

Norton Bavant and Scratchbury Hill



ART OF BALANCE

This walk takes in several Iron Age Hillforts that are a common feature of the chalk uplands of Wiltshire, including Scratchbury Hill - one of the finest hillforts in the area. Views from the Imber Range Perimeter Path are far ranging, particularly eastwards towards the forbidden military training grounds of Salisbury Plain.

The walk

1 Start

From the phone box at Norton Bavant, take the road which leads north towards Scratchbury Hill. On reaching the B3414, cross over to the pavement and turn L towards Warminster. This is a very busy road and care should be taken when crossing. After approximately 250 yds bear R onto a road marked as a dead-end and signposted North Farm. As you continue to your L you will see Middle Hill and Battlesbury Hill. Cross over the railway bridge and continue on past Middleton Cottage and up a slight incline. To

your L, the land beyond Middleton Farm was the site of the medieval village of Middleton.

2 1.6km/ 1 mile

As the road levels out you will reach a 90-degree bend in the metalled road and a junction of three public footpaths. On rounding the bend continue for about 20 yds and turn R through a kissing gate. You are now joining the Imber Range Perimeter Path and beginning the ascent of Scratchbury Hill. Continue up the field with the fence on your R and go through the next kissing gate.

Once through, look back to Middle Hill and you will see some of the finest Strip Lynchets to be seen anywhere. These man-made terraces were designed to ease cultivation on steep hillsides. Turn to the L and continue the climb upwards bearing R after a short while toward a star sign. These signs indicate areas of archaeological significance. The open chalk downland around Scratchbury Hill is home to a rich variety of flora. In spring and early summer cowslips, harebells, trefoil and common milkwort abound. Having reached the level of the

first of the star signs turn L and head towards the second star sign, skirting the summit of the hill. On reaching the sign continue along the ridge for even better views. This is a lovely spot to stop for a picnic on a fine day.

3 2.8km / 1¾ miles

As you reach the end of this ridge drop down to your L to the hunting gate and continue walking with the fence on your L. After approximately 150 yds, take the stile on your L-hand side and cross the field. Head diagonally towards a stile and signpost on the other side. As you approach the stile, to your R are fine views across towards Sutton Veny and St John the Evangelist church. Take the stile and continue to follow the path through this area of open downland

which has a number of tumuli located upon it. After ¼ mile leave the IRPP bearing R on the bridleway that descends down Cotley Hill.

4 4.4km/ 2¾ miles

On reaching the base of the hill at the A36 roundabout, cross over the B3414 and skirting the roundabout bear R towards Sutton Veny. Be extremely careful, as there are no pedestrian crossings or pavement, although there is a grass verge on which you can walk. Just after the railway bridge turn R onto the footpath which heads back towards Norton Bavant. On reaching the metalled road, continue for 75 yds and at the junction bear R. Continue on to the next T-junction where you turn L and back to the starting point.

POINTS OF INTEREST AND LOCAL INFORMATION

- Battlesbury Hill is an Iron Age hillfort dating from approximately 50BC. It was probably a permanent settlement judging by the artefacts that have been discovered
- Scratchbury Hill also dates from approximately 50BC and is sited on a spur overlooking the Wylde Valley. Within it are the remains of a smaller Iron Age enclosure and five Bronze Age round barrows
- St Peter and St Paul Church in nearby Heytesbury dates from the 13th century but is much restored. There is a fine 16th century stonescreen, and the pillars of the choir arcade are embellished with Purbeck marble in the style of Salisbury Cathedral
- St Leonard Old Church and St John the Evangelist Church in Sutton Veny - from 1868 the former was allowed to become a picturesque ruin due to its low damp site, replaced by St John the Evangelist Church which was built on higher ground



IS THIS WALK FOR YOU?

Terrain Quiet lanes, field paths, tracks and roads
Stiles 1
Suitable for
 Average walkers

PLANNING

Start/parking

Parking Norton Bavant ST907433 – four spaces
 ST908438 – six spaces
 ST909445 – two spaces
 ST910446 – six spaces

Nearest town

Warminster

Refreshments Nearby in Heytesbury you will find the Village Stores, the Angel Coaching Inn and Red Lion Public House.

Public toilets Facilities in Heytesbury

Public transport

There are no bus links into Norton Bavant, but buses do run along nearby B3414. For further details contact Wiltshire Bus Line, tel 08457 090899

MAPS

Ordnance Survey Explorer 143 Warminster & Trowbridge, Westbury and Mere.

ACCOMMODATION

If you would like to find somewhere to stay in Wiltshire, please go to www.visitwiltshire.co.uk, Where to Stay.