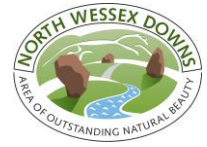


# North Wessex Downs

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



## Walks in Wiltshire

### Pewsey Vale, The Kennet & Avon Canal and the White Horse Trail Circular

A walk with a steep ascent rewarded by miles of stunning views across the Vale of Pewsey; contrasted with stretches of tranquil canal and ancient woodlands full of bluebells in the spring.

#### Useful Information

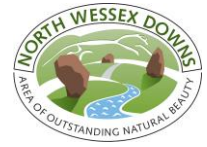
- 8.8 miles/ 14 km circular
- Start point: Pewsey Wharf
- What3words: [///stung.metals.allergy](#)
- Grid Ref: SU157610
- OS Explorer Map: 157
- Parking at Pewsey Wharf – Canal & Rivers Trust (charges apply)
- Alternative parking – Martinsell Hill - What3words: [///adjusted.populate.polite](#) Grid Ref: 183645. Joins the walk at point 5 (adds approximately 1 mile).
- Buses between Swindon and Marlborough stop at Pewsey Wharf, see Stagecoach website for more information
- One very steep ascent, several gates and stiles, mostly on paths/tracks, can be muddy
- Refreshments: Waterfront Bar & Bistro at Pewsey Wharf
- GPX: file available to download from our website

#### Route Directions

- 1) From the Waterfront Café walk along the towpath with the canal on your left for about half a mile to reach a canal bridge. Go under the bridge, and immediately right up and over it (past information board for Jone's Mill Nature Reserve).
- 2) Keep straight ahead. Shortly after joining a track, climb a stile on the left to a path through a field (waymarked the White Horse Trail). Follow this across two fields. On reaching a lane, cross over and continue across fields.
- 3) At a bridlepath, go through the gate opposite into a field. (The gate is waymarked Mid-Wilts Way, and the White Horse Trail). To the left is Oare village. Part way up the hill, take a gate on the right, follow a steep path to the summit of the hill known as the Giant's Grave. At the summit, follow the path to reach a gate (waymarked the White Horse Trail) and a fingerpost pointing to Martinsell hill. Go through the gate, turn right and staying in the field, follow the fence line gently uphill.
- 4) At a stile (waymarked Mid-Wilts Way), go over the stile and continue straight with views on your right. Trees on your left. Follow the path into woodland, under an ancient Cedar of Lebanon tree and out again to reach a wooden seat with stunning views. Continue through a gate and follow the path which bears left. At a fork in the path at a large single tree, keep left. (Join here if you parked at Martinsell Hill car park, turning right at the top of the hill at the big tree.)
- 5) Follow the path through a gate, across grassland and into woodland. At a junction of paths in the woodland, follow the sign to Oare Hill. On emerging from the woodland, turn right on to a track. Follow this to reach a road.
- 6) This is the A345 Marlborough to Pewsey road. Cross with care. Take the track left, signed the White Horse Trail. Follow this for some time until you reach a gate onto open grassland.

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Continue following the White Horse Trail signs across several fields and through gates. Ignore paths to the left until you reach a steep downhill section, go through a gate and immediately left through a 2nd gate. Continue towards Gopher Wood.

- 7) At a crossroad of paths at Gopher Wood, go through the wooden gate straight opposite into a field. Keep left following the edge of the woodland. Take a path straight ahead steeply downhill. Go through a gate and along a track until you reach a gate on your left onto a lane. Go through the gate and turn right on the lane and then past Draycot farm buildings. At a crossroads, keep ahead and follow the lane.
- 8) At two right-hand turns close together, take the second one (No 4 National cycle route). At a cottage join the canal, turning left along the towpath. At bridge no 115, walk over the canal bridge and re-join the towpath on the other side of the canal. Continue along the towpath back to Pewsey Wharf.

## Points of Interest

- The Kennet and Avon Canal runs 87 miles between Newbury and Bath, linking the Kennet and Avon rivers. It was built between 1794 and 1810 to carry iron, coal, stone and timber from Bristol and to bring luxuries like spirits and tobacco from London. Having fallen into disrepair, the canal was reopened in 1990.
- Jones's Mill - the Vera Jeans Nature Reserve. This nature reserve, owned and managed by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, is a combination of marshy fenland, woodland and meadows. It supports rare plants such as greater tussock sedge, giant horsetails and bog pimpernel. The meadows are grazed by Belted Galloway cattle.
- Martinsell hill is one of the highest points of Wiltshire. From here you can see Salisbury Cathedral spire, over 25 miles away. The Iron Age Fort has a clearly visible bank and ditch overlooking Oare and the Pewsey Vale.
- For more information, walks and other activities in the Pewsey Vale, see [Home - Visit Pewsey Vale](#)

**Pewsey Vale, The Kennet & Avon Canal and the White Horse Trail Circular: Map on following page...**

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