

Tisbury Circular (via Donhead St. Andrew) [[Leisurely]]		
1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check
03 rd April 2015	03 rd April/26 th May 2021	
Current status	Document last updated Sunday, 31 st March 2024	
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Tisbury Circular (via Donhead St. Andrew) [Leisurely]

Start: Tisbury Station

Finish: Tisbury station

Tisbury Station, map reference ST 945 290, is 20 km west of Salisbury, 145 km south west of Charing Cross, 94m above sea level and in **Wiltshire**.

Length: 15.4 km (9.5 mi), of which 3.0 km (1.9 mi) on tarmac or concrete, all on quiet country lanes or estate roads.

Cumulative ascent/descent: 322m.

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

Toughness: 3 out of 10

Time: 3 hours 45 minutes walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 9 hours.

Transport: Tisbury Station is on the London Waterloo to Exeter St. Davids West of England Main Line. Journey times are 106 minutes Monday to Saturday (hourly) and 114 minutes on Sunday (hourly).

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

OS Landranger Map: 183 (Yeovil & Frome) and 184 (Salisbury & The Plain)

OS Explorer Map: 118 (Shaftesbury & Cranborne Chase)

Walk Notes:

This walk explores the Upper Nadder Valley (also known as the Vale of Wardour) in the south westerly parts of the West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which is spectacular walking country with some breath-taking open vistas in a varied landscape. The route heads west from Tisbury along the valley floor and then through Wardour Park with its large neoclassical mansion. A small loop before lunch provides for stunning views further up the narrowing valley with its framing steep Downs.

After lunch at an award-winning gastro pub in Donhead St. Andrew, the return route leads back through Wardour Park on a different route, right past the romantically ruined 14th century Old Wardour Castle (English Heritage), where there is enough time for an extended visit. Continue up through High Wood and then through some more smaller copses to descend back into Tisbury, a remarkably unspoilt village.

A longer version of the walk, exists in a separate file.

Walk Options:

A longer version of the walk, rated 7/10, exists in a separate file.

Lunch (details last updated 31/03/2024)

The Forester Inn, Lower Street, Donhead St. Andrew, *Shaftesbury, Wiltshire, SP7 9EE (01747 828 038, <http://www.theforesterdonheadstandrew.co.uk/>)*. The Forester Inn is located 7.0 km (4.3 mi) into the walk. Open all day every day. Food served 12.00-21.00 Mon-Sat and 12.00-18.30 Sun. Originally called "The New Inn", The Forester has been a public house since the 15th century and is housed in an old thatched building made from greensand stone with a large inglenook fireplace and original beamed ceilings.

Tea (details last updated 31/03/2024)

Star Grill Tisbury Sports and Social Club, Jobbers Lane, *Tisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 6JP (07467 248 636)*. A van selling Kebabs, burger, chips for takeaway, but with some outside seating. Open from 16.00 Mon-Sat.

Tisbury Fish & Chips The Square, *Tisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 6JP (01747 870 273)*.

Beatons Tearooms and Bookshop The Square, *Tisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 6JP (01747 871 819, <http://beatonstearooms.co.uk/>)*. Open 9.00-16.30 daily.

Coffee Angels London House, High Street, *Tisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 6LD (07851 701 020)*.

Tisbury Delicatessen High Street, *Tisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 6DP (01747 871 771, <http://www.tisburydeli.co.uk/>)*. Open 09.00-17.00 Mon-Sat.

Gardner & Beedle High Street, *Tisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 6LD (01747 870 947, <https://www.gardnerandbeedle.com/>)*. Open 10.00-18.00 Tue-Thu and 10.00-19.00 Fri-Sat.

The Benett Arms High Street, *Tisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 6HD (01747 870 428)*. Open 12.00-late daily. Run by the local Keystone Brewery. Selected bar food is available upon request.

The Boot Inn High Street, *Tisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 6PS (01747 870 363)*. Open 17.30-21.00 Mon, 17.30-22.00 Tue, 12.00-15.00 and 17.30-22.00 Wed-Sat and 12.00-15.00 Sun. Food served. Atmospheric pub with authentic meals freshly prepared.

Notes:

Tisbury

A village on the River Nadder, where it is joined by three other streams, Tisbury parish was the largest in south-west Wiltshire until the 19th century. References to the abbot of Tisbury suggest that there was an abbey on what is now the site of the village in the 8th century and the origin of Tisbury parish may be as the estate of such an abbey. Tisbury manor and, from the late 14th century, Tisbury church belonged to Shaftesbury Abbey until the Dissolution. The village's 13th century prosperity came from the quarries that produced stone for the building of Salisbury Cathedral, and from the wool that supported a local cloth industry. Unusually for so large a parish no main road crossed Tisbury, and no road in it was turnpiked.

The Salisbury & Yeovil Railway opened a railway across the parish in 1859, it closely followed the Nadder and the Sem. Tisbury is not rich in archaeological discoveries, the last three upright stones of what may have been a henge monument were removed from a site near Place Farm ca. 1792, although the name of the field from which they were taken, Lost Stone field, is a corruption of the earlier Low Stone field. Sir Matthew Arundell of Wardour Castle, a great landowner and a cousin of Queen Elizabeth, was entombed in the Tisbury church, St John's, in 1598. The churchyard also holds the graves of Rudyard Kipling's parents, and contains one of the oldest trees in Britain, a large yew tree believed to be ca. 4,000 years old.

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 extensively quarried. 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.

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 Cranbourne Chase, Cerne Abbas and Pilsden Pen in Dorset.

New Wardour Castle

The Palladian architect James Paine built Wardour New Castle in 1776, but left the Wardour Old Castle as an ornamental feature, integrated into the surrounding parkland, intending it to be viewed as a romantic ruin. It had been the seat of the Arundells, an important Catholic family, until 1944, when it was sold after the death of the last Lord Arundell – who was a prisoner of war in the notorious Colditz Castle during WWII. It then served as Cranborne Chase School, an independent boarding school for girls, for a while, but has now been converted to luxury apartments.

In stylistic terms the New Castle is not a castle at all, but a symmetrical neoclassical country house with a main block built around a central staircase hall (with a rare rotunda staircase) and two flanking wings. Immediately to the south and east the house is surrounded by a lawn of circa 6 hectares, which is enclosed by a ha-ha separating it from the park. There is also an exceptional Roman Catholic Chapel on the westerly side of the building, known as All Saints Chapel, Wardour which was enlarged by Henry Arundell, 8th Baron Arundell of Wardour, in 1788, to the designs of John Soane.

Donhead St. Andrew/Donhead St. Mary

In the Middle Ages the parishes together formed an estate called Donhead (i.e.: head of the down) which belonged to Shaftesbury abbey. There were two churches on the estate in the 12th century, and by 1240 and 1291 they had been called respectively St. Andrew's and St. Mary's. Although the churches are less than 1 km apart their sites are very different: St. Mary's stands on a ridge near a Roman road on the site of a 2nd century Roman settlement, and St. Andrew's is on low ground beside the Nadder.

Alfred's Tower

King Alfred's Tower, also known as Stourton Tower, is a folly, located at the north-western edge of the Stourhead Estate in Wiltshire. The tower stands on Kingsettle Hill and belongs to the National Trust. It is designated as a grade I listed building. The project to build the tower was conceived in 1762 by the banker Henry Hoare II (1705-1785), owner of Stourhead and creator of its famous garden, known to his family as 'the Magnificent'. The tower was intended to commemorate the end of the Seven Years War against France and the accession of King George III, and supposedly stands near the location of 'Egbert's stone' where it is believed that Alfred the Great, King of Wessex, rallied the Saxons in May 878 before the important Battle of Ethandun (now Edington, south-east of Trowbridge) where the Danish army was defeated.

The tower was designed in 1765 by Henry Flitcroft, the notable 18th century Palladian architect, and despite the inspiration from St Mark's Tower in Venice, this tower is rather different: triangular in plan, with round projections at each of the three corners. One of these, furthest from the entrance door, has a spiral staircase within it by which visitors can climb the 205 steps to the top, where there is a platform with a crenelated parapet.

Old Wardour Castle

Set beside a lake, Old Wardour Castle was once one of the most daring and innovative homes in Britain. It was built in the 14th century as a lightly fortified residence designed for comfortable living and lavish entertainment, inspired by the hexagonal castles then in fashion in parts of the Continent, particularly in France; but its own six-sided design is unique in Britain, as is its inclusion of several self-contained guest suites. It passed through several owners until bought by Sir Thomas Arundell in 1544, of an ancient Cornish family with wide estates in Wiltshire, and staunch Catholics. It was besieged several times during the Civil War and ruined in the process. 70m south of Old Wardour Castle, outside the bailey wall, stands the 17th and 18th century Old Wardour House (listed Grade II), with a late 17th century summerhouse to the rear (also listed Grade II). This building was probably built after the castle had become uninhabitable during the Civil War sieges of 1643/44; it subsequently became the main family residence at Wardour and was probably used as such until New Wardour Castle was completed in the 1770s.

The Palladian architect James Paine built Wardour New Castle, but left the Old Castle as an ornamental feature, integrated Castle into the surrounding parkland, intending it to be viewed as a romantic ruin.

The castles, old and new, have been featured in several films. The Old Castle appeared in the 1991 Kevin Costner feature Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves, and the New Castle served as the dance school in Billy Elliot. The cover of Sting's album Ten Summoner's Tales was photographed inside Old Wardour Castle.

The old castle is now managed by English Heritage, which has designated it as a Grade-I listed building, open to the public. An audio tour, included in the ticket price, tells of Old Wardour's eventful past and the fighting it saw during the Civil War. Allow 1 hour for a full tour.

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/old-wardour-castle/>.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train in **Tisbury Station** on the single platform and leave through the station building or to the left of it. *Turn left* through a car park and in 110m continue in the same direction along a road. In 35m *turn right* along a signposted footpath along a tarmac path towards a bridge over the **River Nadder**, which you cross in 55m. **[!]** *Turn left* immediately along a narrow footpath immediately beyond the bridge at a fence corner and continue with the river on your left. In 170m you *turn left* with the path, now with a high wall on the right.

In 100m *turn left* through a wooden kissing gate into a pasture and continue gently uphill with some signs along a clear path through the grassy area (the site of the medieval village of **Wyck**) towards the right of a farm house (195°). In 80m cross a tarmac drive and continue in the same direction with a sign for **Wick Barn** by a track fork with **Wick Farm** below on your left. In 150m walk through a wooden gate and continue along a grassy path with a wood on the right and some fish ponds below on the left. In 100m emerge from the trees and continue in the same direction along a left-hand grassy field boundary. In 260m (15m after passing a wooden field gate), *turn left* through a metal kissing gate in the far-left field corner and descend *bearing right* through a small pasture towards a metal field gate, with **The Nadder** now again close on the left.

In 65m go through the gate and continue, on a bearing of 250°, to a point 50m to the right of the bottom left field corner and in 230m walk through a metal kissing gate to continue through a smaller grassy field in the same direction. In 70m you emerge on a gravel lane junction leading to some houses on the right. Go through a metal gate opposite and *bear right* along a fence (may be temporary), keeping a pond to your left, with the house off to the right. In 50m you go through an unmarked gap in a hedge and then across a previously hidden stile into a large pasture. Aim just to the right of the furthest right of a line of trees 250m away (260°), in 220m continue with a fence on your left and in 30m walk through a metal kissing gate into an arable field corner. Walk along its left-hand grassy boundary and in 140m in the far corner walk through a wooden gate and down some steps onto a tarmac lane in **East Hatch** hamlet.

Turn left along the lane and in 25m *turn right* at a T-junction. In 120m *turn left* off the lane (with **Tor Cottage** on the right) through a kissing gate into a large field and *veer right* across this field towards its far corner (210°). You've got the **Nadder Valley** on the left with **High Wood** rising on the other side (the afternoon route goes through it), and the wooded **Barkers Hill** ahead of you. In 330m go over a set of stiles either side of the railway line and *turn right* down the middle of a narrow but long grassy field, with **The Nadder** meandering on the left. In 350m you walk to the left of a **solitary tree** (with an arched road bridge over the railway line visible on the right) and in 45m reach a path running down from a stile on the right to a bridge on the left.

Turn left and in 90m go over a set of step-less stiles with a **Wessex Ridgeway** marker either side of the bridge, continue in the same direction through another grassy field and in 100m leave it through a metal kissing gate onto a road opposite **Wardour Catholic Primary School** with a bus shelter on the right. Cross the road and *turn left* with a footpath signpost along the opposite margin, with the fenced school playing field to the right. In 50m *turn right* at the fence corner along a grass path and in 90m walk through a wooden gate into a grassy area and then uphill in the same direction along its right-hand side. In 60m walk through a metal gate, cross a gravel lane and continue uphill with houses on the right. In 100m emerge on a four-way junction of road, lane and path, at a bend of a road on the left. Continue in the same direction though a large metal gate (*using a button on the right-hand side wall to open the gate*) into the

grounds of **New Wardour Castle** (now converted into apartments) and continue along its tarmac driveway.

In 10m ignore a right fork, in 80m ignore a left turning tarmac lane to "Garden Cottages 1-4", [!] but in another 80m *turn right* off the tarmac driveway across some grass along a clear path towards a yellow-topped pole (225°) which you pass in 35m. [There is a footpath marker on the back of the pole, and another one pointing towards the house, meaning you can walk to the front of the house, if you wish to have a look at it; in the near wing of the house note **the stained-glass windows of a large Catholic chapel**]. Follow the route in the previous direction through the **Temple Garden** area of **New Wardour Castle**, guided by yellow-topped poles: in 90m pass a statue of a monk on your right (**St. Anthony of Padua**, listed Grade II), then continue through a newly planted area of the garden, with the new-built **Wardour Court** on the right. In 100m you enter a copse (wild garlic in season) and in 90m go over a stile into a pasture.

Veer ever so slightly left (220°) to follow a clear path to the right of a solitary lime tree, cross a farm track in 75m and in 110m go over a set of stiles either side of a concrete track into a large grassy field sloping down towards the **Nadder**. *Veer left* through the field (195°) along the line of a hedge on the left. In 180m you walk through a metal field gate and across a concrete bridge over a stream to continue in the same direction through the next field. In 165m go over a stile to the left of a metal field gate into the next field and continue along its left-hand boundary, with one of several ornamental lakes in **Wardour Park** on the left. Ignore all gates on the left through the fence line and in 600m (30m before the narrow end of the field) walk through a wooden gate by **Park Gate Farm** to continue with a laurel hedge on the right. In 85m enter the farm through a wooden gate and continue in the same direction across the concrete yard.

In 40m *turn left* through a wooden squeeze gate into a large grassy field and continue – initially – along its right-hand fence. In 25m continue in the same direction (210°) where the fence turns right towards the river, in 320m walk to the left of a metal field gate and in 10m *turn right* over a stile and continue along a car wide track. In 50m *turn right* at a T-junction with a road (**Castle View**) and in 40m cross **The Nadder** on the road with **Ricketts Mill** on the right. In 45m *turn left* with a low footpath signpost on a metal railing's corner over a stile and walk along a fenced path. In 30m go over a set of stiles into a large field and *veer ever so slightly to the right* uphill towards a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate in a boundary hedge 340m away (265°). You get views from the gate back to **New Wardour Castle** (passed earlier), the lunch destination **Donhead St. Andrew**, and steep Downs at the end of the valley [SWC Walk Tisbury Circular (via Ludwell and Berwick St. John)].

Walk through the gate, continue along a grassy car wide farm track and in 50m you walk through a metal gate to the left of a metal field gate onto a tarmac lane. *Turn left* uphill along **Pigtrough Lane**. In 280m *turn left* at a lane T-junction. In 60m pass the entrance to **Beauchamp House** on the left and in 85m *fork left* up a car wide farm track and through a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate into a pasture. *Turn left* along the boundary hedge and fence and in 110m walk through a metal gate into a sloping field with the **River Nadder** and **Donhead St. Andrew** village on the other side of it. *Veer right* on a clear path through this field (125°) towards the bottom right corner of the field (i.e.: ignore a stile in a fence line to the right). In 200m (*do notice* the faux **standing stone circle** on the right at head height in a garden!) go over double stiles 5m apart and follow the right-hand side of a small grassy field.

In 75m continue in the same direction between fences with an arm of the **Nadder** on your left (ignore the arched wooden bridge off to the left and then a public footpath turning right through a wooden gate). In 70m cross the river on a two-railed wooden bridge and follow the path to the left in a grassy area. In 30m *turn right* over a stile in a

hedge by **Kelloways Mill** and then *turn right* along a tarmac lane (**Mill Lane**). In 105m *turn right* at a T-junction with a road and in 120m you reach **The Forester Inn** (get to the entrance through the car park and around the building to the far end). **Convenient picnic spots** are to be found in a cemetery with benches just a little further along on the right, or 200m along the road on a green with benches at a (quiet) three-way road junction.

After lunch *turn right* along **Lower Street**. In 175m you *fork right* along **Wardour Lane**, signposted "**Salisbury**" and in 390m cross a road to continue in the same direction uphill along a tarmac lane. In 80m the lane turns to gravel and in 150m you ignore a stile in the fence on the left. In 10m you pass the entrance to **Pile Oak Lodge** (inscribed in a gate on the left: "fiat justitia ruat coelum", a Latin legal phrase, meaning "Let justice be done though the heavens fall"). In 120m go through a gap to the left of a metal car barrier into **Wardour Wood** and continue along a car wide forest track. In 290m, just after the track has turned right, *turn left* downhill off the track (50°) towards the fringe of the wood and in 50m walk over a stile with a Wessex Ridgeway marker to the right of a wooden field gate into a pasture. Continue in the same direction and in 225m walk over a stile to the left of a metal field gate and go through a wood with **Pale Park Pond** on the right (used for the water supply of all troughs on the farms around).

In 160m leave the wood by or through a metal kissing gate and continue uphill along the left-hand side of a field towards the corner of a wood. In 320m pass or go through a metal kissing gate and continue along a car wide gravel farm track with good views yet again to **New Wardour Castle** on the left, with the wood on your right and over your shoulder on the left, at 295° and 20 km away on a ridge: **Alfred's Tower** (SWC Walk 342 Bruton Circular via Stourhead). In 100m pass an elaborate ornamental arch gateway over a farm track into the wood on the right (early 19th century, listed Grade II), in 100m the impressive 14th century ruin of **Old Wardour Castle** comes into view and in 120m ignore a left turning footpath along another farm track. In 430m the track becomes tarmac as it passes **Old Wardour House** on the right, just before you walk between the castle on the right and its (fishing) lake on the left. In 220m *turn right* at a four-way junction of footpaths by a car park and in 65m ignore the right turn to the castle, instead continuing uphill along a gravel track into a wood (**The Hanging**).

You are now following the **historic approach lane** to Old Wardour Castle, en route ignoring a right fork, and in 225m walk through the remnants of its arched entrance gate. In 140m the path levels out and you ignore a track to the left and in 40m a path to the right, as you leave the trees to continue along a fenced-in path. The prominent and steep down on your right is **Swallowcliffe Down** (SWC Walk Tisbury Circular [via Alvediston]). In 400m cross a farm track as you enter trees and in 30m *turn left* at a four-way forest track junction in **Twelve Acre Copse**, up a Restricted Byway (330°). On the left – now covered in trees – runs **Park Pale**, marking the boundary of what was once **Wardour Castle Deer Park**.

In 670m continue in the same direction where a car wide track joins from the left from a house, as the path starts its descent through **High Wood**, eventually between steep high banks. In 270m *fork right* and in 35m continue in the same direction along a tarmac lane to the left of **Highwood Lodge** and ignore a Restricted Byway turning right. In another 90m *turn right* over a stile to the left of a double metal field gate into a large pasture. *Turn right* at a fence corner (with a footpath marker on a fence post) in 20m and continue towards the fringe of the wood ahead and then *turn left* along the field/wood boundary. In 160m you walk past a metal post on the right (remnant of a gate) and in about 100m *veer left* down the sloping field towards a metal kissing gate near the middle of a wood (70°).

In 185m you go through the gate and over a plank bridge across a stream into the wood. There are now numerous markers guiding you through **Pheasants Copse** to leave you in little doubt where to go, **but in detail**: continue in the same direction gently uphill (20°), in 65m passing a marker post and *veer to the right* and in 25m turn right by a couple of marker posts (110°); in 75m *bear left* by a couple of marker posts and cross a plank bridge over a streamlet (40°, bluebells in season); in 55m (just before emerging from the wood into an arable field) *turn right* with a marker post and in 15m go through a metal kissing gate into a large field.

Turn left along its boundary, still ascending (60°). In 100m you reach the brow of this field and in 125m in the field corner (a footpath joins from the right: [SWC Walk Tisbury Circular (via Ludwell and Berwick St. John)]) you *turn left* through a metal kissing gate onto a car wide farm track and *turn right* along it. In 360m *turn half left* through a gap in a hedge at a four-way junction of footpaths (with markers on a pole on the right) and in 20m go over a plank bridge into a large arable field. *Turn left* across this field (335°) along a usually wide and clear path through a dip, in 310m cross a gravel track and in 110m at the edge of a wood on the other side continue along its right-hand boundary, still uphill (this is a fine bluebell wood in season).

In 110m cross a tarmac lane and then a kissing gate in a hedge to continue in the same direction (305°) across an arable field to a metal gate in the opposite boundary fence, 50m to the left of its far-right corner. In 250m you walk through the gate and *veer right* in the next field to a stile in the fence line 60m away. *Turn left [!]* before the stile and continue along the right hand grassy margin of the field towards **Wallmead Farm**. In 110m continue through a metal kissing gate along a fenced-in path and in 20m *turn right* onto **Jobbers Lane**, where you *turn left*. In 180m a road joins from the left (signposted 'Old Wardour Castle'). In 240m you walk under the railway arches along a flood-proof higher footpath on the left-hand side of the road with **The Nadder** on your left. *Turn right* with the road on the other side and in 140m from the railway arch *fork right* uphill to **Tisbury Station**.

But for tea options continue ahead along the road past **The South Western** (currently **closed and for sale**) and further on across a bridge over **The River Nadder** and up into the village:

- In 50m you find the **Star Grill** in a van in the grounds of Tisbury Football Club on the right;
- In 70m pass **Tisbury Fish & Chips** on the right and **Beatons Tearoom Bookshop**, **Coffee Angels**, a **Co-op** and **Tisbury Delicatessen** on the left;
- In 50m pass the **Gardner & Beedle** wine shop on the right;
- In 90m pass **The Benett** pub on the left;
- In 205m reach the recommended **Boot Inn** on the right.