

# Avon Valley, Old Sarum and Bishopdown Walks

**Start point: Guildhall Square for all walks**

## **Walk 2a: Riverside Path, Avon Valley Nature Reserve – 2½ miles**

*See: River Avon, wildlife, historic park, Salisbury Arts Centre*

1. Cross the **Market Square** to the Library and walk through Market Walk, turn R and follow the **Riverside Path**, this is a shared use footpath and cycleway. After going under the railway and road bridges you come to a road, cross to the footpath opposite and turn R on a footbridge over the river.
2. Turn immediately L onto a gravel path before reaching the **Five Rivers Leisure Centre** Keep beside the river or walk up to the top of the slope for views of Old Sarum and to see wildflowers in summer. This area is part of the **Avon Valley Nature Reserve**. The path curves right and leads to a paved path.
3. Turn R, walk as far as the allotments then turn L and walk up to a T-junction, cross over, turn R and enter **Victoria Park**. Keep the hedge on your right and walk to the main gate. Cross Castle Rd at the lights, turn R, then L and cross over into Victoria Rd., walk along to the footbridge over the Ring Road.
4. Cross the railway bridge, go straight ahead to the end of Marlborough Rd. cross road and walk along Swaynes Close. Continue along the 'No-through road', to a car park and go slightly left to a gap in the wall to reach **Salisbury Arts Centre**, usually open for exhibitions and refreshments. Go along a path to a gate, cross the road to St Edmunds Church St., take the second R into Winchester St. to return to the Guildhall.

## **Walk 2b: Old Sarum – 4 miles** (there is an option of returning by bus)

*See: Ancient Monument*

1. Follow sections 1 and 2 of walk 2(a). At the paved path turn L and continue to the road. Cross over, turn R, then go straight ahead up a gravel road leading to a track, **The Portway**. Part way along you will pass the site of the historic **William Pitt Stone**. Continue along the path until it bears right then go straight ahead through a gap in the hedge. Follow the hedge on left then turn L onto a path. Go through two gates to reach the access road to **Old Sarum Castle**. *It is possible to walk round the earth works with extensive views over the city and surrounding countryside or go into the central grassy area to explore the ruins of the first **Cathedral** and the Castle.*
2. On leaving the ancient monument retrace your steps. To catch the bus go straight ahead to Castle Rd. To walk turn R though the gates and back across the field. Go down steps with handrail to **Hudson's Field**. Walk diagonally left to reach the gate onto Castle Rd. and turn R. Walk past two mini-roundabouts until you reach **Victoria Park**. Keeping the hedge on your left walk to the main gate. From here follow the route for walk 2(a) from the last sentence in section 3.

# Avon Valley, Old Sarum and Bishopdown Walks

## Walk 2c: Stratford-sub-Castle and Bishopdown – 5 miles

See: *Riverside and wildlife, views over the City and Laverstock Down*

1. Follow section 1 of walk 2(a). At the wooden bridge do not cross but continue straight ahead along a gravel path. After a small bridge, keep to the edge of the river and continue on a boardwalk along the bank. This area of reed-beds and meadows is part of the **Avon Valley Nature Reserve**.
2. In summer keep straight on along the riverbank, then bear L to reach a kissing gate onto a gravel path and turn R. In wet weather turn L along the boardwalk to the end and turn R along the gravel path. Follow the path beside a field and at a path junction, turn R and cross the footbridge over the River Avon. Continue straight ahead to Stratford Rd., turn R, cross the road and continue to the thatched houses, turn L onto footpath and follow this path uphill with **Old Sarum** ahead of you.
3. At the top turn R through a gate into a field, keep the hedge on your left and go through another gate. [To visit Old Sarum bear left along the hedge and follow the route at the end of section 1 of Walk 2b.] Otherwise turn R down steps onto a track, the Portway. Turn L to Castle Rd, cross over at the traffic island and walk up Old Castle Rd.
4. As the road bends left take the footpath R and continue along a gravel path with views over the city. When the path passes between high hedges, go through an opening on the L. onto **Bishopdown** with views over Laverstock. [*This area is to become a Country Park after which there will be further opportunities for walking across the downs.*]
5. Continue in the same direction keeping the hedge on your right to reach the road. Walk straight on along Bishopdown Rd. into St Marks Avenue, after crossing an unmade road take a footpath up to the R which then descends to a footbridge over the Ring Road.
6. After crossing the bridge take the first L, cross over into Queens Rd to walk across a recreation area to reach **Bourne Hill Gardens**. Walk straight ahead past the Council Offices **and** turn R past the **Salisbury Arts Centre**, cross the road and walk along St Edmunds Church St., take the second R into Winchester St. to return to the Guildhall Square.