

Tisbury Circular (via Donhead St. Andrew) [Vigorous]		
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Tisbury Circular (via Donhead St. Andrew) [Vigorous]

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: 23.3 km (14.5 mi), of which 7.6 km (4.7 mi) on tarmac or concrete, all on quiet country lanes or estate roads.

Cumulative ascent/descent: 561m.

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

Toughness: 7 out of 10

Time: 5 hours 40 minutes walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 10 ½ 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 Nadder Valley and through Wardour Park with its large mansion. After lunch at an award-winning gastro pub in Donhead St. Andrew, a series of ascents through some large estates and several woods take you all the way to the Nadder Head in another large country estate. Looping back, the route passes a Neolithic hill fort site on a ridge right on the boundary with Dorset, with occasional views through trees to surrounding steep downs.

An exhilarating descent and an equally exhilarating route through the wooded Barkers Hill lead back down to the Nadder. The return route then leads right past the romantically ruined 14th century Old Wardour Castle and through High Wood back into Tisbury, a remarkably unspoilt village.

A shorter version of the walk allows time to visit Old Wardour Castle (English Heritage).

Walk options:

A shorter version of the walk, **rated 3 out of 10**, and allowing enough time to visit Old Wardour Castle (English Heritage), 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.

Donhead House

Donhead House is situated opposite the Church within the popular village of Donhead St Andrew on the Wiltshire/Dorset border, in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is believed to date from the early 18th Century with later additions and is listed Grade II. The property is south facing and enjoys superb views over parkland towards Win Green (South Wiltshire's highest hill) and the Cranborne Chase. It was formerly the rectory until about 1891 when the Rector converted to Rome and his rectory to a private house. The original building had been a Queen Anne fronted 5-bay house with the central bay incorporating a tablet above the entrance door inscribed "Deus nobis haec otia fecit" (God has given us this tranquillity). In 1892 the house was extended to the west which doubled the length of the south front. Donhead House was later acquired by James Pender who was the son of the founder of Cable & Wireless. He is buried in the churchyard opposite in its only table tomb. During the War the house was used as a recuperation hospital and was then rented to Sir Anthony Eden for a year following the Suez Crisis of 1956.

Wincombe Park

Grade II listed Regency house built in the 1820s for John Gordon and set in wooded parkland with two lakes, said to be fish ponds of the Abbess of Shaftesbury, near the source of the River Nadder.

Castle Rings Fort

Castle Rings is a univallate hill fort in the parish of Donhead St Mary. The fort is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, has been dated to the Iron Age and is situated at an altitude of 228 metres upon Upper Greensand sandstone beds. In the mid-1980s a metal detectorist unearthed a hoard of stater coins of the Durotriges tribe within the hill fort (and was subsequently fined for looting a Scheduled Ancient Monument). The rampart of the fort stands 2.8 metres high with a 0.4 metre deep ditch, set between double earth banks. The ditch averages 16 metres wide and varies in depth to a maximum of 4.4 metres. The inner rampart has an average width of 8 metres and stands 1.9 metres above the internal surface level of the fort. The fort measures 320 by 200 metres, enclosing an area of 5.2 hectares. There is a counter-scarp bank that averages 5 metres wide and varies in height from 3.1 metres at the southwest to between 0.8 and 1.5 metres at the northeast; at the southwest this bank is high enough to give the impression of a bi-vallate fort. There are four gaps in the ramparts, one in each of the cardinal directions, but it is not known if these were original entrances to the fort. The east and west gaps are suspected of being the original entrances while the narrower gaps on the north and south sides are thought to be modern field entrances. The roughly oval rampart of the fort is now overgrown with trees and bushes. An outlying earthwork lies approximately 150 metres to the west of the main rampart and crosses the ridge in a north-south direction, ending at natural scarp slopes in both directions. It extends in a curve for 340 metres, running almost parallel to the rampart of the fort.

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 ignore a footpath turning left through a wooden kissing gate into a pasture and continue along a wider grassy path, with houses on the right. In 80m *turn right* at a T-junction with a lane and in 110m continue in the same direction along a road at a bend.

In 530m *veer left* in **Tuckingmill** hamlet at a three-way road junction at a triangular green (signposted **Hatch** and **Newtown**) and in 50m *turn left* with a bridleway signpost along a gravel track with a wooden fence on the left (230°). In 120m walk through a metal field gate and continue in the same direction along a grassy farm track with a barbed wire fence on the right initially. The views on the left down a field cover the **Vale of Wardour** and – beyond it – some of the hills climbed later as well as **Win Hill**, the highest top in South Wiltshire. In 270m you walk through a wide hedge gap and continue in the same direction in the next field. In 160m *turn right* through a wooden gate (just before a metal field gate) into the adjacent grassy field and *turn left* to continue broadly in the previous direction, crossing a U-shaped valley towards the buildings of **Manor Farm** 500m away.

At the farm go through a metal gate to the right of the farmyard and shortly after through another metal gate onto a road and *turn left* along it in the hamlet of **East Hatch**. In 10m you *fork right* downhill and in 25m you *turn right* with the road. In 40m [!] *turn right* off the road with a footpath marker on an electricity pole on the left, at the corner of a large thatched house along a raised concrete path, signposted “**The Chapel**” on a right-hand wall. In 10m pass the chapel (for a few days in May this is used for art exhibitions as part of the **Wylve Valley Art Trail**) and in 25m you walk down some steps into a car parking area. Continue downhill along a tarmac lane, in 15m *turn left* where another lane joins from the right and in 30m *turn right* along a road.

In 50m the road levels out, with a pond on the right, and in 110m it starts ascending again. In 130m [!] *veer left* off the road by a footpath signpost along a car wide farm track, in 10m ignore a footpath turning left down some steps and then through a metal kissing gate and in another 10m walk through a metal field gate. In 10m ignore an unmarked stile on the left in the fence line. Cross the arable field diagonally on a bearing of 205° (or if overgrown or freshly ploughed: follow the fence line and in 170m *veer right* with the fence in a field corner). You leave the field in the far-left corner through a kissing gate to the right of a metal field gate (and with a **Wessex Ridgeway** marker on a gate post) and *turn left* along the tarmac **Share Lane**. In 135m cross the railway line on an arched bridge and in 65m *turn left* through a wide gap in the hedge at a footpath signpost on the left and in 10m through a kissing gate into a pasture.

Continue along a clear grassy path (135°) towards a two-railed raised bridge over **The Nadder**. In 160m go over a set of step-less stiles 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 through 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 left* at a T-junction with a road (**Castle View**) into the village of **Donhead St. Andrew**. In 50m *turn right* along **New Road**, ignoring the road ahead to Salisbury. In 450m continue along **Lower Street**, where **Wardour Lane** joins from the left, and in 50m ignore **Mill Lane** joining from the right (this is the afternoon return route). 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 left* along **Lower Street** and in 40m ignore a footpath turning left over a stile. In 165m you *turn right* along a tarmac lane at a junction with a couple of triangular greens (signposted Semley 2 ¼). Follow **St. Bartholomews Street** for 110m and *turn left* through a narrow gap in the wall by a footpath signpost, 25m before reaching the gateway to **Donhead House** (you'll find **St. Andrew's Church** another 100m along the road). Walk along a narrow path through a wooded area and in 50m cross **The Nadder** on a two-railed wooden bridge. Continue across pastures towards the top of the hill (250°): in 170m pass to the left of a couple of large oak trees, in 250m walk through a set of metal kissing gates, in 150m (fine views back to New Wardour Castle from here) through another metal kissing gate and then walk through a newly planted orchard along a fenced-in path. In 250m you reach a tarmac lane through another metal kissing gate, below the church. All along you can enjoy splendid views: first to the right to **Donhead House** and **St. Andrew's Church** to the right of it, then back across the valley to the surrounding Downs.

Turn left along **Berry Wood Lane** and in 60m you *turn right* at a three-way lane junction with **Bart's Cottage** on the right, and then *turn right* again along another tarmac lane past the entrance to **St. Mary the Virgin, Donhead St. Mary**. Continue uphill along the lane, in 135m pass the village hall on the right and *turn left* opposite it over a stile by a signpost (**Watery L. 300**). Cross a large pasture with three ornamental ponds (sometimes populated by black swans) on a route displayed on a note on the stile: downhill to the left of the first pond (240°), in 130m *turn right* at the far corner of the pond and in 25m *turn left* between two smaller ponds and in 100m *turn left* along the far boundary hedge by a wooden field gate. In 35m leave the field over a stile to the right of a wooden field gate onto **Watery Lane** (but 'Water Lane' on the OS map).

Turn left along the lane and in 30m *turn right* opposite **Laurel Cottage** over a hidden stile to the left of a wooden field gate into a steeply sloping pasture. *Veer right* along the top of the field, *curving right* with it, and avoiding any paths down the slope. In 75m you go into an adjacent field through a wide gap and *veer half left* down the slope through a dip, following a clear path (240°). [!] In 140m – before reaching a line of trees – *turn right* towards double stiles in the tree line on the right. In 40m go over the stiles and *bear half left* in the next pasture towards the bottom of the valley. In 130m go over a stile and cross **The Nadder** on stepping stones to re-ascend steeply through a wooded strip. In 30m go over a stile into a pasture and *veer left* (175°) to leave it in 50m over another stile. *Turn right* and up the valley along a car wide gravel track with a wood (**Step Cross Copse**) on the left and pastures behind wooden fences on the right, ignoring all gates and ways off.

In 500m enter a wood over a stile to the right of a wooden field gate and follow a forest track in the same direction, still ascending. There are plenty of bluebells here in season. In 220m the track curves left and you go over a stile to the right of a wooden field gate and *turn right* along a car wide track. In 200m [!] *turn right* at a four-way track junction (**Windwhistle Corner**), downhill (initial bearing 310°) with views on the right into the valley. In 220m ignore a public footpath turning right through a metal field gate and head back into trees (**Great Wincombe**). In 300m reach the bottom of a dip, an often very muddy area (skirt around it to the left, if it is too bad). In 150m *turn right* at a junction of forest tracks (ignoring a faint path ahead) along a sunken track flanked by bluebells in season (330°), with a steep wood on the left (**Great Hanging**). In 130m cross a stream, the outflow of a pond which in turn is fed by various springs at the valley head, which are considered to be the source of **The Nadder**.

In 80m go through a metal field gate and continue to the right of a line of trees, and in 130m *turn right* through a metal kissing gate to the left of a metal field gate and *turn left* through a small grassy field past a fenced tennis court (i.e.: continue in the previous direction). In 40m walk through a wooden gate and along a grassy path with a walled garden on the right and a house on the left. In 40m cross a gravel path and in 40m pass a metal gate on the right and steps on the left down to the Regency house of **Wincombe Park**. In 30m *turn left* along a tarmac lane. In 30m ignore another tarmac lane turning down left. The lane continues uphill and bends right and in 310m, just as it levels out, [!] *turn half right* (30°) along a car wide forest track between trees, where a concrete lane joins from the right from some large sheds 50m away. In 20m walk through a double metal field gate and follow the track for 580m through **Lodge Wood**, with occasional glances on the right towards the tops of distant downs.

At a fork, with a house visible 65m away, [!] you *fork left* (i.e.: continue in the same direction) with a bridleway marker post along a wide grassy track towards the house, ignoring the forest track forking right down into the wood. Walk through the gravel car park of **Wincombe Lodge** and emerge at a three-way road junction. Cross the main road and *veer right* along the minor road, signposted **Semley & Gutch Common**.

Bluebells will be growing on both sides of the road, in season. In 130m the trees on the right end and you can see across a field the earthworks remains of the Iron Age **Castle Rings Fort** site (now wooded over), and in another 130m you are walking parallel to the westerly part of the remains of the ramparts. In another 100m **an out-and-back diversion** along an unmarked narrow path *turning right* along the ramparts gets you in 110m **to a gap in the double earth banks** to admire the remains of the steep ditch and to get a glance of the 5.2 hectares of internal ground. On the next stretch of the road you get glimpses of views to the left into a nearby valley in **Dorset**.

In 110m **[!]** *turn half right* off the road (just before the road dips down and curves left) by a bridleway signpost. The path (**The Tittle Path**) ascends to then run parallel to the upper boundary of this wood for about 600m, through a bluebell-rich wood and with occasional views to the right across fields out to the Downs seen earlier, sometimes also offering views on the left and back over the left shoulder to other Downs at the same time (foliage permitting). In 360m ignore a path forking left to a lower level, this does re-join the upper path later on, but doesn't offer any better views to the left. In 170m you pass a trig point at the highest point of the walk. In 140m the path *veers right* towards the end of a line of trees on the right and in 65m (at the corner of a field on the right at head height) the path starts to descend through **Gutch Common SSSI** (Site of Special Scientific Interest), soon zigzagging with houses visible deep below at the bottom of **Donhead Clift**. The descent becomes extremely steep after a right turn, but in 70m and another right turn you walk parallel to a road below and in 40m emerge in **Gutch Common**, opposite **Foxbury** cottage.

Turn right along the road, in 80m *turn left* along a tarmac lane and in 30m *fork right* along a tarmac to the right of a green. In 520m (sometimes with views to the left into the valley, sometimes between trees), you reach the bottom of a dip and re-ascend steeply. **[!]** In 160m, just before the lane levels out, and at the corner of a wood on the left (and where a short car wide track leads on a dog leg on the left to a field gate), **[!]** *turn hard left* along the track and turn right before the metal field gate, up into the wood along a railed narrow path. In 15m *bear left* (50° initially), steadily ascending on top of a spur in the wood, with plenty of bluebells growing in season. This is **Barkers Hill Wood** (with 'Barkers' being vernacular for St. Bartholomew's, a former Catholic chapel). In 50m the path *veers right* towards the left of some farmhouse buildings at the fringe of the wood. In 60m *turn left* near the edge of the wood, steeply through a gap in the spur that runs all along the wood. In 35m – just over the brow of this gap – *turn right* with the path steeply uphill. In 80m, this levels out on a path along a narrow ledge with a steeply sloping wood on the left and the top of the spur of **Barkers Hill** further up on the right.

There is a large farm visible below through the trees and you get occasional glimpses of **Pythouse**, a large stately home on the other side of the **Sem Valley** (a tributary of The Nadder). Ignore all ways off, keeping to the level path and eventually *turn right* with the path (still with the steep drop on your left, and again with plenty of bluebells in season). In 135m *turn left* at a T-junction (80°) along a steeply descending wide path. Follow the path to a road junction and continue in the same direction along the middle lane, signposted '**Donhead St. Andrew**'. Ignore a couple of footpaths turning off the lane over stiles. In 310m another tarmac lane joins from the right and in 130m you continue in the same direction at a three-way lane-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 left* at a T-junction with a road, in 50m *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 ignore a footpath turning right over a stile to the left of a double metal field gate. In 280m, where a bridleway crosses the lane (with a two-way signpost tucked away on the right), *turn right* through a gap to the side of an overgrown wooden gate and follow a left-hand field boundary. In 250m go through a metal gate and follow the left-hand field boundary of a similarly sized field.

In 270m walk through a metal field gate into a larger arable field and cross it diagonally along a usually well-cleared path (25°). From the brow of the field you can see **Tisbury** and after 380m you leave the field through a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate and *turn left* along a tarmac lane. In 10m *turn right* at a four-way junction of lanes and in 230m walk through **Wallmead Farm**. *Turn right* at a T-junction with a road along its left-hand grassy verge and in 140m *turn left* at a road T-junction. 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 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 Arms** pub on the left;
- In 200m you reach the recommended **Boot Inn** on the right.