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 Swindon to Devizes
- Connect 2 'Bassett Boomerang' bookable service: Royal Wootton Bassett to Clyffe Pypard. Book at least 2 hours before departure 01249 890794 (Monday to Saturday). If using this bus service, start walk at point 7.

Ordnance Survey Explorer maps 157 & 169
Start point Grid reference: SU 112764

Refreshments:
- Broad Hinton: pubs and a shop
- Clyffe Pypard: pub
- Winterbourne Bassett (near to start and finish of walk): pub

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

Path near Broad Town

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

BROAD HINTON, CLYFFE PYMPARD AND THE WHITE HORSE TRAIL (Circular)

9 miles/14.5 km
Suitable for most walkers
Several stiles
Hilly in parts
Walk directions

1. Travelling from Swindon, alight at the bus stop at the Barbury Inn (formerly the Bell Inn) on the A4361 road. Cross the road with care and take the minor road ahead, signed Broad Hinton. On reaching a triangular junction with a row of white thatched cottages ahead, cross over and turn left to reach the church.

2. To the left of the church's laygate is a wide grassed area. Look for a wooden footpath sign pointing to a gap in the tall trees ahead. Once through the gap in the trees, turn immediately right to follow a footpath which runs to the right of private gardens. This path leads onto a road (the road bends sharp left). Turn left onto the signposted byway.

3. After just under a mile, the byway emerges at minor road. Continue straight ahead along the no through road for about 800 yards, until reaching two houses on the left.

4. Opposite the first house, turn right along the footpath into the field and follow the path in the direction of the distant mast. At the top end bear right and then left to cross the centre of the next field. The path continues in the same direction across another three fields. On reaching a woodland, turn right to follow the edge of field to the right of the woodland, passing a thatched cottage on the left. Continue along a gravel track to emerge at a road junction above Clyffe Pypard.

5. Cross the road to walk half a mile downhill to the village. There is no footpath along this steep descent, so care must be taken. At the foot of the hill, turn right into Clyffe Pypard.

6. Just beyond the pub, take a footpath on the right, leading to a church. Walk through the churchyard to exit through a gate in the far right hand corner. Follow the footpath through several fields to emerge at a road junction beside Springfield Villa.

7. Continue straight ahead along Pye Lane. The Broad Town white horse is now visible. The lane emerges at a crossroads in Broad Town. Cross over into Chapel Lane, which is signed as a no through road. Where it bends to the right, continue ahead on a track between two bungalows. Follow the track to Littletown Farmhouse, which is directly below the white horse. Walk uphill towards a half-concealed white-washed cottage on the right.

8. Go through the gate on the left of the cottage, then through the next gate on the left, marked with a yellow arrow. Proceed ahead along a grass path at the foot of the escarpment. At a path junction beneath overhanging trees, go through the gate ahead. Proceed straight ahead, across successive fields, keeping the escarpment on your right. (Note: the path can be overgrown in summer). After about a mile, there is a farmhouse down to the left. Go through the gate in the hedgerow. Immediately, turn sharp right to climb a wide track that leads to the remains of an ancient hillfort (Bincnoll Castle).

9. Cross the centre of the hillfort to a gate with an arrow pointing straight on along the field edge. Go straight ahead alongside trees on a wide track until the track bends sharply to the right. Here, go through the gate/stile and across the field, heading for the right hand side of a clump of trees on the left. Ahead are two gates separating a narrow strip of land. Go through the two gates and continue in the same direction across two fields.

10. The path exits onto a minor road. Turn left to reach the A4361 and the bus stop. Alternatively, turn right and then left to reach Broad Hinton (from the High Street, turn left along Post Office Lane to reach the bus stop opposite Barbury Inn).

Points of interest

St Peter's Church, Clyffe Pypard

In the churchyard is the grave of the architectural historian and writer Sir Nikolaus Pevsner and his wife Lola. A refugee from Hitler's Germany, he was best known for his 46-volume series of county guides 'The Buildings of England.' A cottage near to Broad Town was the author's country retreat.

The Broad Town White Horse

There are several accounts of when this horse was cut. The most reliable date is 1864 by William Simmons, of Littletown Farm, on whose land it stood. The horse was covered during the Second World War and remained invisible until 1992 when a group of local enthusiasts rechalked it.