

North Wessex Downs AONB

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) includes some of England's finest and most ancient landscapes - from chalk downland and river valleys to arable farmland, ancient woodland and world-famous historic sites. The AONB is ideal for walkers, cyclists and riders to enjoy panoramic views along open chalk escarpments, as well as rights of way through woodland and alongside rivers and parts of the Kennet and Avon Canal. Visitors can follow routes that include the Ridgeway National Trail, the White Horse Trail and the Wayfarer's Walk, taking in attractive rural towns and villages that offer opportunities to enjoy local produce and hospitality. For further information about the North Wessex Downs AONB, please visit

www.northwessexdowns.org.uk

This is part of a series of walks in the North Wessex Downs AONB that can be accessed by public bus from Swindon.

Transport options

From Swindon:

- Thamesdown 24 (no service on Sundays and Public Holidays)
- Thamesdown 19 (Sundays only)
- Thamesdown 11 passes near to start of walk
- Stagecoach 70, Thamesdown 16, 30, 46, 46A, 47 & 48 pass near to main entrance of Coate Water Country Park

From Chiseldon:

- Wilts & Dorset X5 Chiseldon to Swindon, via Queens Drive
- Stagecoach 70 Chiseldon to Swindon, via Queens Drive (no service on Sundays and Public Holidays)
- Stagecoach 71 (Sundays only)

Ordnance Survey map: OS Explorer 169

Start point grid reference SU 163828

Refreshments:

Chiseldon: pubs, a hotel, shop/Post Office, garage with café outlet and kiosk near to bus stop

Designed by Wessex Print Centre 01672 563189

For the latest public transport information: www.traveline.info
☎ 0871 200 22 33

Photography: Paths - Jeremy Wingfield
Cottage - Elaine Jones

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The Countryside Code

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under control
- Consider other people



The Railway Path

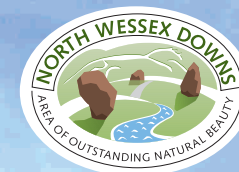
For more information about the Swindon to Marlborough Railway Path contact:

The Friends of the Railway Path

www.friendsofthepath.org.uk

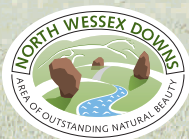
Email: Dick.Millard@friendsofthepath.org.uk

WALKS IN THE NORTH WESSEX DOWNS



Path by Coate Water

COATE WATER TO CHISELDON (Linear)



3 miles/4.8 km

Suitable for most walkers

No stiles

Slight gradients on parts of walk

Walk directions

1. From Swindon town centre, alight at the Broome Manor Lane bus stop on Marlborough Road. Cross the road and walk along Broome Manor Lane (road signed Hodson). After about half a mile, the Lane crosses Broome Manor Golf Course.
2. Walk straight ahead, ignoring a waymarked path on the left. Instead, keep to the path beside a low hedge, running parallel to the road. Follow this path for about 200 yards, ignoring another waymarked path on the left. Just before the road bends sharply to the left, take the path on the left over a small wooden bridge into Coate Water Country Park. This path meanders through woodland for about a third of a mile, with good views of the lake (to the left).
3. On reaching a junction of paths, ignore the footbridge over the lake, and the path on the right. Instead, continue straight ahead along the path signed Hodson and Chiseldon. The path is part of the Timberland Trail for walkers and cyclists. Cross the M4 Motorway via the concrete helter skelter bridge. Liddington Hill is clearly visible at this point. Follow the tarmac path through an area of oak woodland (noted for its bluebells in late Spring).
4. After about a mile, the path merges with the trackbed of the Swindon to Marlborough Railway Line. The railway line closed in 1962, but the trackbed has been restored for use by walkers and cyclists, and forms part of the Sustrans National Cycle Network. Almost immediately, turn left off the railway path, to follow a footpath signed Chiseldon. Follow this path downhill to a kissing gate, then across a field to the far left-hand corner, and another kissing gate.
5. Turn right along a path to a junction of paths at Washpool. Continue ahead along a narrow tarmac path, bearing left gently uphill to a flight of steps. Climb the steps (there is a step-free path on the right) to emerge at Church Street.

6. At the end of Church Street, turn right along the High Street to reach the bus stop on the corner of the High Street and Station Road. If time allows, instead of turning right at the end of Church Street, walk straight ahead into Butts Road. The Chiseldon Museum www.chiseldonlhg.org.uk is located about 200 yards on the right.

An alternative return route to Swindon would be to retrace your steps to point 3, then cross the bridge to walk around Coate Water to the main entrance on Marlborough Road.



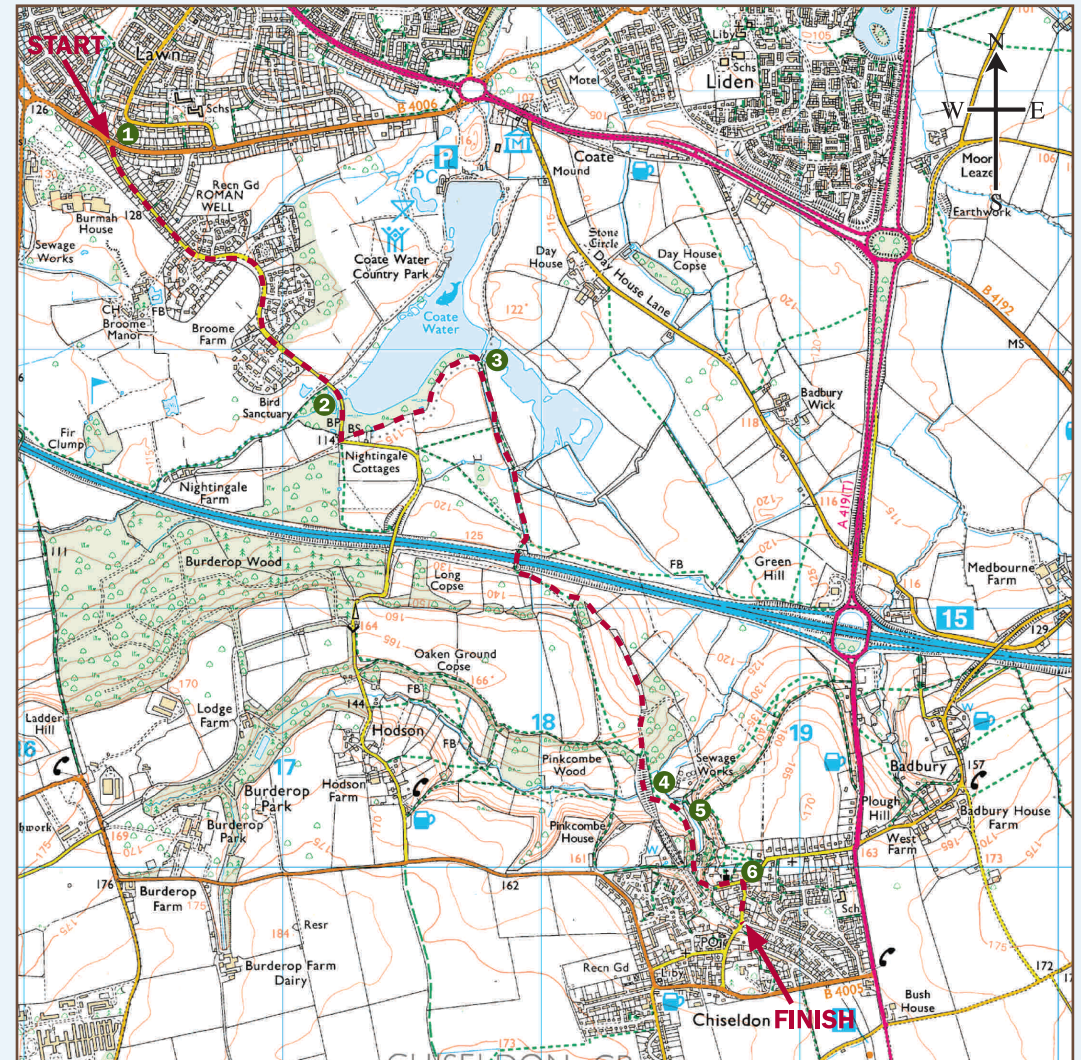
Cottage, Church Street, Chiseldon

Points of interest

Coate Water

Coate Water Country Park, owned by Swindon Borough Council, has a 56-acre reservoir built in the 1820s as a headwater tank for the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal. In the 1970s a smaller lake was created as a flood storage lagoon. There is a rich variety of birdlife – great crested grebe, grey herons, Canada geese, and kingfishers. Most of the site has been declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Richard Jefferies, one of Wiltshire's foremost countryside writers, was born at Coate Farm in 1848. The Richard Jefferies Museum www.richardjefferiessociety.co.uk/museum/html is housed at his birthplace. In 1874, he married Jesse Baden in the Church of the Holy Cross, Chiseldon.



Chiseldon

Chiseldon is situated just within the boundary of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The village takes its name from the Saxon 'Ceosel Dene' – stony or gravelly valley. This refers to the steep-sided combe running north from the centre of the village. A restoration project is currently underway in this conservation area to restore the Washpool, for the benefit of wildlife.

The Chiseldon to Marlborough railway was constructed through the village in 1881.

Many village men found work on the railway or in the railway works in Swindon. A large military camp was built to the south of the village in 1914 and made a huge impact, the camp population being greater than that of the whole parish. The military presence continued until 1961, the same year the railway closed.

The Chiseldon Museum contains a comprehensive range of photographs and objects relating to the village. The British Museum is currently undertaking a project to study and conserve Iron Age cauldrons found in 2004 in Chiseldon.