

WALKS IN THE VALE OF PEWSEY



CIRCULAR WALK

UPAVON, NORTH NEWNTON CHARLTON ST PETER & RUSHALL

8.4 miles/13.5 km : just over 3 hours

(with 3.5 miles/5.5km option)

A few fairly steep inclines, some steps.

The majority of the route is earth & stone tracks, field paths, and lanes. Sometimes muddy after wet weather.

Two main road crossings.

Not suitable for buggies or wheelchairs.



THE VALE OF PEWSEY WILTSHIRE

Imagine quintessential England.
Rolling countryside, thatched cottages,
country lanes, white horses on chalk hills.
Welcome to the Vale of Pewsey,
one of the most beautiful
and unspoilt places in the UK.

Readily accessible by road and rail,
the Vale is located in the North Wessex Downs
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Traversed by the Great West Way,
Ridgeway, and Kennet & Avon Canal,
served by a network of ancient footpaths,
tracks, and bridleways, the Vale of Pewsey is ideal
for walking, riding or cycling, with welcoming
places to stay, friendly and atmospheric places to
eat, drink and shop, and local events
to enjoy throughout the year.

For more information go to
www.visitpewseyvale.co.uk



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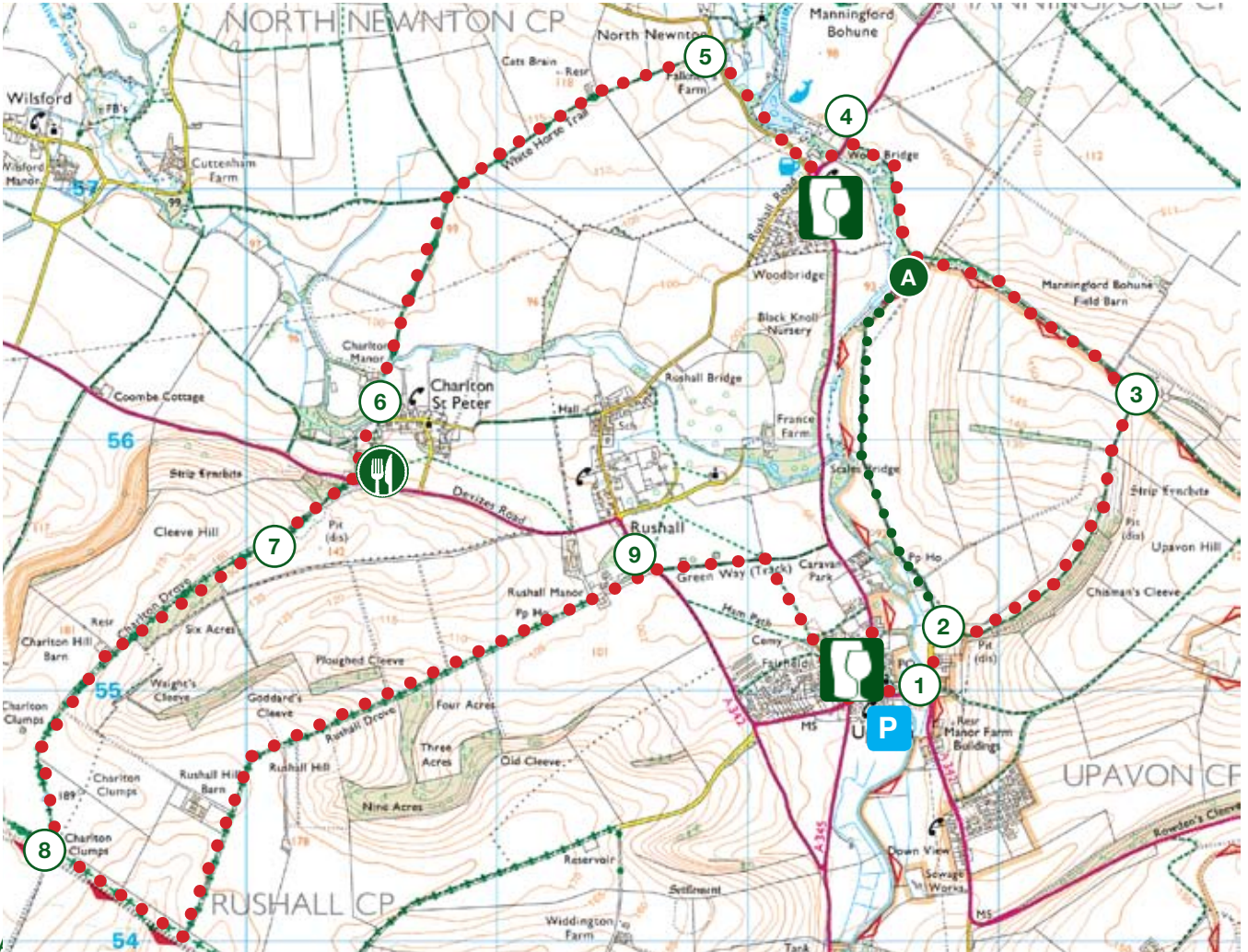


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St James' Church, Hilcott

The first church on this site was built in 963, making it one of the oldest churches in England. The history of the present building (left) begins in the 13th century with the erection of the nave and chancel.

The tower dates from the 15th century. There were originally two bells, one of which survives, the other recast in 1606. A further pair of bells was added in 1616.

The church was restored in the 1950's, with the organ installed in 1977 in celebration of the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

Cat's Brain



Located halfway between Stonehenge and Avebury, Cat's Brain pre-dates both, belonging to the early Neolithic period (3,800 - 3,600 BC). Although ploughed flat over the years (shown here during excavation), its footprint can still be seen. Two huge banana-shaped ditches flank the outline of a timber structure thought to have been a timber hall.

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Park in the centre of Upavon. The starting point for the walk is on the A342 Everleigh Road, on the sharp right bend just past the bridge over the River Avon. Alongside is Priors Meadow, a lovely water meadow open to the public courtesy of the Wookey family.
- 2 Turn left down Vicarage Lane to a signpost where you turn right, going up the hill along a shaded holloway that skirts the edge of the woods. As you approach the summit, look back and to your right for a view of the strip lynchets. Found mainly throughout southern Britain, often in the vicinity of Iron Age forts and other earthworks, these hillside terraces are a feature of ancient field systems.
- 3 From the top of the hill the views of the downs to the north are spectacular – Martinsell in the east with the Alton Barnes White Horse to the west. Turn left beyond the field edge onto the track between the field and the wood on your right. As you descend you will see and hear the River Avon in the woodland below.
- A Where the path meets the woodland, a bridleway to the left leads back to the village of Upavon for those who prefer a shorter route.
- 4 At the main road turn left over the bridge along the pavement, which then turns into grass verge. Cross over at the roundabout to the Woodbridge Inn, a coaching inn dating back to 1786.
- 5 Continue down the lane that runs alongside the Woodbridge Inn until you reach Falkner's Farm where you turn left (signposted) into the farmyard. At this point (signposted) a farmyard to St James' Church by turning right along the pretty lane opposite the farm: the aspect as the church comes into view is delightful.

Going through the farmyard, follow the track towards Charlton St Peter. On your right at Cat's Brain is the site of a neolithic building that predates both Stonehenge and Avebury, although nothing is now visible from ground level. At the top of the hill more strip lynchets can be seen on the distant Cleeve Hill. When you reach a fork in the track, take the left track.

- 6 Enter the village of Charlton St Peter with Charlton Manor on your right. Follow the lane over the bridge, and at the sharp left bend, take the right turn, then turn left (signposted) to a stile with a waymarker. Go over the stile and follow the path up the slope to the gate and steps next to The Charlton Cat.
- 7 Cross over the main road and continue up the hill – you are now on Charlton Drive, a route dating back to the 13th century along which livestock were driven to market in Upavon. The views from the top are again spectacular.



- 8 When you reach the MOD signs, turn left along a very visible grass track. At a byways signpost pointing in all directions, turn left towards Rushall Hill. The farmland here is owned by the Wookey family, pioneers of the organic movement and owners of Rushall Organics. As the track bends round to the right, you will see Casterley Barn on your right, the family's off-grid, sustainably managed events venue.
- 9 Going down the hill, past Rushall Manor on your left, you will come to the main road. Cross over and go slightly to the right on to the Greenway (signposted). About halfway along the field edge, a clear track to your right takes you across the field to Upavon.

Go past the allotments on your left to a junction on a bend; turn right down Chapel Lane. Follow this down to the T junction with the main road and turn left to the centre of the village and The Antelope Inn.

