



Royal
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Military environmentalism

Discover prehistoric sites and rare species preserved on Salisbury Plain



Walk through the largest military training area on British soil
Explore the largest remaining area of chalk grassland in Northwest Europe
Discover the largest prehistoric long barrow in Britain
Look for big birds and tiny insects

www.discoveringbritain.org

the stories of our landscapes
discovered through walks





This booklet is to be used alongside the audio commentary for this walk

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Discover prehistoric sites and rare species preserved on Salisbury Plain

An ocean of grassland and a sweep of big sky. Ancient monuments loom out of the mist; camouflaged soldiers crouch in the undergrowth.

Salisbury Plain is a landscape of extremes. It is the largest remaining area of chalk grassland in Northwest Europe and home to 2,300 prehistoric sites yet also the largest military training area on British soil.

You may be surprised to discover that the presence of the military has benefitted archaeological sites and natural habitats.

The walk follows public footpaths that penetrate deep into the heart of the military training area taking you out of your comfort zone and to experience a totally new kind of landscape (don't worry, it's safe and legal).



An exhilarating walk in a landscape of big skies
© Maurice Pullin, Geograph (CCL)



The prehistoric Long Barrow
© Jenny Lunn

Walk along the largest prehistoric long barrow in Britain to a 20th century East German village.

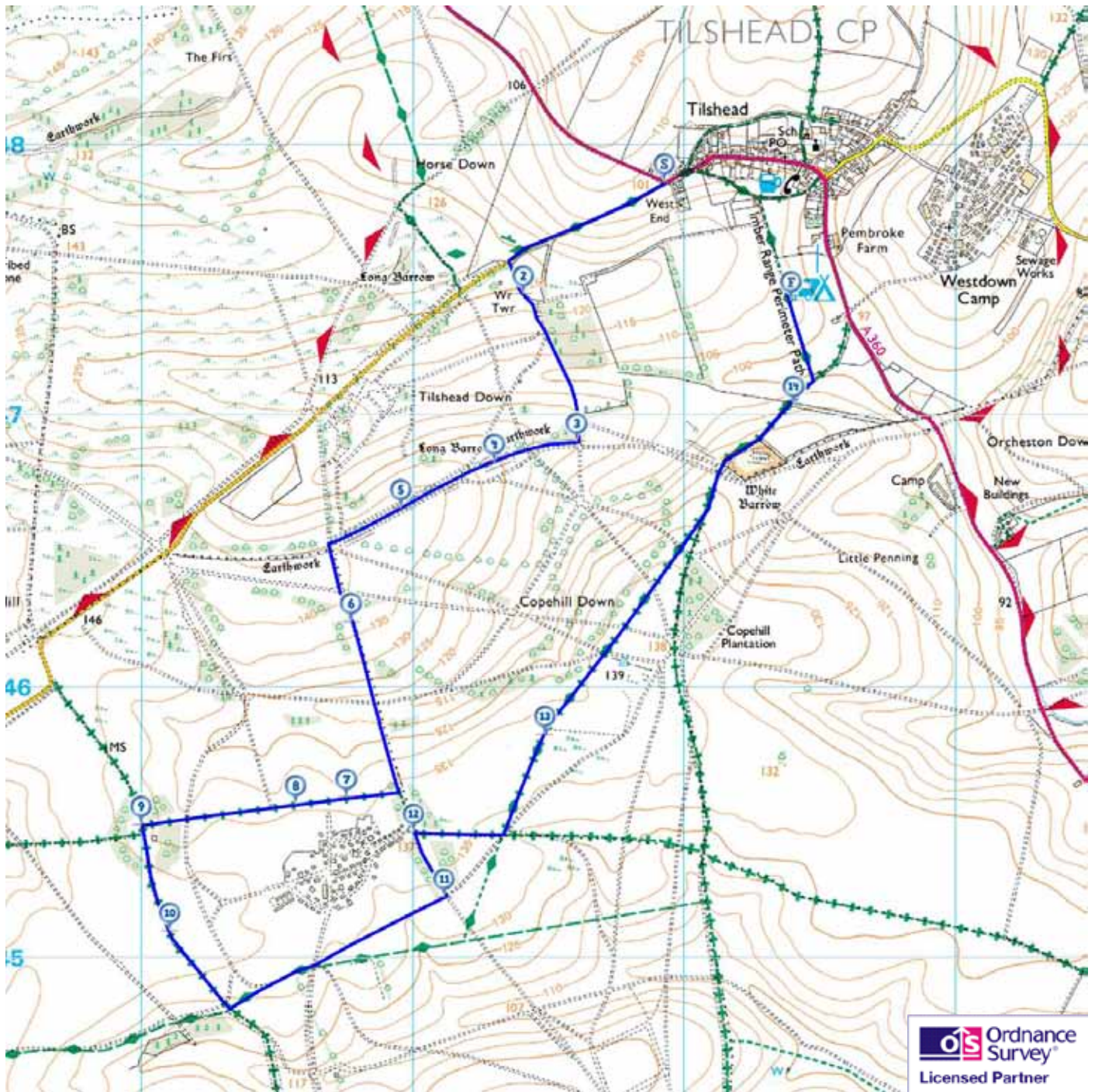
Hunt in puddles for a tiny translucent shrimp and look out for the largest bird species in Europe.

The extremes of Salisbury Plain sit side by side. Use this spectacular landscape to stretch your legs, blow away the cobwebs and fire the imagination.

Practical information

Location	Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire, Southwest England
Getting there	<p>Car - Located on the A360 10 miles south of Devizes and 15 miles north of Salisbury. Also only 7 miles from Stonehenge.</p> <p>Parking - At the western end of Tilshead village is a garage/petrol station at a road junction. At the bottom of the minor road signposted Chitterne is a rough parking area on the right (free).</p> <p>Bus - Served by local buses running between Devizes and Salisbury (limited services). Southbound stop near Tilshead Garage; northbound stop opposite the Rose and Crown pub.</p>
Start point	Tilshead Garage
Postcode	SP3 4SB
Finish point	Tilshead village
Distance	6 miles
Level	Moderate - A fairly easy walk around the undulating chalk grasslands mainly on gravel tracks and grass paths.
Conditions	Can be muddy after wet weather.
Suitable for	<p>Families - The possibility of seeing tanks and soldiers may appeal</p> <p>Dogs - The MOD advises to keep dogs under close control around the military training area; during training exercises there may be noise from shells and gunfire that could cause distress.</p>
Refreshments	<p>No facilities available on the walk route.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- In Tilshead village, food is available at Tilshead Garage (mini-supermarket) and the Rose and Crown pub.- Also recommended is The Bridge Inn in the next village of West Lavington.
Facilities	No public toilets available in the village or on the walk route.
Other info	- Spring and summer is the best time of year to appreciate the richness of the chalk grasslands including wildflowers and insects
Tourist information	<p>Visit Wiltshire www.visitwiltshire.co.uk</p> <p>Nearest Tourist Information Centres in Salisbury and Warminster</p>

Route map



Stopping points

1. Tilshead Garage
2. Military car park at water tower
3. Northeast end of Long Barrow
4. Gap in trees about half way along Long Barrow
5. Southwest end of Long Barrow
6. Beyond crossroads of tracks just south of end of Long Barrow
7. North side of FIBUA village
8. North side of FIBUA village
9. Crossroads of tracks amid trees to west of FIBUA village
10. Track to west of FIBUA village
11. T junction at southeast corner of FIBUA village
12. East entrance to FIBUA village
13. Copehill Down
14. Track just beyond White Barrow
15. Footpath between fields running parallel to A360

Important information

This walk takes place in an active military training area so you might see or hear soldiers on training exercises. Don't be afraid of them, but neither should you interrupt their training activities.

It is safe to walk in this part of the training area as live ammunition is not used here BUT if you do see some military debris on the ground please **DO NOT** touch it, let alone pick it up and take it home.

More information about military training on Salisbury Plain can be found in the DTE Salisbury Plain online Public information Leaflet http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/D6449926-64C9-4DCA-B805-9716E9B7CFD1/0/dte_info_leaflet_salisburyplain.pdf

Directions

Listen to each track then read the directions in the boxes below to get to the next stop.

1. Welcome to Salisbury Plain

Tilshead Garage

Directions 1

From Tilshead Garage at the western end of the village take the minor road opposite signposted Chitterne which heads straight upwards towards some trees. After about a third of a mile at the brow of the hill turn left into a large car park signposted "No access for civilian vehicles". Stop at the left hand side of the car park and listen to Track 2.

2. Keep out!

Military car park at water tower

Directions 2

Go towards the left corner of the car park away from the road and the water tower. Follow the track and it goes gently downhill, through a dip and up the other side. Stop at the top where there is a line of trees stretching to the left and right and listen to Track 3.

3. Biting wind and bitter cold

Northeast end of Long Barrow

Directions 3

From the track, turn right along the footpath through the avenue of trees. After about 200 metres is a break in the trees and it is obvious that you are standing on an embankment. Stop here and listen to Track 4.

4. A fossilized landscape

Gap in trees about half way along Long Barrow

Directions 4

Continue following the footpath along the embankment as it heads back into the avenue of trees. Look carefully on the tree trunks for graffiti. Stop when you find some and listen to Track 5.

5. Tree graffiti

Southwest end of Long Barrow

Directions 5

Continue following the footpath through the avenue of trees. When you reach a broad gravel track turn left. After about 100 metres is a crossroads of tracks where you should go straight on. After another 50 metres the line of trees on the left ends and the track starts to descend. Stop here with expansive views to the south and listen to Track 6.

6. An ancient grassland

Beyond crossroads of tracks just south of end of Long Barrow

Directions 6

Continue along the track as it heads down into the dip and up the other side. Immediately after a line of trees begins on both sides of the track take the track on the right which is signposted as a Byway. Stop after about 50 metres where you have a good view of the village and listen to Track 7.

7. A little bit of Iraq in Wiltshire

North side of FIBUA village

Directions 7

Remain in the same place but stand with your back to the village to look north and listen to Track 8.

8. Ghost village

North side of FIBUA village

Directions 8

We are now going to circumnavigate the village. Don't be alarmed if there is activity within the village – the footpath around it is a public right of way and safe to use. Any shooting or firing here is simulated, as we are in a dry training area where live ammunition is not used.

Continue along the track with the village on your left. When you reach a crossroads of tracks go straight on into the trees. This is signposted as a Byway. About 100 metres further is another crossroads surrounded by trees. Stop here and listen to Track 9.

9. Ambush

Crossroads of tracks amid trees to west of FIBUA village

Directions 9

At the crossroads turn left (note that all four directions are marked as Byways) in a southerly direction. Follow this track for about half a mile. Along the way look for ruts in the track, particularly ones filled with water. Stop when you find one and listen to Track 10.

10. The curious tale of the tank and the shrimp

Track to west of FIBUA village

Directions 10

Continue along the track. At the next junction turn left along the track signposted Byway and Imber Range Path. After about 150 metres this track merges with a wider gravel track – continue straight on. After another 150 metres is a major crossroads of tracks with the FIBUA village entrance to the left – continue straight on with the village on your left. After another 500 metres is another crossroads. Stop here and listen to Track 11.

11. Bleak and bare

T junction at southeast corner of FIBUA village

Directions 11

At the crossroads turn left on the track that leads between trees and with the village on your left. Stop after about 250 metres where there is another entrance to the village and listen to Track 12.

12. From protests to conservation

East entrance to FIBUA village

Directions 12

Take the track opposite the entrance to the village which is signposted as a Byway. After about 300 metres and just before a major crossroads, take the minor track to the left across the grassland which is signposted Byway and Imber Range Path. This will take you across Copehill Down. Stop somewhere along this path on the open grassland and listen to Track 13.

13. Big birds

Copehill Down

Directions 13

Continue along the track across the open grassland of Copehill Down. For some distance it stays on the highest ground. There are several crossroads of tracks but continue straight following the signposted Byway and Imber Range Path.

After some way the track starts to drop steadily downhill and merges with another track coming from the right. Continue following the Byway and Imber Range Path which becomes a gravel track. Look out for the White Barrow owned by the National Trust on the right side. You may wish to go over the stile into the site and have a look. Stop about 100 metres beyond the White Barrow and listen to Track 14.

14. A buffer zone

Track just beyond White Barrow

Directions 14

Continue down the gravel track for a short distance then take the footpath on the left signposted Imber Range Path. Follow the path as it rises gently between fields. Stop before you reach the trees at the right side of the path and listen to Track 15.

15. Defender of the nation and nature

Footpath between fields running parallel to A360

Directions 15

Continue along the footpath with a row of trees on the right and fields on the left. When you reach a junction of paths bear left following the Restricted Byway sign. This path takes you behind the houses of the village to High Street. The garage and car park are to the left; the bus stop southbound towards Salisbury is on the opposite side; and the Rose and Crown pub and bus stop northbound towards Devizes is to the right.

Credits

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Tank tracks across the grassland
© Andrew Smith, Geograph (CCL)

Further information

Sources of further information about the the walk story and places of interest nearby:

Abandoned communities – Imber

www.abandonedcommunities.co.uk/imber.html

Defence Archaeology Group

www.dmasuk.org

Fairy Shrimp

www.arkive.org/fairy-shrimp/chirocephalus-diaphanus

Forever Imber

www.foreverimber.org.uk

Great Bustard Group

greatbustard.org

Imber Church

www.imberchurch.org.uk

Ministry of Defence – Access and Recreation

www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/DefenceEstateandEnvironment/AccessRecreation

Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum

www.salisburymuseum.org.uk

Salisbury Plain Training Area Mapping Project

www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/research/landscapes-and-areas/national-mapping-programme/salisbury-plain-nmp

Stonehenge Downland

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/stonehenge-landscape

Stonehenge

www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/stonehenge

Wiltshire Heritage Museum

www.wiltshireheritage.org.uk

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