

2014/2015

Welcome to Wiltshire!

We are delighted to welcome you to our beautiful county – a land of ancient history, natural beauty and attractions galore.

There are a multitude of things to see and do in Wiltshire – we cannot cover them all on paper but we have selected highlights to showcase the length and breadth of the county's offering.

VisitWiltshire Ltd was established in August 2011 and is the official Tourist Board for Wiltshire. It is a private sector membership organisation representing over 550 members. VisitWiltshire's priority is to grow the county's Visitor Economy by raising awareness of the destination and generating additional tourism visits and spend. Wiltshire's Visitor Economy currently generates an estimated £1.4billion and supports over 27,000 jobs.

Please take a few moments to visit our website, read our blogs or connect with us via social media.

- www.visitwiltshire.co.uk
- www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/blog

Should you require further information on any of the attractions or areas, please do not hesitate to contact us:

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With kind regards

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A county 10,000 years in the making...







Avebury Stone Circle

World-famous Stonehenge

Silbury Hill

Since Wiltshire's story began some 10,000 years ago, it has amassed a treasure-trove of attractions taking you on a journey through time from Stone Age to present day. Probably the most iconic of Wiltshire's sites is Stonehenge which, to this day, remains a mysterious, monolithic monument known as a site of unique importance. Stonehenge's orientation on the rising and setting sun has always been one of its most remarkable features, but why it was built in this way remains a mystery to this day.

The new world-class visitor centre at Stonehenge is now open, housing museum-quality permanent and temporary exhibitions, plus a spacious shop and café. Entrance to Stonehenge is managed through timed tickets, and advance booking is strongly advised. Pre-booking is the only way to guarantee entry on the day and at the time of your choice; there is limited walk-up availability on the day.

Further north is <u>Avebury</u>, the largest stone circle in the world. Dating from around 4,500 years ago, the stones form a huge ring a quarter of a mile across and enclose part of the village. Avebury is the focus of an amazing cluster of ancient monuments. Follow an 'avenue' partially marked by stones that originally led to The Sanctuary; visit West Kennet Long Barrow, one of Britain's largest Stone Age burial sites; or gaze across the fields towards the giant mount of Silbury Hill which stands over 130 feet high.

Wiltshire is also home to the vast Iron Age hill fort of <u>Old Sarum</u> – the original site of the beautiful cathedral city of Salisbury. It was re-used by Romans, Saxons and Normans before growing into one of the most flourishing settlements in medieval England. Other Iron Age hill forts can be found around the county, at Battlesbury Camp, Cley Hill, Bratton Castle in west Wiltshire, Bradbury Castle near Swindon, and Oldbury Castle near Calne.

During the industrial revolution, the <u>Kennet & Avon Canal</u> was created linking Bristol to Reading by water. The canal, although no longer used for industrial reasons, is still buzzing with activity and is the perfect spot for a stroll or cycle along the tow path.

Wiltshire also boasts a number of museums that offer the chance to unearth the secrets of this historic county. The archaeology collections at Wiltshire Museum in Devizes, for instance, are among the finest in Britain. Displays feature collections excavated from the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site, including finds from Bush Barrow – described as the Crown Jewels of the 'King of Stonehenge'. The Salisbury Museum also has archaeology collections of outstanding national importance.



Ancient Market Towns and Beautiful Villages

Wiltshire is blessed with a fantastic variety of historic market towns and stunning picturesque villages, each one with something to offer. Here are a sample of Wiltshire's beautiful market towns and villages.

Amesbury



Nestling within a loop of the River Avon alongside the A303, just 1½ miles from Stonehenge, historic <u>Amesbury</u> is a destination not to be missed. With recent evidence of a large settlement from 8820BC and a breath-taking Mesolithic collection, Amesbury History Centre will amaze visitors with its story of the town where history began.

Bradford on Avon

The unspoilt market town of <u>Bradford on Avon</u> offers a mix of delightful shops, restaurants, hotels and bed and breakfasts lining the narrow streets, not to mention a weekly market on Thursdays (8am-4pm). Still a natural focus at the centre of the town, the ancient bridge retains two of its 13th century arches and offers a fabulous view of the hillside above the town - dotted with the old weavers' cottages – and the river bank flanked by 19th century former cloth mills.



Calne



<u>Calne</u> evolved during the 18th and 19th centuries with the wool industry. Blending the old with the new, much of the original Calne is located along the River Marden where some of the historic buildings still remain. There is also the recently restored Castlefields Park with nature trails and cycle path easily accessible from the town centre.

Castle Combe

Set within the stunning Wiltshire Cotswolds, <u>Castle Combe</u> is a classically quaint English village. Often referred to as the 'prettiest village in England', it has even been featured regularly on the big screen – most recently in Hollywood blockbuster 'The Wolfman' and Stephen Spielberg's 'War Horse'. Visitors can also stop by the Corsham market on Tuesdays (8am-3pm) which is nearby.





Chippenham

Chippenham prospered thanks to its location on the Wilts & Berks Canal, the London to Bristol stage coach route, and the Great Western Railway. This historic riverside market town houses a wealth of period buildings, the Museum & Heritage Centre, the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre and a variety of shops and restaurants. A little over an hour's journey from central London, Chippenham offers an ideal centre for relaxation and exploration of rural Wiltshire and the Cotswolds.



Corsham



Corsham is a quiet, unspoilt town where peacocks wander freely around the streets! Thanks to the wool trade and the quarrying of golden Bath stone, Corsham developed from its Saxon origins into a prosperous town. The historic High Street consists mainly of properties from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, including old inns, an elegant town hall and the stately Corsham Court. The town also has a weekly market, held on Tuesdays.

<u>Cricklade</u>

<u>Cricklade</u> is the only Wiltshire town on the young River Thames. The wide high street has some interesting specialty shops and many places to eat. In 2011 the town was awarded RH Champion of Champions in the Britain in Bloom competition, while North Meadow National Nature Reserve is renowned for its wild Snakeshead Fritillaries.



Devizes



This historic market town has a colourful medieval past and a rich Georgian heritage. <u>Devizes</u> has kept its character, with many small, family-run businesses and a good old-fashioned market bustling with fresh food, crafts and curios. The town stands on the Kennet & Avon Canal and is home to both the Wiltshire Museum and Wadworth Brewery.



Lacock



Lacock is one of Wiltshire's real gems, with its winding streets, beautiful abbey and houses dating back to the 13th century, all combining to create a stunning backdrop which has starred in a number of film classics – from Harry Potter to Pride and Prejudice. With quality accommodation, atmospheric dining options, the stunning abbey and Fox Talbot Museum, once the home of the pioneer of photography William Fox Talbot, Lacock is the idea base to spend a few days exploring the area.

Malmesbury

Known as the "Queen of Hilltop Towns", <u>Malmesbury</u> is England's oldest borough with a rich history over 1000 years. And, with a skyline dominated by the imposing Norman Abbey, many of the town's highlights – from the 15th century Market Cross and the Old Courtroom and Almshouses, to the narrow medieval streets, quaint alleyways and the riverwalk – can be easily discovered on foot. For market lovers, there is also a farmers' market on the second and fourth Saturday of each month (9am-1pm).



Marlborough



The handsome old staging post of Marlborough has evolved into a stylish and cosmopolitan town with its own chic café culture, offering the discerning visitor a unique blend of attractions and facilities. The High Street is one of the widest in Europe, lined on both sides with characterful old buildings housing an array of high quality shops.

Melksham

The town of Melksham evolved at a ford across the River Avon and was once part of a vast royal forest that stretched as far as Chippenham and was a favourite hunting ground of Tudor Kings. In the 19th century, the town boasted the discovery of Saline and Chalybeate springs, and an attempt was made in 1815 to develop the town as a spa that would rival nearby Bath.





<u>Pewsey</u>

Archaeological digs around the village of Pewsey indicate that there has been a settlement here since the 6th century, but it was the opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal in 1810, and the railway in 1862 that transformed Pewsey into a bustling community. A quaint village that retains its charming character, Pewsey is a hotspot for crop circle enthusiasts. The Pewsey Vale is recognised as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is extremely popular with the outdoor enthusiast.



Royal Wootton Bassett



Royal Wootton Bassett offers a wide range of independent shops including a greengrocer, award winning butcher, a deli, plus items for the home from the ironmonger and Shabby Chic shops. Since being granted the 'Royal' prefix in November 2011 the town has continued to build on its strong traditional values with a welcoming, friendly atmosphere.

Salisbury

Superbly situated in southern England's rural heartland, medieval <u>Salisbury</u> is the perfect fusion of ancient and modern. Salisbury lies at the confluence of five rivers and the awe-inspiring sight of the Cathedral described as 'Britain's best view'. Salisbury is bursting with things on offer for visitors, from first class arts venues such as the Salisbury Playhouse and great shopping to museums, stunning gardens and a huge range of eating options; not to mention a market on Tuesdays and Saturdays (8am-4pm).



Swindon



Thanks to the arrival of the Great Western Railway in the mid-19th century, <u>Swindon</u> developed from a sleepy market town into a hive of industry. Today, visitors can enjoy the quiet courtyards, traditional shops and pubs of the Old Town alongside the excellent shopping on offer in the new town centre, not to mention two of Swindon's main attractions: STEAM Museum and the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet.



Tisbury



The largest village in the Nadder Valley, <u>Tisbury</u> has been a settlement for over 2,000 years and offers an excellent choice of independent shops. It is a great base from which to explore picturesque villages such as Hindon and the Donheads, local towns such as Wilton and Shaftesbury, and attractions such as Longleat, Stourhead and Old Wardour Castle.

Trowbridge

Trowbridge is Wiltshire's county town, with a Market Charter dating back to the year 1200. Situated in the heart of west Wiltshire, the town has ancient roots, having been first mentioned in the Domesday Book as 'Straburg', and was once the centre of West of England woollen cloth production - Trowbridge Museum's collections focus on this fascinating heritage. The town has a rich array of independent retailers, national chains and high quality markets.



Warminster



Warminster is a warm and welcoming historic town with lots to do for all the family. The town boasts many historic attractions as well as nature trails, meadows and grassy marshlands, all of which provide plenty of opportunities for cycling and walking activities, as well as water sports at the nearby Shearwater Lake. It is also the nearest town to Longleat - home of the UK's first ever Safari Park and one of Britain's most impressive examples of high Elizabethan architecture.

Westbury

Set within a striking landscape nestling below Salisbury Plain and overlooked by the famous Westbury White Horse, Westbury offers access to Wiltshire's glorious countryside and opportunities for walking, cycling, pony trekking, kite flying, hang gliding and paragliding. Westbury is exceptionally well positioned for all UK major road and railway connections with the mainline railway station offering links to London, Wales and the whole of the south west of England.





Spectacular Countryside

Wiltshire is very lucky to have not one, not two but three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – not to mention a section of the New Forest National Park and over 8,200 footpaths waiting to be discovered. Easy to explore, yet off the beaten track, Wiltshire's scenery is as beautiful as it is varied, ranging from rolling chalk downland to gentle Cotswold hills; from a high grassy plateau to acres of ancient woodland.







Big skies and Broad Horizons

At the heart of the county lies the vast expanse of the <u>Salisbury Plain</u>. In addition to being a military training area, the land is home to some unique wildlife including the recently reintroduced Great Bustard – Wiltshire's county bird. Within the Plain also lies the abandoned village of Imber, which opens at various times during the year.

Havens for Wildlife

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust manages 37 nature reserves across the county, covering a wide variety of natural habitats from bog and wetland to chalk grassland and woodland. The National Nature Reserve at North Meadow, near Cricklade is renowned for its spectacular display of Snakeshead Fritillaries during April, while West Woods at Marlborough and Grovely Woods near Wilton are carpeted with beautiful bluebells in May.

Wiltshire's White Horses

Among the many characteristic images of Wiltshire are its <u>white horses</u>, of which eight can still be seen today across the centre of the county. The oldest, at Westbury, has a history dating back at least 300 years. The most recent, at Devizes, was cut into the chalk to commemorate the Millennium in the year 2000.

Cycling, Walking and Horse Riding

Wherever you are in the county, Wiltshire's miles of ancient drove roads and uncrowded country lanes are the perfect way to explore this quintessentially English landscape. A series of cycle routes range from short hops to long-distance trails – of which the 160-mile Wiltshire Cycleway is an excellent example. Elsewhere around the county you can sample one of several National Cycle Routes, or experience part of the National Byway. Walkers will love Wiltshire too, with the opportunity to revel in part of the Ridgeway, a classic National Trail, or take to the Thames Path, which follows this most famous of rivers from its source in the Cotswolds towards London.

Whether galloping over rolling chalk downs or hacking through beautiful woodland, horse riders are also well served, with plenty of spectacular routes to choose from.



Arts, culture and industrial heritage

From international events and award-winning museums to theatrical events and independent galleries, Wiltshire is rich in both arts and culture.

The <u>Ageas Salisbury International Arts Festival</u> takes place each year for two weeks at the end of May/beginning of June. The festival brings with it classical and world music, theatre, dance, visual arts and more.

For two weeks in the summer, the <u>International Street Festival and Carnival</u> comes to Devizes. The festival includes a confetti battle and carnival parade as well as lots of street theatre.

Anyone with an eye for the arts should head to <u>Fisherton Mill</u>. Here lies a treasure trove of amazing artwork in the largest independent art gallery in the South West. See on-site artists in their studios and discover beautiful handmade cards and jewellery for sale. In the heart of the Wylye Valley is <u>The Black Barn Gallery</u> housed in a beautifully restored barn.

In Bradford on Avon, the <u>Wiltshire Music Centre</u> hosts regular concerts in its 300 seater hall attracting internationally renowned musicians including the City of London Sinfonia, jazz legend Courtney Pine and famous guitarist John Williams.

Wiltshire is also a country with an intruiging industrial heritage. Traditionally a very agricultural county, Wiltshire's main development during the Industrial Revolution came from the cloth industry, the development of the <u>Kennet & Avon Canal</u> and later the Great Western Railway. Some of these sites can still be visited today and help preserve the history of the area.



The Caen Locks of the Kennet and Avon Canal



Steam Museum of the Great Western Railway

The Great Western Railway (GWR) was designed by famous engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel to link Bristol and London. Swindon played a large part in the GWR and housed the Swindon Railway Works which was used to repair and maintain the network. The works remained open until 1986 and since this time the site has been redeveloped housing STEAM-the-Museum of the Great Western Railway and the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Swindon.

Other museums and sites well worth visiting include the <u>Trowbridge Museum</u>, <u>Wilton Windmill</u> and <u>Wadworth Brewery</u>.



Stately homes and gardens

Wiltshire is home to a world-class collection of gardens and stately homes, and its sweeping landscapes are studded with horticultural gems.

<u>Stourhead's</u> harmonic vistas - especially the classic view of the Turf Bridge, lake and Pantheon on the opposite shore - seem to epitomise the county as a whole. This outstanding stately home, one of Wiltshire's finest 18th century landscaped gardens, is a delicious mix of formal and informal features. And it's not just the gardens that draw visitors, for at Stourhead's heart lies a Palladian mansion filled with glittering furnishings and objects d'art.

At <u>Bowood House and Gardens</u>, master landscaper 'Capability' Brown created a flowing mix of woodlands and lawns sloping down to a lake, overlooked by the formal terraces of an imposing stately home. Bowood has an all-round appeal, for set amongst its woods is an imaginatively designed Adventure Playground for younger visitors.

<u>Longleat</u> is a beautiful stately home in Wiltshire and also attracts a family audience. The house, seat of the Marquess of Bath, is surrounded by magnificent grounds that again bear the mark of industrious 18th century landscaper 'Capability' Brown.

<u>Wilton House</u> is another stately home in Wiltshire. Here, the magnificent 450-year-old house – seen in films such as Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice - stands amongst parklands, woodlands and water gardens.

<u>Lydiard House and Park</u> near Swindon is a Palladian jewel. With its formal parkland, pasture, beautiful woodland walks, avenues and lake, it still retains the grand design of its 18th century heyday.

Mompesson House in Salisbury's Cathedral Close is a Queen Anne-style with a small, courtyard garden. It was also used in the film Sense and Sensibility.

Make sure you also visit The Peto Garden, a little corner of Italy at <u>Iford Manor</u>, near Bradford on Avon.

And don't forget that many other beautiful Wiltshire gardens are open to the public on selected dates throughout the year through The National Gardens Scheme.



The lake and temple at Stourhead House



The gardens at Bowood House



Shopping in and eating out

Wiltshire is home to not only some great outlet shopping but many towns and villages blessed with independent shops, making it ideal for a UK shopping break! A visit to McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Swindon is a must for any shopaholic as here you'll find over 90 top named stores including John Lewis Home, Hugo Boss and LK Bennett, all with reductions of up to 60% off the RRP.



Salisbury is host to a thriving scene of independent shops from boutiques through to specialist hobby shops. It also has the Old George Mall, Cross Keys and Maltings shopping areas, the twice weekly market and three miles outside of the city is <u>Wilton Shopping Village</u> with its outlet shops; not to mention the Christmas Market which is now in its third year.

Marlborough, Devizes, Bradford on Avon and Corsham all have a unique array of independent shops often in historic buildings and make the perfect locations for picking up something special.

McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Swindon

County town Trowbridge hosts the Shires Shopping Centre with its high street stores and Trowbridge Museum, whilst Chippenham retains its historic roots with its market that still comes every Friday and Saturday to The Shambles.

For a unique gift visit one of the independent shops in Lacock or the craft village at <u>Studley</u> Grange and don't forget the array of markets that Wiltshire has to offer too!

Let us tempt you with gourmet dining at one of our restaurants, a latte in one of our cafés, join some of our friendly locals for some traditional English fare in our pubs or a cream tea in one of our tea rooms and sample the local Wiltshire food.

Wiltshire is proud to have award-winning dining with three Michelin starred restaurants at some of our prestigious hotels, as well as AA rosettes for fine dining.

Head to one of our Wiltshire farmers' markets for fresh produce directly from the supplier, or perhaps even improve your culinary skills at a cookery school.

We are also lucky to have some fine vineyards and breweries in Wiltshire, including <u>Wadworth</u> <u>Brewery</u> famed for its 6X beer. Why not also sample local cider and apple juice too – often found in our local farmers' markets.



Getting here

By Road

The north of Wiltshire is conveniently accessible from London or Heathrow Airport by using the M4. The M3 connects London to the A30 and A303 roads, which serve the south of Wiltshire. From the Midlands and the North, the best route is by the M5 to the Almondsbury interchange near Bristol and then into Wiltshire by the M4, A4 or A36.

Self-drive classic car hire – available from Vintage Classics in Melksham – is a great way to explore the county. From the beautiful city of Salisbury to the rural idyll of Castle Combe and the World Heritage Site of Stonehenge and Avebury, there can be few finer ways to view this mystical and romantic area than from a classic vehicle. Alternatively travel in style with Gray's Retro Car Hire Ltd for a nostalgic drive through Wiltshire.

To help plan your journey once in Wiltshire visit www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk

By Coach

There are regular long-distance coach services from many parts of England to Chippenham, Marlborough, Salisbury, Swindon and other Wiltshire towns. Visit www.nationalexpress.com to view timetable information.

By Rail

Fast and regular Inter-City services as follows:

- From London (Paddington) to Bath and Bristol serve Swindon (55 mins) and Chippenham (70 mins) in the north of Wiltshire, and Great Bedwyn (90 mins).
- From London (Waterloo), the West Country trains stop at Salisbury (90 mins) and Tisbury (103 mins).
- The Bristol to Weymouth and Southampton lines call at Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge, Westbury, Warminster and Salisbury for visitors from the Midlands and the North.
- Popular tourist attractions, such as Stonehenge, can be reached from London by rail services to Swindon and Salisbury respectively where connecting bus services are available.

For National Rail Enquiries, anywhere in the UK, call Local Rate: 08457 484950 (UK only). Alternatively, visit www.nationalrail.co.uk to view timetable information.

By Air

The following airports are all within easy reach of Wiltshire:

London Heathrow
Southampton
Cardiff

Exeter
Bournemouth

London Gatwick
Bristol



By Sea

Car ferries operate from Hook of Holland, Cherbourg, Caen, Le Havre, St. Malo and Bilbao to Harwich, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Southampton or Poole. Apart from Harwich, all are within one to three hours' drive of Wiltshire.

For more information visit <u>www.posl.com</u> or <u>www.brittanyferries.co.uk</u> or www.condorferries.com

Airport and Seaport Transfers

If you need transfers to or from an airport or seaport, contact one of the following companies who will be happy to help:

- · City Cabs Salisbury www.citycabssalisbury.co.uk
- Spire Travel <u>www.spiretravel.co.uk</u>
- · Salisbury and District Value Cars www.salisbury-valuecars.co.uk

To help you plan your journey to Wiltshire visit www.transportdirect.info