

Mid Wilts Way directions west to east, in 13 stages

MWW directions west to east – Mere to Kingston Deverill

Maps: OS Landranger 183, OS Explorer 143

Distance: 5 miles (8 km)

Starting in the centre of Mere by the war memorial and clock tower, go down the narrow, apparently unnamed road (it is called Manor Road) opposite the George Inn. Pass Castle Hill Lane, then Crescent, then Castle Hill itself, all on the L, and cross over the A303. Take the bridleway which is the second turning to the R after the Manor House drive (note: **not** Manor Farm, which is further on). After approx. 70 metres of a metalled road, fork L on a track for roughly the same distance. Go through two gates in quick succession, then follow the track uphill in a broad sweep to the R. It soon becomes apparent that we are ascending the western arm of a large semi-circle of hills. Eventually join another track ascending from the L. Continue with fence on L before veering R to a gate onto a wide track, which goes towards two low, flat hills (tumuli and the remains of White Sheet castle) topped by a mast on White Sheet Hill to your L.

Cross the track, go through a gate and keep going in the same (north-easterly) direction through a field with a fence initially to R, then through a gap, after which the fence reappears on your L. Maintain direction on a track on the edge of the next field, then cross the third field aiming for the gate in the opposite fence. Beyond the gate is a sign warning you of gliders, and beyond the sign can be seen the runway of the local gliding club. This is open farming country with vast fields and lovely views to both sides.

Turn L after going through the gate to go slightly downhill to another gate. Here turn R, with fence on R, to walk approx. 1 ½ miles (2.4 km) following the contours of the hillside and passing below two copses to reach a gate onto a farm track. Cross the track, go through the gate on the far side and cross the field bearing half left to another gate in the bottom corner. (If there is a bull in this field, you can instead turn L down the track to the metalled road, then turn R along it to rejoin the correct route). Turn L for a few feet after this to reach a junction, then turn R to reach the road running through Kingston Deverill on a sharp bend.

Turn L at the bend with a small stream (the River Wylye) on L. At the next junction, just before a bridge over the stream, turn R and walk down

the street between pretty cottages. At the T junction, with Bell Cottage on L, turn L.

MWW directions west to east – Kingston Deverill to Heaven's Gate car park

[Amended on 25/6/20]

Maps: OS Landranger 183, OS Explorer 143

Distance: 4.4 miles (7 km)

If starting in Kingston Deverill, take the road off the B3095 signposted to Maiden Bradley, passing Bell Cottage on L after a junction.

If continuing from last stage, turn L at T junction to pass Bell Cottage on your L.

When the road bends sharp L, go R down the lane marked by a sign saying “Ford, 550 yards”. Soon reach a farm gate up a small slope on the L; pass through this and ascend the field with fence to L, then at the fence corner follow track ascending to R. Soon after, veer off to the L on a faint track going due north. Pass approx. 40m to the L of a metal water trough and aim for the lone tree on the R (one of two) on the horizon. On arrival, pass through the gate at its side and turn 90 degrees L with fence on L.

Follow the fence for approx. 1 ½ miles (2.4 km) along the ridge, ascending to a beacon on a hill top, then descending and climbing again. There are fine views on this section in all directions, with Bidcombe Down to the L and Whitecliff Down to the R. Shortly before reaching the end of the fence, strike out across the field towards the wood on your R, dropping down onto a farm track. Immediately on leaving the open area through a gate-sized gap, bear half left to enter the wood through a field gate. Follow the path, initially slightly uphill, then downhill, quite steeply at first, passing through two farm gates en route, to emerge into another field at the bottom. There is a large memorial stone to Bernard and Joan Russell about 40 metres to the R.

Go down the field edge, with fence and occasional trees to L, to another gate, then along a tree-lined path to a quiet country road. Cross this and continue on the bridleway slightly to the L to reach a metalled road on a bend, just before the Horningsham place name. Turn L here.

(If it is desired to visit Horningsham, ignore the junction soon after on your R and continue along the road. This becomes Horningsham's lengthy main street. Pass its church on R to eventually arrive at the Bath Arms pub.)

Turn R at the first junction, signposted Longleat, Warminster and Salisbury, then L at the junction very soon after. Follow the road round to the R past a phone box, with houses 17, 18 & 19 on your L, and proceed uphill. When this road turns L, fork R up the bridleway to reach the road from Horningsham to the Longleat/Cley Hill roundabout. Turn L on this road to arrive at Heaven's Gate car park on the R soon after joining it. This is shown on the Explorer map as being in Nockatt Coppice, but is indicated only by the usual blue P in the Landranger map.

MWW directions west to east – Heaven's Gate car park to Upton Scudamore

Maps: OS Landranger 183, OS Explorer 143

Distance: 6.4 miles (10.2 km)

Turn R out of the Heaven's Gate car park along the road from Horningsham to the Longleat/Cley Hill roundabout and follow it, with care, for 1.4 miles (2.2 km), past the entrance to the Aqua Sana Spa (on R), Batsford Timber (both sides), the Main Entrance to Longleat for paying visitors (on L) and Center Parcs (on R) until it arrives at the roundabout. Take the second exit off the roundabout (ignoring the Main Entrance to Longleat House, which is the first exit), signposted Frome and Corsley Heath, A362, and after 400 metres or so turn R to get to the National Trust car park for Cley Hill. Proceed along the track past the car park, through a R/L kink and up to a kissing gate at the base of the hill. Please ascend and descend the hill by any route (and there are many!) other than the well worn one which goes straight up the hill from the entrance gate, so as to minimise any further erosion. The trig point at the top probably affords the best views. When you have had your fill of these, return to the kissing gate where you came in.

When you reach the kink in the track, go through the last metal farm gate on the L onto a wooded path to the R of fields. (If this is impassable due to vegetation growth, it is possible to go through the penultimate gate on the L and along the edge of the field with woods to the R, although this is not a right of way). After 300 metres, ascend the L hand bank to cross a stile at the top. Turn R and pass along the edge of two further fields to

reach a minor concreted road. Here turn L, then R at a T junction to pass under the A350. Take the R hand of two parallel tracks. At the end of these, cross a stile between two double farm gates, and turn L onto Victoria Road, which goes into Warminster. After approx. 500m and not far past a letter box, take a track on your L signposted "Footpath". Follow this round to the L and along the edge of a field with hedge to L to emerge onto the A350 via a stile.

Turn R and walk beside the A350 for 500 metres until you reach a spot 10m beyond the end of a layby. Cross over the stile to the R, by a sign which states 'Upton Scudamore 1 3/4 miles', and go along the left hand edge of a field before crossing it to turn half L onto a wooded path. Soon go over a stile; aim slightly to the R and cross two fields to pass to the L of Cross House Farm via another stile. Continue in the same direction on a path through trees to go over a squeeze stile very near the entrance to the farm, then go down the metalled road beyond to arrive at another of the roads, the B3414, leading into Warminster. Here turn L to arrive at a roundabout on the A350. (It may be more expedient if the grass verges round the roundabout have not been cut to go down the road to the services on your R approx. 100m down the B3414, then cut between the Burger King and Travelodge, and turn L past the garage, to arrive directly at the A350. If you do this, the stile you need will be in front of you on the other side of the road).

Take the third exit from the roundabout, signposted Chippenham, A350 and Trowbridge (A363) and almost at once cross a stile to the L. Cross over three fields on the other side connected by two small footbridges to arrive at another footbridge, this time over a railway, on your R, which you cross. Continue over the field beyond to pass through a gateless kissing gate onto a metalled road on the outskirts of Upton Scudamore. Turn R (effectively straight on) on this road, then take the first turn L, just before reaching the church. Stroll along this lane to arrive at the Angel Inn on your R.

MWW directions west to east – Upton Scudamore to Lower Westbury Road, Bratton

Maps: OS Landranger 183, OS Explorer 143

Distance: 4.9 miles (7.8 km)

With your back to the Angel Inn, walk down the road in front of you. After 200m cross the A350 and bear L down the slip road to the A350.

Just before reaching it, take a metalled no through road to the R. Stay on this as it climbs quite steeply up to the top of Upton Cow Down and continue on it as it joins the Imber Range Perimeter Path, with firing ranges/restricted areas and two flag poles on your R, followed by a disused quarry. On arriving at a crossroads by the entrance to the quarry on the R, turn L downhill. Take the stile on the R after some 150m (but continue on the road for access to Westbury) and head directly downhill towards a rusty, square water tank. Turn R here along the escarpment, with trees initially to L, then a fence. Go through a gap into another field, then through a metal kissing gate at the end of this. Continue up a slope to pass several benches, and with a plinth with a metal semi-circle on top giving information on the places below relative to the points of the compass. It also tells you that White Horse Hill is 754 feet above sea level. The plinth was erected by pupils of the Aldcroft School of Building in Trowbridge in 1968. The White Horse can be clearly seen to the R. A bit further on, pass an information board about the White Horse by a bench. The White Horse car park is up to your R. There are some superb views from here on a good day.

Go through the gate beyond the information board and walk all the way along the northern ramparts of Bratton Camp, which is an Iron Age hill fort, with the White Horse initially to your L. When you reach a gate after approx. 500m, do not go through it but turn R with fence to your L. On reaching a stile to a tarmac road (which is Castle Road, from the White Horse car park to Bratton) cross the stile and turn L down the road.

After 200m, take a narrow bridleway to the L and downhill. At a Y-shaped junction, bear R, and follow the path downhill along the R hand side of a field. On arriving at the B3098, cross it and continue down the tarmac road on the other side. Soon follow the road round to the R at a sharp bend, along Lower Westbury Road. After 650m, arrive at a T junction with another tarmac road (Court Lane).

If terminating in Bratton, turn R at this T junction and walk uphill to the B3098. The Duke pub is to the L along the B3098

MWW directions west to east – Lower Westbury Road, Bratton to Steeple Ashton

[Amended on 26/5/20]

Maps: OS Landranger 183 & 173, OS Explorer 143

Distance: 4 miles

If starting from Bratton, take the road off the B3098 signposted Steeple Ashton, West Ashton and Trowbridge. Pass Lower Westbury Road, the first turning to your L.

If continuing from last stage, turn L at T junction.

Pass stately thatched dwelling called Court House, on L.

Just before the speed derestriction sign, there is a choice of routes: the official route, which follows the White Horse Trail across fields and the railway, or the alternative route, which is a lengthy road section. The official route is slightly longer and can get boggy/very muddy when wet. It can also be quite difficult to follow if hedges are overgrown and stiles hidden in undergrowth, even though both sets of waymarks all point the way, so detailed directions are given. The alternative route can be used if there has been a spate of bad weather and/or in late summer when the vegetation has become unmanageable.

If following the **alternative route**, continue along the road past the speed derestriction sign and over a railway bridge to a crossroads. Turn L here, and after exactly a mile (1.6 km), at a left-hand bend in the road with a black and white arrowed “sharp bend” sign and a footpath sign to Easton, go through a gap in the hedge on the R into a field.

If taking the **official route**, cross a stile into a field on the L next to a sewage pumping building, immediately crossing a second stile over a wooden fence. Go half right across the field to a double stile and footbridge in the far corner. Continue in the same direction diagonally across the next field. (If it has been raining it would be advisable to go past the telegraph pole on the slightly elevated, rampart-like section across the middle of the field, turning L at the hedge at the bottom, to avoid swampy areas in the middle). Cross a small footbridge and stile and go half R for 10m to arrive at a metal kissing gate leading to a railway crossing.

Having crossed safely, pass through another metal kissing gate and follow the unofficial diversion of the legal route along two sides of the field. This has been created by the landowner to ensure that walkers do not follow the right of way, which goes half L across the field. Go through a rusty metal gate onto a footbridge and over a stile. Turn R into the long, thin field beyond, and aim for the left-hand end of the hedge at the end, where there is a double stile sandwiching a footbridge. Aim for the tree in the middle of the hedge to L in the next field, where there is a footbridge and stile. In the next field, aim for a stile to the L of a house. Cross this and walk down the narrow, fenced path to right to a minor

metalled road (Capps Lane). (The occupant of the house has unilaterally diverted the right of way at this point, and it looks as though the diversion is here to stay).

Go L along this for 30m, then turn R through the metal kissing gate. Proceed across the field beyond, which is often cultivated, going a few metres to the L of the first tree in the middle. Maintain direction over the next field, which is also cultivated (although you may have to forge a route through crops to do so). The route takes you about 50 metres to the L of the furthest of four trees in the middle of the field, to a footbridge and metal kissing gate at a dogleg hedge. Continue along the edge of the next field, with hedge to right, to a gap in the hedge (the footbridge and metal gate hidden in the far right corner are no longer in use). Follow the hedge on right to arrive at a metal kissing gate onto a metalled road, just to the right of the drive to Lower Dunge Farm.

Go R along this road for 500m to arrive at the bend in the road mentioned in the official route above, but from the other direction. Go through a gap in the hedge on the L, signposted East Town. Here the official and alternative routes unite.

Cross this field in the direction the footpath sign is pointing in (or go round the left hand edge of the field if the route is blocked by crops, which it invariably is in the summer) to arrive at a second field with hedge to L. Follow the grassy path, which soon becomes a wide dirt track, to East Town Farm, then turn R keeping farm buildings on R. Continue on this track, which is named as East Town Lane on the OS Explorer map. It has hedges on both sides after the farm buildings are left behind, with occasional gaps. At a Y-shaped junction, bear right. On arriving at a T junction at the bottom of a slope, leave the White Horse Trail briefly and turn R then immediately L, heading uphill on a bridleway. This soon arrives at the end of a metalled road, which is Acreshort Lane. There is a bench on the L at this junction and a byway sign. Turn L down this road for approx. ½ mile (0.8 km) to reach the road through Steeple Ashton. Turn L on this to arrive at the Longs Arms pub.

MWW directions west to east – Steeple Ashton to the Barge Inn at Seend Cleeve

[Amended on 30/5/20]

Maps: OS Landranger 173, OS Explorer 156

Distance: Option 1, 4.1 miles (6.6 km), option 2, 5.2 miles (8.3 km)

Facing the Longs Arms, turn R along the main road. Soon rejoin the White Horse Trail. Turn R again opposite Bartlett's Mead down a narrow track signposted 2 Church View. At the end turn R past a rusty metal gate onto a path between fence and hedge, then sharply back on yourself to L through a gate just outside the graveyard. Follow the path in a sweeping R hand curve through the field beside the graveyard. Go through a gate at the end, then immediately L through another one. Head half R across the field to go through another gate or gap at the bottom. Negotiate a gate/footbridge/kissing gate on the other side of the next field and follow the path through what can be a swampy area. Cross a stile then head slightly uphill along the edge of a field with fence, then hedge, to R. At the corner, ignore the farm gate on your R and go through the field gate in front of you, and a small metal gate just beyond. After 30 metres, go through a kissing gate on the right, and through a small wooded, enclosed area, to arrive at a stile next to a metal field gate. Here go L along the top of the field, passing a second field gate to L, and go through a third one in front of you. Proceed down the broad track on the other side between fence to R and hedge to L, and through a double farm gate at the end. Continue across the top of another field with hedge L.

Go through a wooden kissing gate into a brief section between hedges to a metal kissing gate. Approx. 30m after this, go through the metal kissing gate in the hedge on the L. Cross the field diagonally towards the church to arrive at a sturdy footbridge between two metal gates. Maintain direction across the next field to the gate into Keevil church's graveyard. Go through this, keeping the church on your R, and down the short street at the end (Church Lane) to emerge onto the main road through the village. (Route is now on tarmac roads as far as the A361). Turn R here, passing Pyatts Corner/Butts Lane, Martins Road, Longleaze Farm and a byway, all on the R, leaving the White Horse Trail at the byway. After approx. ½ mile (0.8 km), on a R hand bend, take the road on the L (effectively straight on). After passing Elmleaze Farm (on R) and The Old Dairy (on L), the road bends R and arrives at a T junction. Turn L to reach the busy A361 road. Cross it, turn L and after a few metres turn R down a quiet lane, signposted "Restricted Byway".

After 80m, there two options, the second of which avoids the village of Seend Cleeve and the extra road walking that this involves, but which is over a mile (1.6 km) longer. It also adds 1.2 miles (1.9 km) onto the lengthy stretch of walking beside the Kennet and Avon Canal, which comprises the entire next stage – which may or may not be a good thing!

Warning: Option 2 is usually unfeasible in summer when the lane beyond the first field becomes impassable due to overgrown vegetation

Option 1: Cross the bridge over Semington Brook, passing Seend Head Mill on the L, and immediately after this continue ahead at the junction with a metalled road. This is Row Lane, and goes steeply uphill initially. Walk along this for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile (1.35 km) to arrive at a T junction. Turn L here down Seend Cleeve's main street. Pass the Brewery Inn (or go in if thirsty!) to R, to arrive at the Barge Inn after approx. 0.6 miles (1.1 km).

Option 2: Take the stile to L into a field. Cross this to a stile on the other side, with Semington Brook to R. (When it has been raining, turning the centre of this field into a lake, follow the hedge on L round the field). Turn L on the other side of the stile into a lane. The lane bends R and slowly becomes more navigable. Beware of huge badger sett entrances partly hidden by nettles in this section. After 150m the nettles retreat to the edges of the lane and grass predominates. Where the lane joins a quiet metalled road, with the A361 only a few metres to the L, turn R down said metalled road. 100m after a sharp left hand bend, go down the drive on R into Seend Park Farm. Follow the waymarks around it to reach the Kennet and Avon Canal. Cross the swing bridge (no. 156) to the other side and turn R. After 1.2 miles (1.9 km), come abreast of the Barge Inn on the other side. There is a handy road bridge at this point (no. 153) which enables you to visit the pub for sustenance if needed! Otherwise, if you wish to continue the Mid Wilts Way, do not cross the canal

MWW directions west to east – The Barge Inn at Seend Cleeve to Devizes Wharf Centre

[Amended on 13/6/20]

Maps: OS Landranger 173, OS Explorer 156 & 157

Distance: 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles (7.2 km)

Assuming you chose option 1 on the last stage, go L out of the Barge Inn car park, follow the road over the bridge over the Kennet and Avon canal, and descend onto its towpath by going L on the other side and under the bridge you have just crossed. Pass three locks, then go under a minor road (Spout Lane) at bridge 149, from which there is easy access to the Three Magpies pub. Quite soon after this, go under the A365 at Sells Green (bridge 148). Pass opposite the Caen Hill Marina for narrow boats, which incorporates a swing bridge, and cross over to the other side of the canal.

This is the beginning of the famous Caen Hill flight of 29 locks, at the second of which (at Lower Foxhanger's Farm) we are joined by the White

Horse Trail. After another five locks, pass under a road bridge. This stretch of the canal is famous for the series of 16 locks stretching away up Caen Hill, a wondrous sight! These take the narrow boat user (and walker) up into Devizes. At the top, pass two more locks, continue under the A361, then pass three more. Go under the A361 again, take the ramp on the right up to the A361. Turn right over the canal bridge then turn right again to continue along the towpath on the other side. The canal museum and cafe of the Wharf Centre soon come into view on the other side. Leave the towpath and cross the bridge to R (no. 140) just past the cemetery. After a few metres turn R into the Wharf Centre. There is a (paying) car park next to it.

MWW directions west to east – Devizes Wharf Centre to A361 Shepherd's Shore

[Amended on 14/6/20]

Maps: OS Landranger 173, OS Explorer 157

Distance: 6.3 miles (10.1 km)

Pass under the bridge over the canal (no, 140) to the L of the canal museum and cafe in the Wharf Centre, using the towpath. Take the next bridge L over the canal and go through the gap next to the large iron gates in front of you into Quakers Walk, a pleasant tree-lined avenue popular with the local population. When this reaches a metalled road, with the entrance to Roundway House to your L, cross it and continue on a stony path between hedges. When the path bends R before a house, go L through a gap between hedges, with the house now on the R, then between two fields. Continue with hedge to R. Go down shallow steps onto a tarmac road and turn L on it, then sharp L, to reach a kissing gate on the R very soon after the bend. Go through this, a copse, and another kissing gate, then walk uphill along the L hand side of a large field, passing to R of a pylon as you do so. Go through the gap next to the double metal farm gate at the top, and turn L along the road. This soon degrades, then peters out, becoming a stony track. Where this goes sharp R, there is a parking area to L.

Here you can either go through the metal kissing gate at the top of the copse next to the parking area, and along a path beside the copse, or through the gap to L of a metal farm gate beyond the kissing gate and L down a path enclosed by fences. These paths are parallel and indeed the second one joins the first one via another kissing gate after only about 40m, but it is debatable which one is muddier in wet weather. Both lead

to Oliver's Castle hill-fort. (Where the fence to R forms a corner with another fence, there used to be an information board about the Battle of Roundway, which was fought on this spot, but this has been removed).

Follow the ramparts of the fort in a wide semi-circle to the R, with wide-ranging views to L, passing a pointed wooden post with "R5" carved into it and an English Nature information board on Roundway Down at the end of the semi-circle. Go through a metal kissing gate as you leave the fort behind, then follow the fence on R in the next field. On arriving at the corner the right of way goes through the small metal gate next to a farm gate in front of you onto the track beyond, where you turn L along it. However this can get very muddy and churned up, so there is the option to turn L along the inside of the fence at the corner until reaching a small metal gate to R. Go through this onto the track and turn L to rejoin the right of way. Branch R on arriving at a T junction. After 500 metres, turn L at the turning/parking area along a metalled (but degraded) road. This soon passes a house (Hill Cottage) and some farm buildings on the R. Just before a large open-sided barn on the R, the road deteriorates into a rutted farm track. Just over a mile (1.6 km) after joining the metalled road, arrive at a crossroads of tracks. Turn L here to arrive at the clubhouse of the North Wilts Golf Club approx. ½ mile (0.8 km) later.

Cross over the metalled road and venture cautiously onto the golf course. Veer slightly to the R, aiming for a wooden signpost in a copse beyond the fairway, passing two more small wooden waymarked posts by clumps of trees on the way. Head in the general direction of the two radio masts on Morgan's Hill which have been visible for some distance already, and are a constant landmark on this part of the MWW. Go through the copse beyond the sign post to join a clear cut (literally!) path up the side of the golf course, with more clumps of trees and the golf course to L and a fence to R. Follow this uphill and round to the L to arrive at a gate to the R. (There is an information board on the other side of the gate, which at the time of writing was devoid of any information!)

On entering the field beyond, **the official route** (this is not as indicated on the map, Ordnance Survey have been advised of this error), follows the path through the earthworks and then turns R on the other side. The earthworks are part of the Wansdyke, an ancient fortification which stretches for 50 miles through Wiltshire. The path sticks closely to the Wansdyke initially but gradually drifts to the L to pass through a gate. As you follow the path along the contours of the hill, the communications masts move to your R and then behind you. On reaching the end of the field, turn R uphill for 20 metres, then go through another gate. Walk uphill with fence to the L and communications masts on your R. The path gradually drifts away from the fence towards a **fence corner** ahead.

When you reach this, turn L onto a path which goes downhill to another bridle gate, with the Wansdyke to your immediate R.

Alternatively, on exiting the golf course you can take a short cut by walking along the Wansdyke, as opposed to along the path beside it, going through a gate nestling between the two ramparts of the Wansdyke into the field containing the radio masts (which are now on the L) and following the Wansdyke to the **fence corner** mentioned above. This route takes walkers directly along the Wansdyke and to the R of the communications masts, rather than in an extended arc to their L.

Follow the path as it winds right, then left and right again in harmony with the Wansdyke, to a bridle gate in front of a small copse. Go through the copse on a path across tree roots onto a byway. Turn R for a few paces, then go through another bridle gate to the L. Walk beside the Wansdyke for the length of two fields to arrive at the A361.

MWW directions west to east – A361 Shepherd’s Shore to Knap Hill

Maps: OS Landranger 173, OS Explorer 157

[Amended on 12/7/20]

Distance: 5 ½ miles (8.8 km)

The Mid Wilts Way crosses the A361 at Shepherd’s Shore farmhouse, where there is also a shot blasting and powder coating business. Go up the driveway of the farmhouse on the eastern side of the road, but almost at once branch R onto grass. Cross a stile and begin/continue a lengthy perambulation along the Wansdyke. This is an ancient fortification which stretches for 50 miles through Wiltshire (you will already know this if you have walked the previous stage!). **Try not to walk along the top of the Wansdyke where possible to help prevent erosion.** In the course of your perambulation, cross several farm tracks, at each of which you drop down from the Wansdyke and negotiate a stile or metal kissing gate on each side of the track. After 1.2 miles (1.9 km) arrive at two barns; pass to the L of the first one, then go R and L over the (often extremely muddy) track leading to it to resume the path along the Wansdyke beside the second one.

Just over a mile (1.6 km) from the barn, having passed through two more gates en route and after a moderate ascent, arrive at a stony track leading to Manor Farm (per notice on gate on R). The official route continues beside the Wansdyke and is accessed via a gate opposite, but is often too

overgrown to follow. If this is the case, turn L and almost immediately R along another stony track parallel to the Wandsdyke for 100m, then branch R through a farm gate along a track for 20m to arrive at another gate. Turn L on the other side and continue your progress along the Wandsdyke. There are superb views on both sides along this stretch, which lasts for approx. one mile (1.6 km).

Finally, leave the Wandsdyke by going through a gate and turning L onto a track. Immediately arrive at a junction of tracks. Take the right-hand track going uphill, and after approx. 100m turn R through a gate into the Pewsey Downs Nature Reserve. (You leave the Wandsdyke Path behind at this point). Turn L through a gate at the end of the first field. Go in a broad semi-circle to the R along the crest of a ridge, passing through another gate as you go. Milk Hill, the highest point in Wiltshire at 295m (968ft) is to your L. After a third gate, go L in a tight semi-circle round the stunted trees and bushes on the shoulder of Milk Hill, then follow the contour on the other side to a gate. The Alton Barnes White Horse is 200m or so beyond this gate, but is not visible until the last moment due to folds in the hills.

Continue past the White Horse along the contour path. Ignore the fork to the R approximately 130m from Adams Grave at the top of Walkers Hill, and instead continue on the main path beside a low earthwork, with the whale-like shape of Knap Hill directly in front of you. After around 150m, veer L towards a metal kissing gate, with the car parking area at Knap Hill in your line of sight. Follow the well-beaten path through two more metal kissing gates to arrive at a final metal gate onto the Lockeridge to Alton Barnes road. The car parking area is on the other side.

MWW directions west to east – Knap Hill to Oare

Maps: OS Landranger 173, OS Explorer 157

Distance: 3 1/2 miles (5.6 km)

Walk through the car park and beyond the two large boulders at the end. After 100m, turn L through a clearly waymarked gate with a sign on it forbidding the flying of model aircraft; ignore the path that follows the fence on your L, and follow the path uphill to a gate in the middle of the fence on the far side of the field, with Knap Hill rearing up to your R. The path climbs more steeply on the other side of the gate but you are soon on top of a ridge of hills with arguably the best views of the whole MWW spread out beneath you to your R. The path goes through several fields

and is clearly waymarked. In the last of these, with Gopher Wood in front of you, turn half L in the direction indicated by a signpost and go over a stile, and then ahead along the edge of a field beside the wood, then L. Turn R over another stile to descend to a crossroad of tracks. (You join the White Horse Trail at this point).

Follow the clear green track straight ahead up the side of the field. This track is soon bordered by two earth banks. Go through the gate in the top L corner of the field, then immediately R through another gate into a large field. Walk round the edge of the field with fence to R. Go through another gate at the end of the field (you leave the White Horse Trail at this point), and cross the next field aiming for the far R corner. Go through the farm gate there and after about 50m, turn R through a sturdy wooden gate, then immediately L. Keep the fence to your L in sight, and after passing through some gorse bushes arrive at a farm gate (which was lying on the ground at the time of writing) near the corner of the field. From here the village of Oare is clearly visible below, with the brooding mass of the Giant's Grave, the next stage of the MWW, beyond. Continue in roughly the same direction to arrive at a bench by the fence on the far side. From here it is a steep descent R to the field below, where the incline slowly levels out to reach the lane into Oare. Turn L along this to arrive at the A345, then R along this to arrive at the White Hart, which is sadly now permanently closed.

MWW directions west to east – Oare to Wootton Rivers

Maps: OS Landranger 173, OS Explorer 157

Distance: 4.6 miles (7.4 km)

With your back to the White Hart pub, go R down the A345, turning L after 25 metres into Pound Lane. Go down this for 350m, well beyond where the houses end, and go through a gate on your L on a signposted footpath, joining the White Horse Trail in the process, to cross a field. Just beyond where the path reaches the other side, cross a stile into another field and begin the ascent of the Giants Grave; the gradient, gentle at first, gets steeper and steeper, but the views at the top are well worth the effort. Continue past the trig point along the gently undulating spine of the hill and go through a gate. Soon after, arrive at a metal kissing gate, dedicated to the memory of Mark Rendall of the Long Distance Walkers Association. (At this point, you leave the White Horse Trail). Here there is a choice of routes:

- i) the **official route** takes you to the R of the gate and past another gate to L very soon after. Stay close to the fence on your L initially, but you are eventually forced to leave it to go round clumps of gorse bushes and stunted trees in this area of open access land. Returning to the fence at the top of the area after this, you pass through a **gate** in the corner of the field.
Regrettably this route is now very overgrown, as the permissive path described below is much more popular.
- ii) **alternatively**, you can take a much more user-friendly permissive path which, having gone through the metal kissing gate, simply follows the right hand edge of the field beyond, soon arriving at the **gate** described above.

Continue with fence on your R into a small wooded area, emerging on the other side to a bench close to another gate, where you can pause to admire the view at your leisure. Pass through the gate and follow the path round to the L, with fence L. After approx. 300m, turn R downhill with a small copse to L and follow the track to the L; the route is well waymarked but you will have to be alert to see the signs! On arriving at woods at the bottom of the slope, turn R, with woods to your L, to arrive at a small car park by a road. On the other side of this road is the start of the well-named Mud Lane.

As an alternative to slipping and sliding along the well-named Mud Lane, it is possible to reach Wootton Rivers by taking quiet country roads, which also provide good views of Martinsell Hill. To do so, turn R on reaching the road above, and after approximately 0.6 miles (1 km) arrive at a junction to R (signposted New Mill and Milton Lilbourne). Do not go R but follow the road round to the L to pass East Wick Farm on your L. Approximately 0.7 miles (1.2km) after the junction, arrive at a T junction. Turn L here and after 50 metres or so arrive at the Royal Oak pub opposite.

If you wish to stick to the **official route**, make your way along Mud Lane, past three vast fields to your R, with a barn between the first and second. On reaching the edge of the third field, turn R down the edge of the fourth field, with hedge on R. However before doing so, it is worth making a small detour; if you continue along Mud Lane for perhaps 15m you will see, carved onto the end of a tree stump at head height to your L, the lugubrious face of the Green Man. Once back in the fourth field, follow the edge round to the L at the bottom and after 150m turn R down a green bridleway. This leads directly to Wootton Rivers. On reaching the metalled road, turn R and you will soon arrive at the Royal Oak pub on your L.

MWW directions west to east – Wootton Rivers to Wilton

Maps: OS Landranger 173 & 174, OS Explorer 157

Distance: 5.4 miles (8.6 km)

Turn L on coming out of the Royal Oak pub. Pass the village hall on your R en route to the Kennet & Avon Canal. Cross the bridge over the canal and turn L onto the towpath. Walk along the canal for approximately 4 ½ miles (7.2 km), passing three bridges over the canal, each accompanied by a lock, before reaching a fourth under the A346 at Burbage Wharf. Not long after this, the canal disappears into a tunnel (Bruce Tunnel). Here go R up steps and through a low tunnel under the railway, and then past a field and what used to be the Forest Hotel to R, to cross a minor road (Savernake Road). Continue along the path opposite, past houses to L and R, soon rejoining the towpath. After four more locks and a road bridge, the Crofton Pumping and Beam Engines station will be on your L, on the other side of the canal. To visit these, when open, cross the canal by the footbridge by the last lock.

At this point the MWW leaves the Kennet & Avon Canal by means of a footbridge to R, just past the pumping station opposite. Follow the path round to the R on the edge of a verdant meadow beside a small lake (Wilton Water) to R. Exit in the far R corner of the meadow onto a metalled road by a duck pond and turn L to arrive at the Swan Inn in Wilton on your R.

MWW directions west to east - Wilton to Ham

Maps: Landranger 174, OS Explorer 157 & 158

Distance: 7.9 miles (12.6 km)

Turn R out of the Swan Inn car park along the main street (signposted to Great Bedwyn, NOT Hollow Lane). Turn R after approx. 150m, signposted Tidcombe, Marten and Wexcombe, along a Roman road. On reaching the A338 after almost one mile (1.6 km), turn L and immediately R, signposted Marten. Pass Sir William Bentley Billiards on your L, and shortly afterwards, as the road bends R, take the track to L just past the letter box and notice board outside Rose Cottage. The hedge to R is soon replaced with an open field, and when the track bends R, go

through double metal farm gates on your L into a field, with hedge R. Continue along the edge of the field, then go through a gap and uphill to a tarmac road. Turn R here, and after 700m turn L uphill onto Rivar Down on a signposted byway.

Follow this for 1.3 miles (2 km) to another tarmac road (to Shalbourne). There are fine views from the track to the L. Go R uphill for a few metres to a junction with a side road, signposted Fosbury 2, and take the track which leads L off this side road after a few metres. This is Ashley Down. Follow this track (which is deeply rutted and can be overgrown) for just over a mile (1.6 km) to another tarmac road (to Ham). The fine views continue along this section, trees and hedges permitting. Cross the road and go straight on, signposted Buttermere 1, and after a few metres veer L onto a byway along the crest of Ham Hill (also deeply rutted). Follow this track for exactly a mile (1.6 km), until you reach a small metal gate in the fence approx. 25m to your L. Descend gently to the gate (which has "No footpath" notices to L and R) and pass through it. Follow the obvious path half L downhill, and go through another metal gate in an "empty" fence into the next field. Maintain direction downhill to a gate on the edge of a line of trees.

Turn L along the edge of the field to your L. At the corner, go R for a few metres, then L through the gap in the hedge. (This is not the official right of way as the landowner has shifted it to the west, presumably to minimise the space taken up by the path in the field you have just left). Turn R across the (second) field (the landowner leaves a broad path to follow through any crops) to arrive at a wooden post next to an information board about the Ham Estate.

Turn L onto a wide, stony track to arrive at a tarmac road after half a mile (0.8 km), at the end of the second field. Turn R here and follow the road into the village of Ham, where the MWW ends outside the Crown and Anchor pub (which is now an Indian restaurant).