

Heytesbury and Salisbury Plain



A varied walk with extensive horizons, exposed to the elements on the southern perimeter of Salisbury Plain. Setting out from Heytesbury the route soon ascends the massive chalk plateau. The Imber Range Perimeter Path takes you past the Iron Age Knook Barrow and Knook Castle. As the route descends into the Wylde Valley, Great Ridge Wood monopolises the horizon before you reach charming Upton Lovell and on to Heytesbury – whose main street houses a delightful 13th century church and interesting 'jailhouse'.



WILTSHIRE TOURISM

The walk

1 Start

Begin at Heytesbury, ST927426. Leave the village on the old A36, walking 500m east. As you reach the new A36 cross to its northern side. Continue on the pavement, bearing L with the Chitterne road (B390). After 100 yds take the first L up a tarmac lane (ST936425). On reaching the concrete road, stay on the path to the L. You emerge opposite a green corrugated barn, (ST938432) – cross the concrete road and walk to the L of the barn. Follow round the top of the Coombe (Dunscombe) and then drop down slightly to the R to take a stile and gate. Once through the gate, continue across a number of fields with the fence on your L until you reach Willis Field Barn (now a house). Cross between the new house and paddock, and turn L at the stile. Once you have climbed up around Dunscombe with your back to the Wylde Valley you can look ahead across

Salisbury Plain. From the stile turn L and walk for 1km to a T-junction and Knook Barrow.

2 3.9km/2½ miles

Meeting the unsurfaced track (ST953445), with an Imber Range Perimeter Path (IRPP) signpost, turn R and keep on this track heading east. You have now joined the IRPP with its distinctive field gun logo on the signpost. Under no circumstances should you venture off this track into the danger area. At this point there are spectacular views to the west of the prominent chalk hills around Warminster, Cley Hill in the distance and Scratchbury the nearest. A further 500 yds on, with Iron Age Knook Castle visible in the near distance across the grass field to the R, and standing earthworks of the Romano-British village to your L, keep to the track and climb up from the dip, following the IRPP signs to

ST969448. Keeping the fence line tight on your R, pass close by the top end of a long belt of trees. Cross the road and continue on a steady descent for 2km to Chitterne.

3 7.7km/4¾ miles

At the road (ST987439), turn L then cross to walk on the R-hand side on intermittent pavements. The Kings Arms Pub is on the L after 250 yds. From the Kings Arms, turn right on to the Codford road. After 1km take a footpath over the stile on the R (ST984431), cross Chitterne Brook, take the stile on the L near the parish boundary stones and enter the long field. Pass through the field gate near the windpump, and across the next field to the lower L-hand side of a belt of trees, go through a field gate and on to the tarmac track. Just before the next belt of trees (ST974421), turn R up the steep field edge brideway.

Bear R after the first gate, then follow a succession of metal brideway gates for 1.2km. Back up on the higher ground and across to the R is the best view of an Iron Age field system. A short way ahead there was an authorised diversion of the public rights of way network in 1999. The alteration may not appear yet on your OS map, but the new route is clearly marked with signposts. At the top of the spur turn L for 50 yds, then R, and continue west on the newly diverted path for approximately 900 yds (straight across at the first junction and onwards to a T-junction at ST954423). Hidden in the trees is Upton Great Barrow.

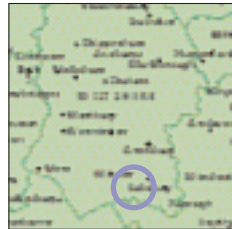
4 13km/8miles

At the T-junction, turn L to follow the track straight downhill for one mile to meet the A36 road. Cross the A36 with great care and continue towards Upton Lovell. Bear R at the first road junction, then follow the road round to the R, keep R at an old horse chestnut tree, continue north-west past (or into!) the Prince Leopold pub on the L. Keep straight ahead to the end of this road, then through a metal bridlegate and along the field edge path towards Knook village, which was once a Roman Camp. Outside the small Norman Knook church (ST938418), cross the road and keep

ahead on a footpath. After around 300 yds fork R, keeping on the northern side of the river Wylde, and after a further 500 yds along this footpath you arrive at the old A36 once more. Turn L for Heytesbury and back to the start.

POINTS OF INTEREST & LOCAL INFORMATION

- Knook Barrow is an unchambered Long Barrow, later used by the Romans
- Knook Castle, one mile east of Knook Barrow, is believed to be an Iron Age fort of 3½ acres
- Upton Great Barrow is a magnificent bell barrow with banks outside the ditch
- Knook Church is mainly Norman but stones from a Saxon building have been re-used in the present building, which was restored in the 1870s
- St Peter and St Paul Church in Heytesbury dates from the 13th century but is much restored. There is a fine 16th century stonemason. The pillars of the choir arcade are embellished with Purbeck marble in the style of Salisbury Cathedral. (SU907433)
- Siegfried Sassoon, the First World War poet, made Heytesbury House his home in the 1920s, and stayed there until his death in 1967. The house, partly rebuilt in 1784, stands in a park of 95 acres



IS THIS WALK FOR YOU?

Terrain Quiet lanes, field paths, tracks and roads, moderate hill

Stiles 3

Suitable for
Average walkers

PLANNING

Start/parking

ST927426 Plenty of parking at the start in a cul-de-sac just down from the village, or along the wide street in Heytesbury.

Nearest town

Warminster

Refreshments Kings Arms pub, Chitterne, Prince Leopold pub, Upton Lovell, also Village Stores, Angel Coaching Inn and Red Lion pub, Heytesbury

Public toilets The pubs above

Public transport

Bus Service X4 runs hourly (Salisbury, through Warminster to Bath). Mon-Sat only. For further details contact Wiltshire Bus Line tel 08457 090899

MAPS

Ordnance Survey Explorer 143 Warminster & Trowbridge

ACCOMMODATION

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