

MWW website directions – stage 8, Devizes Wharf Centre to A361 Shepherd's Shore

Maps: OS Landranger 173, OS Explorer 157

Distance: 6.3 miles (10.1 km)

West to east

Walk to the L of the Canal Museum and Shop in the Wharf Centre to join the towpath and pass under the bridge over the canal. 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 dog walkers. When this reaches a metalled road, with the entrance to Roundway House to your L, cross it and continue. When the track arrives at a house, go L through a gap between hedges, with the house on R, and along the right hand edge of a field. Go down crude steps onto a metalled road and turn L, then sharp L, on it, to reach a stile on the R very soon after the bend. There is a good view from here of the Devizes Millennium White Horse to the R. Go over this and another stile soon after, then uphill along the left hand side of a large field, passing to R of a pylon as you do so. On reaching the gap by the gate at the top, turn L along the metalled road. This soon peters out and becomes a stony track. Where this goes sharp R, there is a parking area to L.

Here you can go either 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 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 is an information board about the Battle of Roundway, which was fought on this spot.

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 in the process. 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 it is possible to go through the metal farm gate onto the track beyond and turn L along it. However this can get very muddy and churned up, so the official route turns L along the inside of the fence at the corner until reaching a metal gate to R. Go through this onto the track and turn L. Branch R on arriving at a T junction. After 500 metres, turn L at the turning/parking area along a metalled (but rough) road. This soon passes a house (Hill Cottage) and some farm buildings on the R. After the next large barn on R, the road narrows and becomes 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 on a signposted footpath. Veer slightly to the R, aiming for a wooden post between a clump of 6 trees and a single tree, and go past two more wooden waymarked posts, heading directly towards two radio masts on Morgan's Hill which are a constant landmark on this part of the MWW. At the third post, a clear cut (literally!) path appears before you with 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 on R. On entering the field beyond, **the official route** follows the path through the earthworks and then to the R on the other side. This is 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 radio masts move to your R and then behind you. On reaching the corner of the field, go R through another gate. Walk uphill with fence to the L and radio masts on your R. When you reach a **fence corner**, turn L onto a narrow path downhill to another gate, with the Wansdyke to your R.

Alternatively, you can take a short cut by walking along the Wansdyke on exiting the golf course, 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 radio masts, rather than in an extended arc to their L.

Follow this path as it winds R, then L and R again in harmony with the Wansdyke. Enter a small copse and cross two byways and the small green triangle between them on the other side to go through a metal gate. Walk along (or beside) the Wansdyke the length of two fields to arrive at the A361.

East to west

Cross the A361 to the L of a line of trees opposite. Go through a metal gate and walk along (or beside) the Wansdyke, an ancient fortification which stretches for 50 miles through Wiltshire, for the length of two fields. Go through a metal gate, across two byways and the small green triangle between them, and pass through a copse beyond. Go through a gate and follow the path beyond as it winds L, then R and L again, in harmony with the Wansdyke. Soon two radio masts on Morgan's Hill come into view; these are a constant landmark on this part of the MWW. Pass through yet another gate and go up a rise to arrive at a fence corner in the field which hosts these masts. Turn R and walk up the side of the field, with fence to R and the masts to L, then descend to a gate in the corner. Turn L after the gate, with radio masts still to L, and follow the contour of the hill through another gate to rejoin the Wansdyke beyond the radio masts. Walk beside it until you arrive at a break in it to L, beyond which is a **gate** giving access to the North Wilts Golf Club.

Alternatively, you can take a shortcut by continuing to follow the Wansdyke, with radio masts to R, exiting the field which hosts them via a gate nestling between the ramparts of the Wansdyke, and walk along the top of it beyond to arrive at the **gate** into the North Wilts Golf Club mentioned above. This route takes walkers directly along the Wansdyke and to the L of the radio masts rather than in an extended arc to their R.

Turn sharp L onto a footpath (which is also a bridleway) once on the golf course and follow the clear cut (literally!) path downhill with fence to L and clumps of trees and the golf course to R. On reaching open ground, head in the direction of the club house past three waymarked wooden posts, keeping a wary eye out for flying golf balls, to arrive at a metalled road. Cross this and go down the byway opposite. Turn R at the crossroad of tracks after approx. ½ mile (0.8 km). The track widens into a metalled road on reaching a large barn to L and the surface improves marginally. Continue past more farm buildings and a house (Hill Cottage) to L, taking the left-hand fork just beyond the latter. When the road bends to L at a turning/parking area, go R up a track to R of a metal farm gate. After 500m take the bridleway to L with fences on both sides. On reaching a metal gate on R, go through this and continue in the same direction but inside the field. At the corner turn R with fence L and go through the metal kissing gate into the next field. This is the site of Oliver's Castle hill-fort, which is on Roundway Down.

After passing an English Nature information board about the Down, and a pointed wooden post with "R5" carved into it, follow the ramparts of the fort in a wide semi-circle to the R, with wide-ranging views to R, to arrive at an information board on the Battle of Roundway, which was fought on this spot. Go past the board, with fence L, and either take the metal kissing gate to L soon after and continue in the same direction with fences on both sides, or continue past it with fence L and (soon) a copse to R. Both paths are parallel and come out in a parking area next to the copse, but it is debatable which one is muddier in wet weather. Turn L out of the parking area (i.e. away from the copse) and immediately R down a stony track. The track becomes a metalled road after a while and starts to go downhill, soon reaching a metal farm gate to R with a gap next to it.

Go through the gap and down the R side of the field beyond, passing to L of a pylon. Cross the stile at the bottom, and another soon after to arrive at a metalled road. Turn L along this, and at the sharp bend to R immediately after, look to your L to get a good view of the Devizes Millennium White Horse. A few metres after the bend, go up crude steps to R into a field, and walk along its left hand side. On reaching a gap between hedges, with a line of houses to L, turn R along a track. On reaching a metalled road, with the entrance to Roundway House to R, continue in the same direction to enter Quakers Walk, a pleasant tree-lined avenue popular with dog walkers. Pass through the gap beside the large iron gates at its end and cross the bridge over the Kennet and Avon canal in front of you. Turn R on the other side and walk along the towpath, passing under the first bridge. Just beyond is the Wharf Centre, with its Canal Museum and Shop, where this stage ends. Walk to the L of the Museum building to arrive at the (paying) car park in the Wharf Centre beyond. Leave the towpath to the R of the Museum to arrive at the (paying) car park.