

Bratton and Westbury White Horse



WILTSHIRE TOURISM

An enjoyable and undulating walk presenting fabulous views from the northern aspect of Imber Range Perimeter Path. Beginning in the village of Bratton, the route takes in Westbury White Horse. From the superb vantage point at the Horse, on a clear day, Cherhill and Alton Barnes Horses can also be seen in the distance. For history buffs, the walk passes through 'Bratton Camp', an Iron Age hillfort.

The walk

1 Start

From the signpost for Longcombe Bottom Bridlepath, follow the fairly steep incline. As you emerge from the lea of the footpath continue straight ahead until you reach the gate. On the R as you continue up the incline is Combe Hill, to the L is White Cliff. Look behind to see fabulous views over Bratton in the near distance and Trowbridge in the far distance. Towards the north-west you can see Westbury's Blue Circle Cement chimney which uses chalk from the nearby quarry - said to be the largest in Europe.

2 0.5km/¼ mile

Continue through the gate at the top of the hill. The path, now level, heads toward a small copse. To your L are fabulous views across the Plain. Go through the next gate. The ridge ahead is the Imber Range Perimeter Path (IRPP), which you will be joining. At the barn and metalled road turn R. You are now on the edge of the live firing range. Look out for red warning flags which are raised when firing is taking place - be sure not to cross the line of the military firing range. The track is used sometimes by vehicles and army transport so

take care. You are now heading west towards Westbury White Horse, one of seven in Wiltshire - this one being unusual as it is made out of concrete, the others being chalk. This part of the IRPP is also the Wessex Ridgeway.

3 1.3km/¾ mile

At ST 916510, you will find an IRPP signpost, continue straight on along the track for almost a mile towards the farm buildings. Continue to the L of the farm buildings and at the junction take the stile to the L. Cross the open land in front of you towards

Westbury White Horse car park. Continue across the car park and you will meet the path for Westbury White Horse itself and Bratton Camp. The Camp is above the White Horse, and was an Iron Age Fort (within which a Long Barrow can be found). Follow the path to the White Horse and admire stunning views as you walk along the top. Once past the White Horse, take the path up to the R to see the remains of Bratton Camp, otherwise continue along the edge of the earthworks until you reach a fork in the path. Bear R following the line of the earthworks until you reach the metalled road.

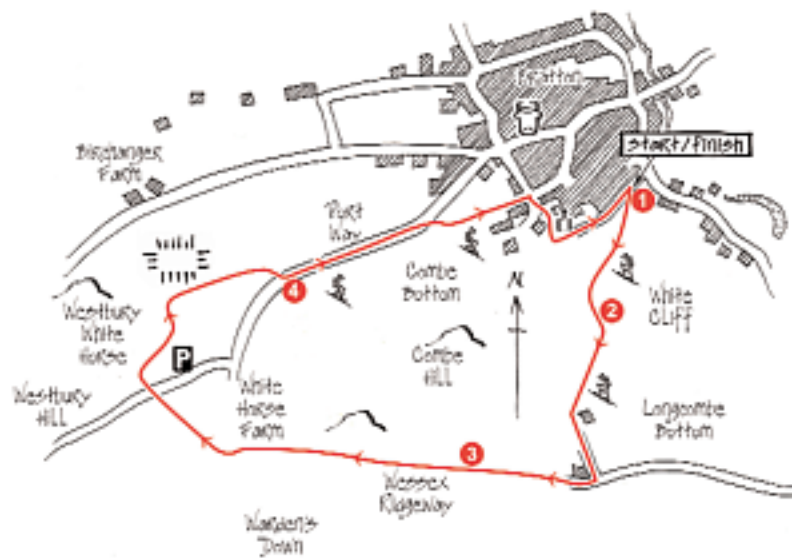
4 4km/2½ miles

Drop down onto the metalled road and turn L. After approximately 400 yds take the bridleway off to the R. At the end of the bridleway join the metalled road and continue until you reach a four-way crossway. Turn R (signposted as a dead end). After around 200 yds at the entrance for Combe Farm bear L onto the public right of way. The ground is uneven approaching the stream so take care. After around 150 yds, cross over the makeshift bridge and continue up the sharp incline on the L. The stone steps

ahead of you lead up to St James Church, a simple but charming building. Take the gates through to the churchyard and around to the R-hand side of the church where the main entrance is located, if you wish to visit. On exiting the church bear L and through the cast iron gates. The metalled road takes you to the start point of the walk.

POINTS OF INTEREST AND LOCAL INFORMATION

- Westbury White Horse, Wiltshire's oldest and best known equine decoration, was cut in its present form in 1774 - incorporating an earlier horse of uncertain age or origin. Said to be created to commemorate Alfred's victory over the Danes in 878, the horse is 182 ft long and 108 ft high
- Hang gliders and kite flyers frequently use the hillside at Westbury White Horse
- Bratton Camp is an Iron Age hilltop fort from around 20BC. The large double-banked earthworks enclose 25 acres. Also on the site is a Neolithic Long Barrow from 3000BC, which is pitted from various excavations
- St James Church in Bratton dates from the 13th century, but has a 15th century tower



IS THIS WALK FOR YOU?

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

Stiles 1

Suitable for

Average walkers

PLANNING

Start/parking

Spaces at the Y junction ST915510 (Longcombe Bottom) – Four spaces where the bridleway meets the IRPP ST914519 – Six spaces at St James Church ST901514 – 50-plus spaces at Westbury White Horse car park

Nearest town

Westbury

Refreshments

Hillsworth's Shop in Bratton; The Duke at Bratton, Fitzroy Farm, east of Bratton.

Public toilets The Duke, Bratton

Public transport

No 87 runs two-hourly (Devizes to Westbury/Trowbridge) Mon-Sat service only. Contact Wiltshire Bus Line, tel 08457 090899

MAPS

Ordnance Survey Explorer 143 Warminster and Trowbridge.

ACCOMMODATION

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