**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**

To Avebury:
- Stagecoach 49 (Monday to Sunday)

From Marlborough:
- Stagecoach 70 (Monday to Saturday)
- Stagecoach 71 (Sundays only)
- Thamesdown 48 (Monday to Saturday)
- Wilts & Dorset X5 (Monday to Sunday)

**OS Maps:** OS Explorer 157

**Start point grid reference:** SU 103700

**Refreshments:**
- Avebury: pub, café/restaurant and community shop
- Manton: pub
- Marlborough: pubs, cafes, tearooms, restaurants and hotels

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**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

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**For further information contact:**

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

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**AVEBURY TO MARLBOROUGH VIA FYFIELD DOWN**

(Linear)

7 miles/11.25 km
Suitable for most walkers
No 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 main road. At the start of the lane (on the left) there is a National Cycle Network sign (in blue, red and white). This walking route uses part of this Network. The lane (Green Street) passes 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 on the ridge, go straight ahead, crossing over the Ridgeway Path. Go through a gate to join a bridleway through Fyfield Down National Nature Reserve. Keep ahead on a grass track, eventually passing through three gates to cross the gallops. The bridleway then becomes a stony track. Follow the track gently downhill.

3. At the foot of the hill, continue to follow the track as it meanders to the left. Go through a couple of gates, still keeping to the stony track. This is signposted intermittently as part of the National Cycle Network route. The second gate takes you out of Fyfield Down National Nature Reserve.

4. About 100 yards further on, take the stony track on the right, signed to Fyfield Car Park. Follow the track for about 1 ½ miles. At a junction, bear left keeping to the stony track. This brings you to Fyfield car park. Walk through the car park, turn left, then right to join a lane.

5. Follow the lane for about half a mile. Take a left turn, at a red post box, into Manton Hollow. Follow this road for about 200 yards. Where the road bends right, follow it downhill. Turn left on a path (between trees). The path is signed as part of the National Cycle Network. Follow this downhill to reach the A4 Avebury to Marlborough Road.

6. Cross the road at the traffic lights, go straight ahead to follow a path and a footbridge over the river Kennet and then bear left to reach the village of Manton.

7. At a T-junction in the village, turn left and follow this lane, which soon becomes a path through the back of Marlborough college. At a fork of paths, bear right and follow the path to the left of the tennis courts. The Marlborough White Horse can now be seen. Follow the path until it reaches a road. Turn left to cross the bridge over the River Kennet towards Marlborough. Buses for Swindon depart from the north side of the High Street, outside Lloyds Bank.

Points of interest

Green Street

Green Street was once the main road from Marlborough to Bath. It is also known as the Herepath, an Anglo-Saxon word meaning ‘army road’.

Fyfield Down Nature Reserve

Fyfield Down is a National Nature Reserve and lies within the Avebury World Heritage Site. It may have been the source of the sarsen stones used in Avebury and Stonehenge as well as many buildings through the centuries.

Marlborough College

In 1843, a group of Church of England clergymen, with the backing of the Archbishop of Canterbury, were looking to found a boarding school with the prime purpose of educating the sons of clergy. Hearing that the Castle Inn at Marlborough was vacant, they took a lease on it and so Marlborough College started in August 1843 with the admission of its first 199 boys.

The Castle Inn had previously been a staging post on the London to Bath road. In 1843, the Great Western Railway line from London to Bristol and the West opened - the traffic on the Bath road, and the fortunes of the Castle Inn, thereby diminished.

Marlborough White Horse

This horse was cut by the boys of a school in Marlborough kept by a Mr Greaseley (this was in 1804, before the foundation of Marlborough College). It was designed and pegged out by one of the boys – William Canning of the Manor House, Ogbourne St George.