SSSI)** below on the left behind a barbed wire fence and some bushes. In 90m – just before the brow of this rise (**Harnham Hill**) and where the trees on the left discontinue – *turn left* through an easily missed gap in the growth and follow a narrow path through trees. Keep to the left fork in 20m but then in 65m *fork right* to stay near the top of the hanging wood and eventually to the right of remnants of a barbed wire fence line.

In 250m **[!]** *fork right* up a minor path where the main path starts descending **Harnham Slope**, and in 150m reach a useful **information panel and viewpoint** on the left at a clearing in the trees, from where you have **splendid views** to Salisbury's Centre and to the Cathedral below. Just beyond the viewpoint *turn left* downhill on a narrow path, which in 100m joins another path at the bottom of the slope where you *turn right*. In 110m *turn left* out of the wooded area (by another information panel) along a gravel lane with trees on the left and bushes on the right into **Harnham**. Continue in the same direction between allotments and sport fields, and then through some housing and across **Parsonage Green** until in 350m you cross the **A 3094 Netherhampton Road** (opposite a bus stop). *Veer left* along **Lower Street** and in 250m *turn right* along **Townpath**.

In 80m reach **The Old Mill at Harnham**, the recommended tea stop. Continue along the tarmac path past the pub and cross the millstream (an arm of **The Nadder River**) to follow the path around the mill and through **Harnham Water Meadows** on a raised bank. This is a very relaxing (near-)finish to the walk, with grassy meadows stretching far away to both sides and the **Cathedral** towering above all other buildings on the right hand side (this view has been described as 'Britain's Best View' by readers of Country Life magazine). Cross **Long Bridge** over the two main arms of **The Nadder** and *turn left* in a park on the other side of the bridge to re-trace the start of the morning route. In 55m continue in the same direction along a tarmac road pavement and follow this road around to the right. In 150m *turn left* along **Churchfields Road** at a mini-roundabout, in 130m *turn right* up a ramp into the station car park to follow marked pedestrian paths to the entrance of **Salisbury Station**.

London bound trains usually depart from platform 2.

Shortcut I

(cut 5.4 km, 20m of ascent/descent and 650m from the tarmac count)

Both shortcuts initially follow the same route and they split after the first paragraph.

In 100m you reach the lunch stop **The White Hart, Bishopstone**. After lunch re-trace your steps for 100m to the lane three-way junction and *turn right* along **The Alley**. In 70m *turn left* through white bollards over a stream along a tarmac path. In 100m *turn left* at a T-junction with a lane to walk past some fishery ponds and The Ebble and in 60m *ignore* a footpath turning right off the lane (this is the main walk route) to continue along the tarmac lane. In 170m you continue in the same direction along a tarmac track where the lane turns right. In 50m this turns to gravel and in 220m you get to a three-way junction of tracks.

Continue in the same direction along the gravel **Croucheston Drove (Track)** [on the OS map] and in 400m ignore a holloway turning right (**Bishopstone Hollow (Track)** on the OS map). In 150m ignore a metal field gate on the left (an unmarked footpath turns through it), just before the track turns right. In 440m this continues as a grassy path with trees on the left where the farm track turns right into a field and in 160m it runs between trees.

The Drove now ascends **Croucheston Down** with occasional views to the side into green valleys and fields. In 470m gaps in the growth and field gates on either side offer views into two very scenic side coombes, just before the ascent becomes steeper for about 170m. 70m further along a footpath crosses from out of arable fields along the course of a **Roman Road**. This is the main route.

Turn left through a gap and pick up the directions in the main text at the asterisk *).

Shortcut II

(cut 7.2 km, 32m of ascent/descent and 360m from the tarmac count)

Both shortcuts initially follow the same route and they split after the first paragraph.

In 100m you reach the lunch stop **The White Hart, Bishopstone**. After lunch re-trace your steps for 100m to the lane three-way junction and *turn right* along **The Alley**. In 70m *turn left* through white bollards over a stream along a tarmac path. In 100m *turn left* at a T-junction with a lane to walk past some fishery ponds and The Ebble and in 60m *ignore* a footpath turning right off the lane (this is the main walk route) to continue along the tarmac lane. In 170m you continue in the same direction along a tarmac track where the lane turns right. In 50m this turns to gravel and in 220m you get to a three-way junction of tracks.

Turn left along a tarmac lane through farm buildings. In 290m the lane turns to gravel and in 560m (all the while with **views** on the left **back along the Chalke Valley**) it levels out where there is a lonely gravestone and a bench in an enclosure on the left, just before a metal field gate. Continue in the same direction along a left hand field boundary with far views across some Downs on the right, in 75m pass a corrugated iron shed on the left and in 440m (just after passing the top of a **stunningly beautiful Down** on the right) you have a small gap in the boundary growth on the left, where a footpath crosses from across arable fields. This is the main route.

Turn left and pick up the directions in the main text at the double asterisk **).