





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

-  Stagecoach 70 (Monday to Saturday)
-  Stagecoach 71 (Sunday only)
-  Wilts & Dorset X5 (Monday to Sunday)
-  Thamesdown 48 (Marlborough to Swindon, Monday to Saturday)

**Ordnance Survey Maps: OS Explorer 157;
OS Landranger 173**

Start point grid reference: SU 202743

Refreshments:

Ogbourne St George: pub and hotel.

Ogbourne St Andrew (just off railway Path):
pub/restaurant

Marlborough: pubs, cafes, tearooms,
restaurants and hotels

Designed by Wessex Print Centre 01672 563189

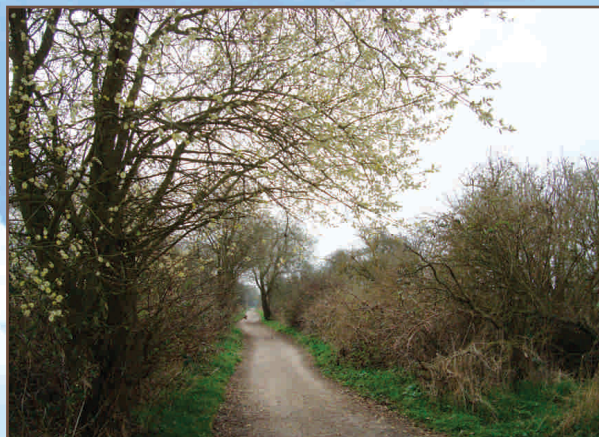
For the latest public transport information: www.traveline.info
☎ 0871 200 22 33

Photography: Ogbourne St George and Railway Path - S R Cassell, Marlborough Mop Fair - VisitWiltshire/David Williams

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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

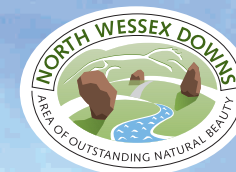
For more information about the Swindon to Marlborough Railway Path contact:

The Friends of the Railway Path

www.friendsofthepath.org.uk

Email: Dick.Millard@friendsofthepath.org.uk

WALKS IN THE NORTH WESSEX DOWNS



View from Railway Path

OGBOURNE ST GEORGE TO MARLBOROUGH (Linear)

5 miles/8 km

Suitable for all walkers

No stiles

Mostly flat



Walk directions

1. Travelling from Swindon, alight in the village of Ogbourne St George. With the Inn with the Well pub on your right, walk along the road under a bridge (the bridge carries the A346 road between Swindon and Marlborough).
2. Almost immediately, turn right into a minor road signed Bytham Farm. After about 100 yards, turn right to join the Chiseldon to Marlborough Railway Path (look for the blue, red and white Sustrans National Cycle Network sign).
3. Continue along this path for just under 4 miles. The track is lined intermittently with trees and hedgerows. This is a good area for spotting wildlife, including buzzards and kites. Also, look out for remnants of the old railway – there is a derelict signalman's hut not far from the start of the walk. Further along the path, behind a small concrete art obelisk, there is a plaque dedicated to Anne and David Billingham. The clearance and the opening of the Path in the 1980's is mostly due to the hard work of this couple. The Path is now maintained by Sustrans, for use by cyclists, horseriders and walkers.
4. When the Path crosses a minor road below (signed to Rabley Arts Centre on left hand side on the road as you go over the railway bridge), turn sharp right to come off the Path onto the minor road. Turn immediately left and follow the road to a T-junction.

Cross the road to join a footpath marked Werg, which leads, through trees, to a wooden bridge over the River Kennet. Cross the bridge and continue ahead, then right (ignoring track on left) along a path. At the end of the path, turn right to cross back over the river on a tarmac track leading to Stonebridge Lane. At the end of the lane, turn left into St Martins. At the end of St Martins, cross the main road and proceed through an avenue of trees across the Green to reach Marlborough Town Centre. Buses to Swindon depart from outside Lloyds Bank.

Points of interest:

Chiseldon and Marlborough Railway Path

This path uses a length of the trackbed of the defunct Swindon to Marlborough railway line. The line, constructed in 1881, was at its busiest during the First World War when it was in constant use by trains full of troops, horses and equipment.



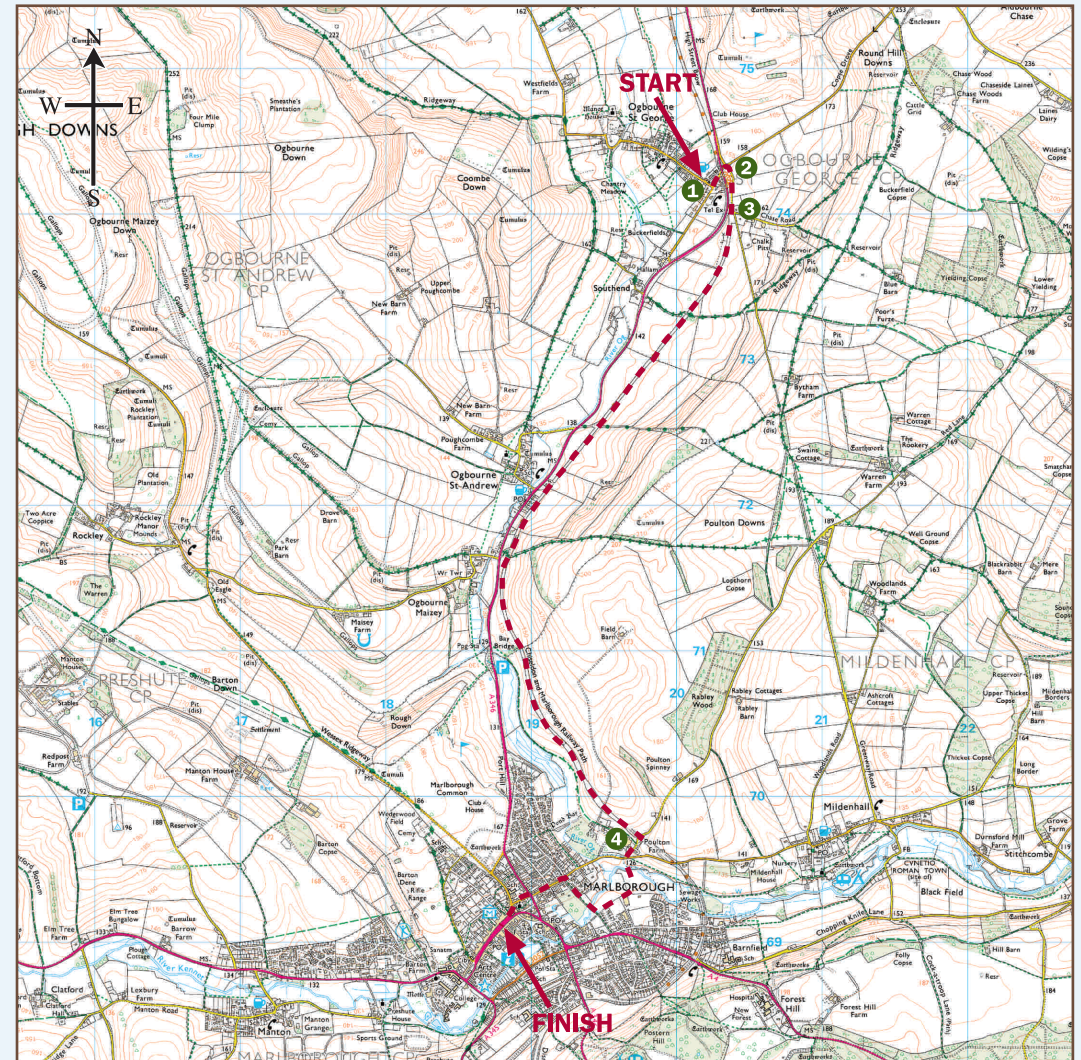
Ogbourne St. George

Marlborough

One of the mail and stagecoach stops on the route from London to Bath, Marlborough has had a varied history since its Roman occupation. There was a Royal mint here during Norman times and the Kings hunted in the Savernake forest nearby.

Marlborough was devastated by fire in 1653, 1679, and 1690. After these fires thatched roofs were banned in the town by an act of parliament. During the rebuilding of the town after 1653, the high street became what is often claimed to be the widest in England. This wide street allows ample space for the market, which takes place each Wednesday and Saturday.

On the north side of the high street is the Merchant's House. The house was built following the fire of 1653. It was the property of a silk merchant. Behind the house is a garden in the formal design of the 17th Century, complete with a herb garden and an orchard. Also for garden lovers, Priory Gardens are located on the south side of the High Street. The grounds run down to the river Kennet.



Every October the high street is closed for the two Saturdays either side of 11 October for the Marlborough Mop Fairs. This was originally a hiring fair for agricultural workers seeking employment but now has become a funfair.

Also worthy of note, each summer the town holds an international jazz festival with the town's pubs, hotels and other venues playing host to live jazz music over the course of a weekend in July. Another annual event, also held in July, is a Contemporary Art Trail known as 'Open Studios'.



Marlborough Mop Fair