



## **Honeystreet & Pewsey Down**

**A fairly strenuous ascent to the North Wessex Downs affording superb views from the White Horse Trail**

### **Essential Facts**

- Route distance: 10.7 km (6.7 miles)
- Approximate time: 3 hours
- Approx. total ascent: 185 metres
- Start point Grid Ref: SU 106 620
- GPS Ref: SU 10679 62037
- Recommended O.S. Map: Explorer 157
- Toughness Rating: Wiltshire 3

Please see the notes on Toughness Ratings at the end of this report

**Up For A  
CHALLENGE ?**

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A Team Effort**

**Full Info from the Great Walks web site**

## THE ROUTE

Your walk begins in the village of Alton Barnes, south-west of Marlborough. Street parking is usually available near the pretty Saxon church of St Mary.

Our starting point, **S**, is the WCC footpath, with a wooden turnstile at its entrance, approximately 100 metres up the road from St Mary's Church.

Pass through the wooden turnstile along the cobbled footpath, keeping the graveyard over to your right. The Alton Barnes White Horse is visible to the left; you will see it many times on this walk.

Keep to the path, ignoring left and right options, but bearing right on the main path. Soon you will pass through two more wooden turnstiles enclosing a wooden bridge and find a second church. Cross the field keeping the church on your right and pass through a final wooden turnstile.

Follow the paved lane through Alton Priors towards the hills. As you reach the road at the top of the village, notice the Sarsen Stone with the white horse replica, opposite a large thatched barn.

Turn left, cross the road and turn right onto a bridleway. Proceed up the hill for 600 metres to emerge onto a road, **A**.

Turn left and proceed along the road. In approximately 300 metres, turn right and ascend the WCC footpath to the Pewsey Downs National Nature Reserve board. Enter the Nature Reserve via a kissing gate where a good view of the White Horse is available to your left.

Continue up the hill, heading slightly right and following the left edge of the escarpment. The views over Pewsey Vale are spectacular. Keeping the escarpment to your left, continue over Pewsey Downs until you reach the earthworks of a 'Cross Dyke', **B**. Look behind to see the ancient longbarrow, Adam's Grave on the ridge.

At **B**, follow the path to the left. With the White Horse now quite close, take the distinct path bearing right to reach the horse's ears! Proceed straight on to a gate, and straight again to a clump of trees and gorse that will reveal another Nature Reserve board.

Turn right, and keeping the fence on your right proceed across Milk Hill, the highest point in Wiltshire, still enjoying far reaching views and always with the escarpment on your left.

As you cross Milk Hill, you will pass through one gate marked 'Mid Wilts Way', then a second signed with a yellow arrow, then a third gate also signed with a yellow arrow and marked 'White Horse Trail'.

After the third gate, cross the field keeping to the right-hand edge. One more gate brings you to the Wansdyke earthworks, **C**. Turn left, and in 300 metres bear left away from the Wansdyke and begin descending via the chalk byway.

In 1.5 kilometres, **D**, take the left fork in the byway. Keeping to the right of the barns half way down the track, continue 1.2 kilometres to the road. Cross the road, taking the lane signposted 'Stanton St Bernard'.

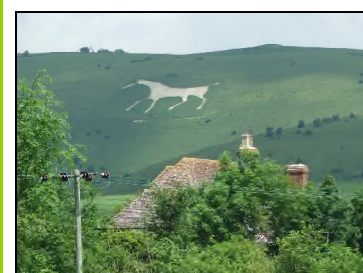
Pass All Saints Church on your left and Church Farm on your right, proceeding to Pewsey Vale Riding Centre. Turn left and the paved lane will soon bring you to the Kennet & Avon Canal. Go over the bridge, **E**, and descend to the towpath via the gate on the right, turning immediately right and doubling back under the bridge.



**The Wooden Turnstile  
Alton Barnes**



**The Escarpment Above  
Honeystreet**



**The White Horse  
Above Alton Barnes**



**The Kennet and Avon Canal**

Proceed for 1.5 kilometres along the towpath to reach The Barge Inn at Honeystreet for refreshments if desired.

To complete the Honeystreet Loop, continue along the towpath leaving at the next bridge that rises at Honeystreet Saw Mills, **F**. Turn left and proceed along the quiet road, enjoying one last look at the Alton Barnes White Horse on the hills ahead. In 600 metres turn right signposted 'St Mary's Saxon Church' and return to the start point, **S**.

### Refreshment

The Barge Inn  
Public House  
Near Honeystreet  
Tel: 01672 851705  
Canal-side pub with meals  
and snacks



The Barge Inn

## LOCAL INFO

**The Alton Barnes White Horse** is a little under a mile north of the village, on Milk Hill on the ridge that extends to Walker's Hill. The originator was a Mr Robert Pile, of Manor Farm, Alton Barnes. In 1812 Mr Pile paid twenty pounds to a John Thorne, also known as Jack the Painter, to design the white horse and have the work of cutting it carried out. Thorne designed the horse, then sub-contracted the excavation work to John Harvey of Stanton St Bernard. Before the work was finished, Thorne took off with the money and Mr Pile was left to pay out again. Thorne was eventually hanged, but what crime that was for is not recorded. In the nearby village of Alton Priors, there is a Sarsen Stone by the roadside that has a miniature replica of the Alton Barnes white horse carved on it.

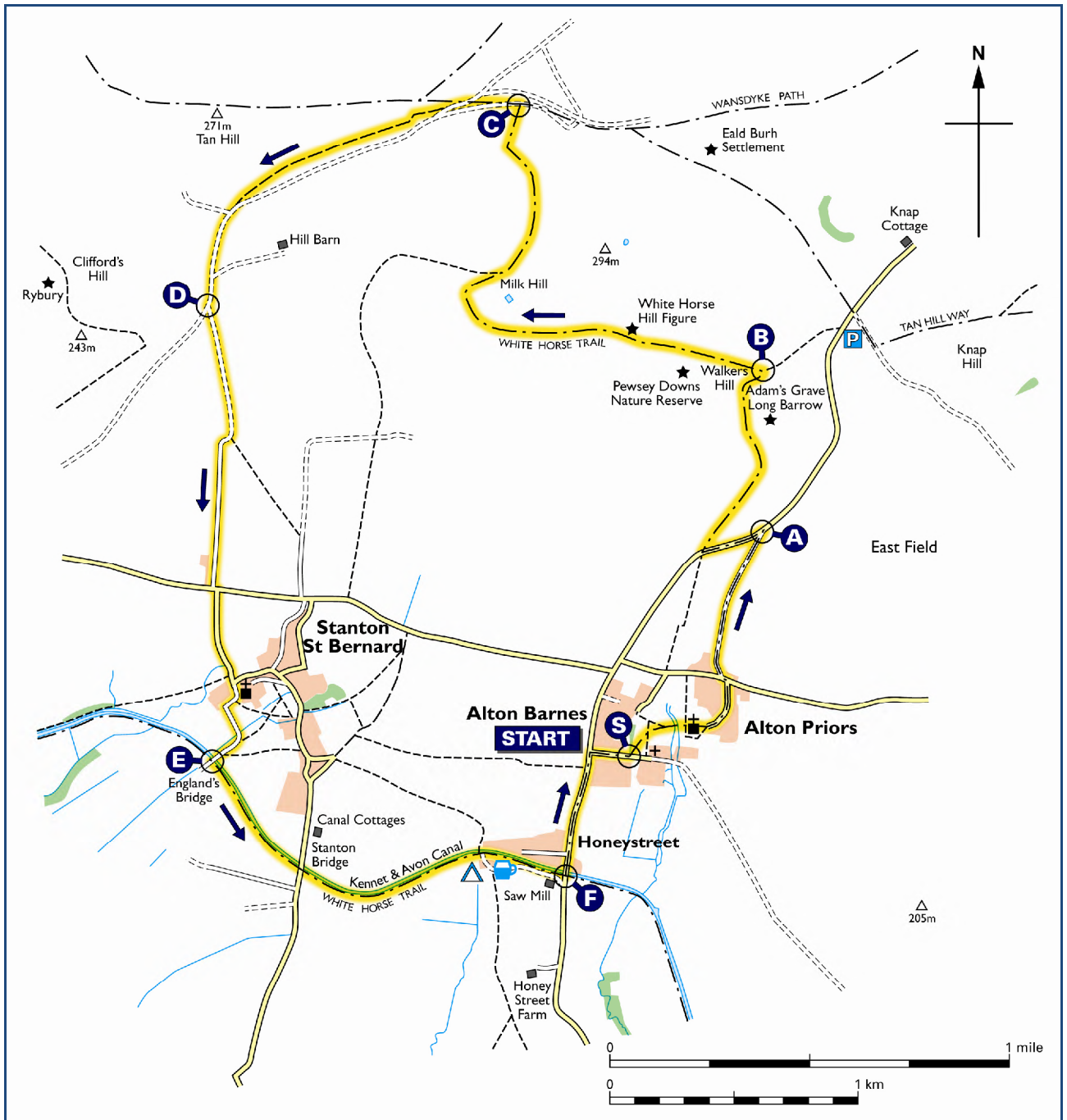
Alton Barnes is also claimed to be the crop circle centre of the UK, with many crop circles miraculously appearing, especially in late summer.

Nearby **Adam's Grave**, is a Neolithic longbarrow which was excavated in the nineteenth century.

**Milk Hill** is the highest point in Wiltshire, at 295 metres above sea-level. Tan Hill is only one metre lower.

**HONEYSTREET & PEWSEY DOWN  
G.P.S. WAYPOINTS**

WAYPOINT NAME	MAP REF		CO-ORDINATES		ELEVATION: Metres
HON S	S	SU	10679	62037	125
HON A	A	SU	11150	62901	175
HON B	B	SU	11131	63520	237
HON C	C	SU	10228	64681	275
HON D	D	SU	08982	63852	178
HON E	E	SU	08999	62014	136
HON F	F	SU	10410	61557	141



MAP LEGEND					
	Great Walks route		Church with tower		Spot height - metres
	M6 Motorway		Church with spire		Information centre
	A23 Main road		Other place of worship		Parking
	B2116 Secondary road		Cathedral / Abbey		Public convenience
	Minor road		Building		Public house
	Other road		Built up area		Picnic site
	Track		Woodland		Camp site
	Footpath		Sand, shingle or mud		Major tourist feature
	Bridleway		Water feature		Other tourist feature
	National trail				
	Railway				

## Safety First

**Safety should always** be your first priority in planning and undertaking a walk, whether on your own or leading a group. Please read these Safety First and Walking Our Routes notes.

**Lead a group** of other walkers only if you have leadership and navigational experience adequate for the 'worst case' conditions which may be encountered on the particular walk, bearing in mind the terrain, possible weather and navigational demands.

**Weigh up the capabilities** of your party, in terms of fitness and walking speed. Adjust your time expectations accordingly.

**Ensure** all your party are adequately clothed for the weather and conditions. Footwear is particularly important. Clothing must protect against cold, wet or strong sun according to the time of year.

**Emergencies** are quite rare, but it is essential to think ahead about what to do if someone in your party sustains an injury. Will you have a First Aid kit? Is there a qualified First Aider in the party? How could help be summoned in a serious eventuality?

**Refreshment**, particularly water, can be vital. Dehydration in hot summer conditions can be rapid, and frequent intake of fluids is essential.

**On tougher walks** it is a good idea to tell someone where you are planning to go – and when you expect to be back. Remember - mobile phones often lose reception in mountainous or isolated areas.

**All our walks use legitimate routes:** Public Rights of Way, Public Footpaths, Bridleways, Permissive Paths, Access Land, Byways and Roads.

**Road** walking calls for particular care. When there is no defined footpath or verge wide enough for safe walking it is usually best to walk on the right – facing oncoming traffic. An exception may be a tight bend, where walkers would be more visible on the left.

**Occasionally** you may find a public footpath blocked or unuseable. It is perfectly in order to take the shortest available diversion without damaging crops, perhaps around a field margin.

**It is courteous** to close gates after passing through, sometimes even if the gate was open when you arrived – particularly if it is obvious livestock may escape.

**Mutual respect** for farm animals is to be encouraged! Don't frighten or annoy them, but equally don't put your party members in danger or discomfort. You certainly wouldn't be the first walkers to go round the outside of a field of frisky bullocks.

**Dogs** should always be kept on a lead anywhere near farm animals, and under close supervision elsewhere in the countryside.

## Walking Our Routes

**Our walks** are designed to be negotiated using the route directions in conjunction with the map section provided. We suggest walkers also take the Ordnance Survey Explorer or Outdoor Leisure map recommended for each walk.

**On mountain, moorland and open heathland** walks it is **ESSENTIAL** to have navigational expertise and tools, including the recommended Ordnance Survey map(s).

**Take care** to observe any cautions in the route description; exposed paths, areas liable to flooding etc.

**Consider conditions before setting off.** Will heavy rain have made a water meadow impassable? Will frost or snow make a path slippery?

**When navigating the route** look for clues to confirm you are in the right place. Are map features where you would expect on the ground? Are features mentioned in the text where expected? If you suspect you may have taken a wrong turn, take action sooner rather than later. It is better to re-trace to a known point rather than carry on regardless with the possibility of becoming increasingly confused.

**All our routes are carefully checked** before publication, but features can change on the ground – sometimes surprisingly quickly. Footpaths may be re-routed, buildings can appear or change significantly and these days pub names seem to change frequently.

**The approximate time** given for each walk is based on an average walking speed of 2.5 miles per hour (4 km/hour), plus an allowance for ascent, descent and any difficult terrain.

**Total ascent** is the approximate total ascent over the whole walk.

**GPS users** can enter in the waypoints provided in each of our walk reports. It is important to read our guide **Introducing GPS for Walkers**, available as a PDF file from the Great Walks in Britain web site.

**Remember that GPS** is a great navigational tool, but only one of those available to the navigator. Never dispense with conventional map and compass – and the training and skills to use them, especially on mountain, moorland or open heathland walks.

### TOUGHNESS RATINGS

Most of our **Wiltshire & North Wessex** routes can be undertaken by reasonably fit walkers able to utilise the map segments and our recommended Ordnance Survey maps, together with the route guidance notes.

The toughest walks should be undertaken or led only by experienced walkers with navigational expertise. Always consider recent and forecast weather.

Each walk has been allocated a **Toughness Rating**:

1. Easier walks with modest ascent and generally on well defined paths. There may be stiles or narrow gateways to negotiate.
2. Routes which are more demanding. They may include more ascent and possibly paths which are looser or more difficult underfoot.
3. More strenuous walks. There may be prolonged steep ascents, and perhaps several ascents over the whole walk. Conditions may be challenging underfoot.
4. The toughest walks, requiring considerable fitness and navigational experience. There may be prolonged steep ascents. The ability to navigate by compass may be essential.

Toughness Ratings are allocated in the context of the terrain in the edition area. For example a walk rated as demanding in Cambridgeshire may be equivalent to an easier or moderate route in the Brecon Beacons.