



Cherhill Down, Wiltshire

**TRAIL**  
**Walking**

**GRADE**  
**Easy**

**DISTANCE**  
**3 miles (5km)**

**TIME**  
**1 hour**

**OS MAP**  
**Explorer 157;**  
**Landranger 173**

**Contact**

01672 539167

wiltshire.countryside@nationaltrust.org.uk

**Facilities**



<http://nationaltrust.org.uk/walks>

In partnership with



# Cherhill downland walk

A walk to the top of Cherhill Down will reward you with wonderful views for miles around. Once there you can explore Oldbury Castle hill fort which, during the summer, is covered in wild flowers. In the spring and summer the Downs are alive with the sounds of skylarks and meadow pipits.



## Terrain

Approximately 2 miles (3.2km). The National Trust land at Cherhill and Calstone is open access, so you can explore the whole area. Well-used paths and tracks cover steep slopes, with uneven surfaces which become muddy after wet weather. Please note: a footpath runs alongside the A4; walkers should judge whether it is safe to walk this part of the route. Dogs welcome under control.

## Things to see



### Oldbury Castle

There are many interesting ancient features along this walk: Oldbury Castle hill fort (pictured); a Neolithic long barrow; Bronze Age barrows; and ancient roads and track-ways. The triangular enclosure of Oldbury hill fort, began life as a single earthwork enclosure in the later Bronze Age (ca.1000BC). It was later extended and developed into a hill fort in the Iron Age (ca. 500-100BC). A geophysical survey of Oldbury Castle showed that the interior was once filled with Iron Age round houses.



### Lansdowne Monument

Standing at the edge of Bowood estate is the Lansdowne Monument, a 120ft (36m) high stone obelisk built in 1845 by the Third Marquis of Lansdowne. It was designed as an 'eye-catcher' by Sir Charles Barry, architect of the Houses of Parliament.



### White horse

Cherhill white horse sits high on a steep slope, just below Oldbury Castle. Cut by Dr Christopher Alsop of Calne in 1780, Cherhill white horse is the second oldest of the 13 Wiltshire white horses, only eight of which are still visible. It's managed by Cherhill Parish Council. The surrounding downland is awash with colourful wild flowers in spring and summer, such as field scabious and birds foot trefoil. Look out for butterflies too, like marbled white and common blue.



Cherhill Down, Wiltshire

## Start/end

Start: A4 lay-by, edge of Cherhill, grid-ref: SU046695  
End: A4 lay-by, edge of Cherhill, grid-ref: SU046695

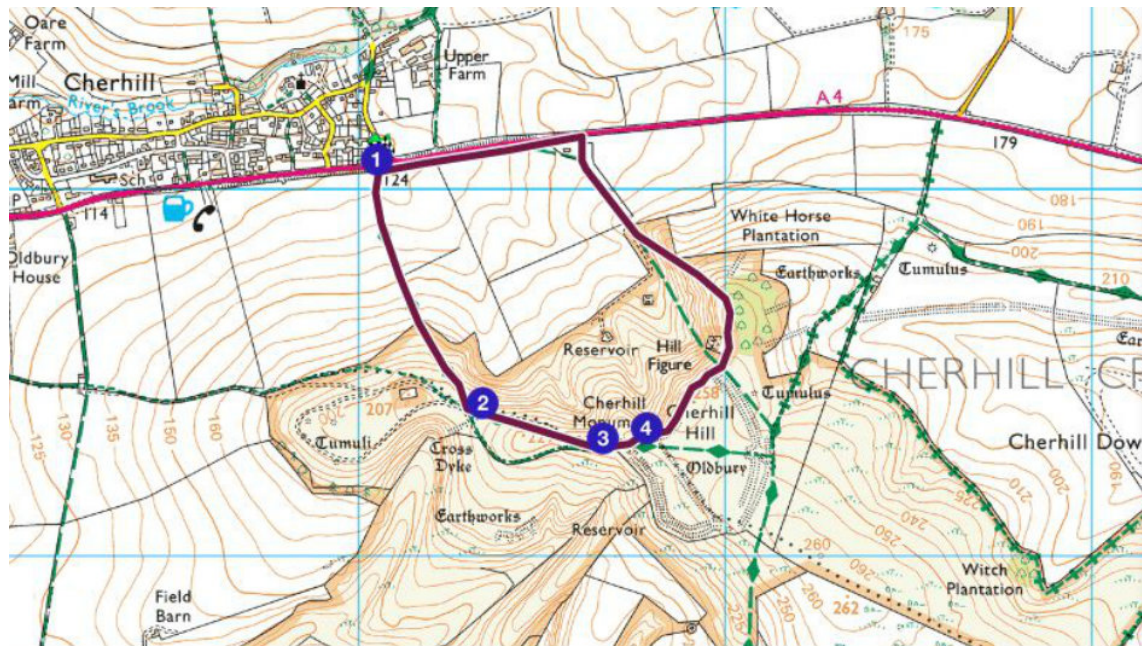
## How to get there

By foot: various footpaths run from the A4 onto the Downs

By bike: Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 403 runs through Cherhill to the north

By bus: Wigglybus 43 and X43 or Bodmans X76, Calne to Marlborough. All services stop near start of walk

By car: between Calne and Avebury, south of A4. Park in one of the lay-bys on A4 in Cherhill or to east of village



1. From the lay-by on the edge of Cherhill, follow the path up to the Lansdowne Monument. Flower-rich unimproved chalk grassland has declined dramatically (by a staggering 80 per cent) in Britain during the last 50 years due to the growth of agriculture. It's a rich wildlife habitat in Britain, half of which is within Wiltshire. Cherhill Down is home to rare plants and insects, such as burnt-tip orchid, bastard toadflax, Adonis blue butterfly and juniper shield bug.

2. Walk through the kissing gate, looking for the white horse across the valley. Continue to the Lansdowne Monument.

3. Once at the Lansdowne Monument you can see the neighbouring villages of Cherhill, Calstone Wellington and Calne. Fields stretch north into the distance and to the south there are views of rolling grassland.

4. From the monument you can choose to take the shorter route, or continue on the longer route (go to point 5). For the shorter route, walk along the edge of Oldbury Castle towards the white horse. Keep to the left of the plantation and follow the path down to a gate. Go through the gate. Follow the track to the A4, cross over the road and walk downhill to the starting point.

**National  
Trust**

<http://nationaltrust.org.uk/walks>