

# **The Plain & Avon Walk (including part of The Great Stones Way)**

**Sunday 26 March 2011  
Casterley Camp to Stonehenge  
with a shorter option from Netheravon**



**14 miles of magnificent historic landscape:  
fantastic views, pretty villages with welcoming pubs,  
good walking surfaces (shorter option is 7.5 miles)**

The Plain & Avon Walk is organised by  
The Friends of the Ridgeway, [www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk](http://www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk)  
and generously supported by  
Plain Action LEADER grant, Tidworth Area Community Grant, VisitWiltshire, Wiltshire Council  
and donations from members of The Friends of the Ridgeway

Photo of Salisbury Plain at Casterley Camp: Janet Hierons  
Photo of the Avon valley towards Fittleton: Chris Coles  
Photo of Old King Barrows, Stonehenge: Chris Coles

## **Introducing The Plain & Avon Walk along part of the southern section of The Great Stones Way**

*Ian Ritchie, Chairman of The Friends of the Ridgeway welcomes you  
to this new and historic walking route.*

I am delighted you are joining our inaugural walk along part of what will become The Great Stones Way (GSW). The Friends of the Ridgeway see the GSW as a wonderful extension of The Ridgeway National Trail. It follows the line of the ancient Great Ridgeway and links the World Heritage Sites of Avebury and Stonehenge.

The Plain & Avon Walk route starts at the Iron Age hill fort of Casterley Camp high on Salisbury Plain, goes down the picturesque Avon Valley, and takes in the pre-historic sites of Durrington Walls and Woodhenge before it reaches Stonehenge.

In total it is a walk of 14 miles (20 kms) with an alternative shorter option from Netheravon to Stonehenge of 8 miles (12 kms).

Our original plan was to open The Great Stones Way on 26 March, but the project is delayed while we address concerns raised by some local people and organisations about the precise line of the route, particularly in the Vale of Pewsey, and potential impacts of the route on the environment and archaeology in the northern section.

We have the support of the communities along the Avon Valley through whose villages we pass on 26 March, and the agreement of the Ministry of Defence to use their tracks around the Plain.

A project like this needs funds, and I am very grateful to the Tidworth Community Area Board and Plain Action for their generous financial support. We are applying to other sources for funding so that we can complete the necessary assessments and practical work on The Great Stones Way.

This short leaflet aims to give you all you need to know about the route, transport options, toilets and the availability of refreshments. We are very grateful for the support from local pubs and shops on the route, so please support them in turn by purchasing your food and drinks there.

The main objective on 26 March is to see as many people as possible enjoying The Plain & Avon Walk, which includes part of The Great Stones Way. If you would like to contribute to The Great Stones Way project or raise funds through sponsorship visit The Great Stones Way web page at Charity Giving [www.charitygiving.co.uk](http://www.charitygiving.co.uk)

Finally, we would like to know what you think of The Plain & Avon Walk and The Great Stones Way project. Send an email to: [campaign@ridgewayfriends.org.uk](mailto:campaign@ridgewayfriends.org.uk) with your comments and photos.

Thank you for your support and have a great walk!

**Ian Ritchie, Chairman, The Friends of the Ridgeway.**

**[www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk](http://www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk)**

## General information

Although The Plain & Avon Walk is signed on the route, you are advised to use OS Explorer 130 Salisbury & Stonehenge.

Registration fee £10 per person. All funds raised contribute to the development of The Great Stones Way project.

Dogs on leads welcome. There may be livestock in fields along the route, so please keep your dog(s) under control. Children are welcome when accompanied by a responsible adult.

Wear appropriate clothing and walking boots or stout shoes. Keep to the route identified as The Plain & Avon Walk. Take your litter home.

<b>Directions to Casterley Camp, start point of The Plain &amp; Avon Walk. Map reference of the car park SU 113 537</b> Start between 10 and 11am.	<b>Directions to All Saints church, Netheravon, start point of the short walk. Map reference of the church SU 148 484</b> Start between 12noon and 2pm.
From the A342 west of Upavon take the track south-west that leads to the car park at Casterley Camp.	All Saints church is up a lane off Lower Road, south of Netheravon village centre. Car park next to the church.

## Public transport

Special return shuttle bus from Stonehenge to Casterley Camp via Netheravon to take you back to your car. Approximately hourly starting from 3.30pm. **Last bus leaves Stonehenge at 6.30pm.** Please make a suggested donation of £2 per person towards the cost of this service which is provided by Bodman's Coaches of Devizes.

Trains to and from Salisbury [www.southwesttrains.co.uk/](http://www.southwesttrains.co.uk/)  
Wilts & Dorset buses [www.wdbus.co.uk/](http://www.wdbus.co.uk/)

## Toilets

Casterley Camp car park  
All Saints Church, Netheravon  
Figheldean Community Rooms at Ablington (refreshments here too)  
Durrington car park, near golf driving range  
Public houses on the route – please buy food or drink too!  
Stonehenge Visitor Centre

## Refreshments and facilities en route or nearby

**Netheravon:** Shops in the High Street including Post Office and cash point. Café Guate coffee bus at the church car park, also picnic tables.

**Ablington:** tea, coffee, cakes and pastries kindly laid on for walkers by Figheldean Parish Council in the Figheldean Community Rooms, Ablington.

## Stonehenge

National Trust café and shop – car park is free in March.

## Pubs with food

Enford. The Swan in Longstreet.  
Netheravon. The Dog and Gun, Salisbury Road.

## **Casterley Camp to Netheravon (All Saints Church) 6 miles (9 km)**

The Plain & Avon Walk starts at Casterley Camp. Walkers set out between 10 and 11am.

### **Casterley Camp**

The Plain & Avon Walk route is clearly marked. Follow the bridleway round Casterley Camp to a field barn where the route goes along a straight track to West Chisenbury Farm. Here the route turns right and goes downhill to Compton Farm.

Take care walking through Compton Farm. The route goes right and after a short while turns sharp left along a footpath towards the A342 before curving right and going downhill towards Enford in the Avon Valley.

The route crosses the river at Enford to Longstreet, and follows the river valley southwards to the hamlet of Coombe. This is a sheltered and attractive section.

**Enford** The name means 'duck ford' from the Saxon Enead meaning Duck. People have lived in this area for millennia. A Neolithic greenstone axe (c2000 BC) was found near the bridge, an Iron Age community lived at East Chisenbury, and the remains of a Romano-British community were found at Chisenbury Warren.

### **River Avon**

This beautiful river rises in the Vale of Pewsey and flows due south to the sea at Christchurch. The Avon and its tributaries form one of the most diverse chalk stream systems in the UK, and is designated a Special Area of Conservation for its diverse fish populations, more than 180 plant species and a wide range of water insects.

**Coombe to Netheravon.** The route goes west across the River Avon to the hamlet of Fifield and then south on footpaths across fields and around woodland. Turn left when the footpath joins Mill Road in Netheravon.

At the junction by the shop and Post Office turn right onto the High Street and continue south through the middle of Netheravon to the T-junction at the end. Straight ahead is the lane that leads to the Anglo Saxon church of All Saints. The Café Guate coffee bus is in the car park near the church for a shot of South American coffee to keep you going!

The Plain & Avon Walk route continues on Lower Road which goes east and crosses the River Avon. As the road bears left look out for Choulston Farm on the right. Turn right onto a public footpath which goes across fields towards Figheldean.

## **Netheravon to Durrington Walls 5 miles (8 km)**

This is an interesting walk through the Avon valley, eventually crossing the busy A345 road back onto the edge of Salisbury Plain. Then cross-country to the outskirts of Larkhill and south to Durrington Walls and Woodhenge.

**The shorter route of The Plain & Avon Walk starts at All Saints church, Netheravon. The adjacent field is a car park, and there are picnic tables as well as the Café Guate coffee bus. Walkers can set out from Netheravon between 12noon and 2pm.**

**Leaving Netheravon.** From the church car park go back up the lane to Lower Road and turn right to cross the River Avon. As the road bears left look out for Choulston Farm on the right.

At Choulston Farm turn right onto a public footpath which goes across fields and joins another road. Continue on this road and just after a road junction look for the waymark and turn right to walk beside woodland towards Figheldean. The footpath goes through part of the village and left of the recreation ground, straight through to Ablington.

***Stop in Ablington for tea, coffee, cakes and pastries all especially laid on for us by Figheldean Parish Council in the Figheldean Community Rooms. Look out for the signs to the venue which is very close to the footpath.***

From the Community Rooms continue on the public footpath with trees on either side. The path emerges from the trees into an open area with tank tracks left and right. Turn right and continue downhill, turn right and cross the River Avon – there's also a ford. Continue on the tank track to the A345.

Take care crossing the A345 and continue on the tank track for a few yards before turning left onto a track across downland to join the military road and go south to The Packway. Turn left and look out for the sign opposite the Wessex Waterworks. Cross the road and go past the waterworks on the right as you head towards the A345 and Durrington Walls.

## **Durrington Walls to Stonehenge**

### **2.5 miles (4 km)**

The last stretch is flat but full of historical interest. The Plain & Avon Walk ends at the junction of The Avenue and the Old/New King Barrows footpath. From this point, Stonehenge can be seen in the distance. Make your own way across the grass towards the Stones, a National Trust signpost points the way. The area between here and Stonehenge is National Trust open access.

#### **Durrington Walls**

This is Britain's largest henge, measuring nearly 500 metres in diameter with a ditch some 6 metres deep. It was built around 2500BC and is thought to be where people who built Stonehenge lived with their families, and their cattle, sheep and pigs. In 2005 the first complete Neolithic house floors in England were discovered here. They measured 5m x 5m and it is thought that hundreds or even thousands of these tiny houses were built along the valley side.

The Plain & Avon Walk route follows a track away from the A345 road towards Woodhenge.

#### **Woodhenge**

Woodhenge is next to Durrington Walls. It is the largest henge monument in the country, but little if any of the original structure can be seen. Short concrete stumps have been placed to show the locations of the original postholes, and a visitor interpretation board provides helpful information.

#### **Woodhenge to The Avenue**

Walk south-west towards an old railway line, turn right and walk past woodland on the right. Just before the end of the wood, veer left and continue walking westward to a track. Turn left and go south with wood on the right. Before you reach the farm buildings turn right and follow the track to Old King Barrows and then left towards The Avenue.

#### **Old King Barrows and New King Barrows**

These Bronze Age Neolithic barrows were named by antiquarian William Stukeley who recognised them as graves. They lie in two small woods either side of The Avenue that leads to Stonehenge.

#### **Stonehenge**

The centrepiece of the World Heritage Site, Stonehenge is managed by English Heritage and the National Trust. The stone circle is aligned with the sunset in mid-winter and the sunrise in mid-summer. It is constructed of bluestones brought from the Preseli mountains in Pembrokeshire, and Sarsen stones from the Marlborough Downs. [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)