North Wessex Downs AONB

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) includes some of England’s finest and most ancient landscapes - from chalk downland and river valleys to arable farmland, ancient woodland and world-famous historic sites. The AONB is ideal for walkers, cyclists and riders to enjoy panoramic views along open chalk escarpments, as well as rights of way through woodland and alongside rivers and parts of the Kennet and Avon Canal. Visitors can follow routes that include the Ridgeway National Trail, the White Horse Trail and the Wayfarer’s Walk, taking in attractive rural towns and villages that offer opportunities to enjoy local produce and hospitality. For further information about the North Wessex Downs AONB, please visit www.northwessexdowns.org.uk

This is a part of a series of walks in the North Wessex Downs AONB that can be accessed by public bus from Swindon.

Transport options

- Stagecoach 49 (Monday to Sunday)

OS Maps: OS Explorer 157
Start point grid reference: SU 100734

Refreshments:

- Avebury: pub, café/restaurant and community shop
- Winterbourne Monkton (near to start of walk): pub

For further information contact:

S. R. Cassell, Voluntary Project Manager
Swindon Bus Rambles
Email: info@heritagewalks.org.uk

The Countryside Code

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under control
- Consider other people

BERWICK BASSETT TO AVEBURY
VIA WINDMILL HILL
(Linear)

4 miles/7 km
Suitable for most walkers
Some stiles
Mostly flat, one short ascent
Walk directions

1. Travelling from Swindon alight at the bus stop at Berwick Bassett turn (where the A4361 turns sharp left). Cross the road, turn right and then immediately left to follow sign to Berwick Bassett. The walk route turns left through the village. (There is a short and rewarding detour to see the Church of St Nicholas – continue ahead for about 20 yards and then take footpath on right).

2. Back on the main route, with the stream on your left and houses on your right, follow a lane away from the village. After about 100 yards, the lane bends to the right. Follow this lane, which soon becomes a wide track, for about 1½ miles.

3. Where the track ends, with a clump of trees ahead and a sunken path to the right, turn left along a path through a field. Keep straight ahead through another field. Continue ahead on a stony track.

4. As the stony track turns left, continue straight ahead along a path with a low hedge on the right. Carry on to a field corner and emerge on to a track.

5. Turn right along the track for about 15 yards. Go through a gate on the left and climb the track ahead to Windmill Hill. Continue to walk through the tumuli and go through a gate to the left of the last mound. Walk down the path with a barbed wire fence on the left. Go through a gate and continue down the next field to reach a wide barred gate. Go through this, and then turn right over a stile at a fingerprint signed Avebury 1 mile.

6. Follow this waymarked path, eventually to cross the stream via a wooden footbridge and soon after a footbridge with white railings. Proceed along a lane to Avebury. Buses to Swindon depart from the stop by the Red Lion pub.

Points of interest:

Windmill Hill
This is the site of a prehistoric settlement and gathering place, although little is visible there now. It dates back to the Neolithic Age and is one of the important World Heritage Site monuments. Evidence of arrowheads, pots, and tools made of bone and antlers have been found at the site.

Avebury
The Stone Circles were constructed some time between 3,000 and 2,500 BC. Avebury may have been a major political and/or religious centre of Neolithic Britain. Avebury Henge and Stone Circles are in the freehold ownership of the National Trust and in English Heritage guardianship. They are managed by the National Trust on behalf of English Heritage.

Avebury lies at the heart of the World Heritage Site landscape within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. For more information: www.nationaltrust.org.uk
www.wiltshire.gov.uk

Alexander Keiller Museum
Founded by Alexander Keiller in the 1930s to house the finds from his excavations at Windmill Hill, the West Kennet Avenue and Avebury, the museum now forms the interpretative centre of the archaeology of Avebury.

Avebury village is partly enclosed by the stone circle. It has an Elizabethan manor house (National Trust) and a church that dates back to Saxon times.