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 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 103700

Refreshments:
Avebury: pub, café/restaurant and community shop

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

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

AVEBURY, WEST KENNET AND SILBURY HILL
(Circular)

Silbury Hill
Cottages, Avebury village

6 miles/10.5 km
Suitable for most walkers
Several stiles
Mostly flat
Walk directions

1. Travelling from Swindon, alight at the bus stop in the village of Avebury (opposite the Red Lion pub). Remain on the same side of the main road and walk down a lane away from the road. The lane passes a former chapel (now the Avebury Tourist Information Centre). After passing a farm, the lane becomes a rough track which heads gently uphill onto a ridge.

2. At a crossroads of tracks turn right onto the Ridgeway and follow a track across the downs. Eventually the track emerges at the A4. Cross this busy road with care.

3. On the other side of the road is the Sanctuary, formerly a double circle of stones linked to Avebury by West Kennet Avenue in the Neolithic period. Proceed along the By-way opposite, continuing downhill and then bearing right to follow the By-way over a bridge.

4. Continue ahead along a tarmac drive to a lane. Keep ahead but after about 10 yards turn right at a corner of a wall, along a footpath that leads to a lane. Here turn right through the village of East Kennet and continue ahead along the road. Just before the road bridge, turn left along a track.

5. At a yellow waymark on a tree, turn right along a path enclosed by trees. Climb a stile and walk along the left edge of a field, following the field edge as it bears to the left. Climb a stile at the far end, cross over the road and continue along the track ahead. Climb a stile and keep to the right edge of a field and, in the corner, go through a gap on to a path.

6. The route continues ahead, but turn left at the tree before the gate that leads gently uphill, to visit West Kennet Long Barrow. Retrace your steps downhill. Follow the path to the left, turn right through a kissing gate and cross a bridge over the river. Keep ahead and go through another kissing gate, cross the A4 and take the path ahead. Follow the path back to the village of Avebury.

7. Cross the main road into the National Trust car park and take the path at the back of the car park to the village. Turn right along the lane to the bus stop outside the Red Lion pub.

Points of interest

West Kennet Long Barrow

This stone-chambered tomb, which dates from around 3650 BC, is the largest burial chamber in England. In c. 2500 BC, around 1000 years after its creation, the immense sarsen stones you see today were placed at its entrance.

Silbury Hill

Silbury Hill is the largest man-made mound in Europe. The Hill, which contains around half a million tons of chalk, was built between 2,400 and 2,000 BC. Investigations and excavations have as yet failed to find out the purpose of this immense feat of construction, which remains one of the great mysteries of prehistory.