

BARBURY CASTLE AND THE RIDGEWAY



VISITWILTSHIRE

A delightful downland walk for a clear day. Part of the route is along the Ridgeway, said to be Europe's oldest road. The Iron Age hillfort of Barbury Castle is believed to be the site at which Cynric defeated the Britons in 556AD.

The walk

1 Start

Leave the car park using the way that you entered. At the road turn to the R and pass Upper Herdswick Farm on your L.

2 0.3km/¼ mile

After the farm, take the first gate on your L which is sign-posted the Ridgeway Long Distance Footpath. Follow the obvious track along an undulating ridge (Smeathe's Ridge) with fine views to the east and south of Liddington Castle, Aldbourne Chase, Savernake Forest, and the northern edge of Salisbury Plain. After a gate and a seat, the path forks to the L. You

will pass a covered reservoir, enclosed by a fence. The path then drops fairly steeply to a stile. At this point you will join a track-way with a hedge on either side that comes in behind you from the L.

3 3.8km/2½ miles

Turn L, and follow this track. When you join a concrete track bear L and follow round to the R. Go straight ahead keeping a line of trees on your L.

4 6.4km/4 miles

At a gate you join a track at a T-junction. Turn L and after 100m the byway forks off to the left.

Follow the track up Burderop Down. The track skirts to the L of a burial mound. On the northern slopes of Burderop Down there are the remaining ridges of an old field system. Follow the track over Burderop Down to join the road.

5 8km/5 miles

Turn L to find the car park.



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POINTS OF INTEREST AND LOCAL INFORMATION

1 Barbury Castle, near Marlborough, was built by the Celts in the sixth century. Constructed in a double-earth bank design, the outer bank was reinforced with huge Sarsen Stones that can still be seen today. Barbury castle offers great views north of the Marlborough Downs towards Swindon and can be a good spot to watch the sunrise as the mist clears

1 The Science Museum, at Wroughton Airfield, stores and conserves large objects from the National Collections including air transport, land transport, agricultural machinery and firefighting. Limited opening hours - for details, tel 0870 870 4868

1 Marlborough is an ideal base for riding, rambling and cycling. It has attracted visitors since the days of the stagecoach and has excellent accommodation, restaurants and shopping. The town has one of the widest high streets in England,

with many Georgian buildings and architectural styles that span 300 years 1 A mile from Marlborough is the magnificent 4,500 acre Savernake Forest, with its long Grand Avenue flanked by a cathedral-like arcade of beech trees. Henry VIII hunted deer here and married Jane Seymour, whose family lived nearby 1 Between Barbury Castle and Marlborough you can access the Marlborough and Chiseldon Railway Path, a level path which was a disused railway line

1 Lydiard Park and House is a beautifully restored, elegant Georgian Country House in 260 acres of 18th century parkland. There are many paths and trails through the woods and by the lake, and in early spring the woodlands are carpeted with snowdrops. The park is ideal for picnics and has a woodland adventure playground for children. Parking and entry to the grounds are free. From the M4 take exit 16 and follow the brown signs to Lydiard Park.



IS THIS WALK FOR YOU?

Terrain: Downland
Stiles: 2
Suitable for: Average walkers

PLANNING

Start/parking: SU156761, car park at Barbury Castle Country Park

Nearest town: Swindon

Refreshments: Patriots Arms, Chiseldon; several pubs in Wroughton

Public toilets: Barbury Castle Country Park. Toilets can also be found at facilities mentioned above.

Public transport: Bus no.70 Swindon to Marlborough stops at Chiseldon. Bus no.49 Swindon to Trowbridge stops in Wroughton. For further details contact Traveline, tel 0871 200 2233

MAPS

Ordnance Survey Explorer 157 Marlborough & Savernake Forest

ACCOMMODATION

If you would like to find somewhere to stay in Wiltshire, please go to www.visitwiltshire.co.uk, Where to Stay.

