

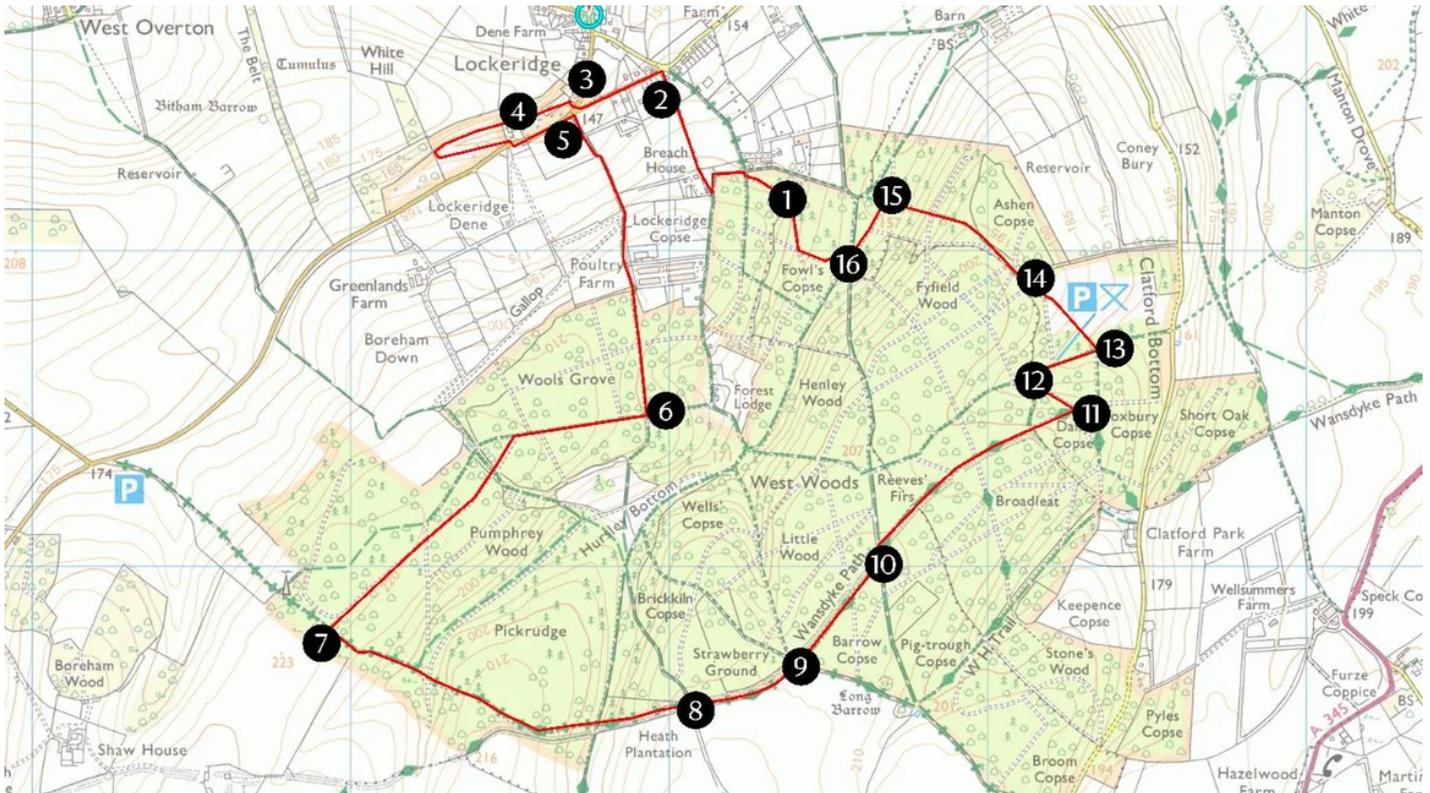
WILTSHIRE

Lockeridge Dene walking trail

Strike out on an adventurous circular walk through Lockeridge Dene that takes in beech woodland and a valley filled with intriguing sarsen boulders. You'll follow the Wansdyke medieval earthwork for part of the trail and have the chance to look out over the surrounding downland and spot birds such as buzzards and nuthatches.

i See bluebells in springtime

West Woods is famous locally for the carpets of bluebells stretching in every direction amongst the 800 acres of beech trees in late April and May.



Information

Address: West Woods forestry commission car park, (off Ryles Lane/Hillside Lockeridge). Nearest postcode SN8 4ED.

OS map: Explorer 157

Activity: Walking

Challenging: Undulating trail on hard tracks, muddy woodland paths and public bridleways. For further details, please see Terrain section.

Dog friendly: Dogs are welcome but please keep them on a lead as the site is grazed by livestock.

Full trail: Miles: 6 (km: 9.6)

Access: Challenging

Duration: 3 hours

Terrain

This walk follows hard tracks, muddy woodland paths and grassy valleys as well as public footpaths and bridleways across farmland with stiles and pedestrian gates. Surfaces can be very uneven and muddy with potholes and loose gravel. This route also crosses a

Total steps: 16

Start point: West Woods forestry commission car park, (off Ryles Lane/Hillside Lockeridge). Nearest postcode SN8 4ED. Grid ref: SU 15238 67257

1. The car park is located at the end of an unnamed no-through road at the junction where Ryles Lane becomes Hillside. From the car park turn back the way you drove in and, just after the entrance, turn left onto an adjoining hardcore track signposted as a bridleway. Just before you reach the house in front of you, right on the bend you will see a gate with a stile next to it. Climb over the stile and cross the orchard diagonally to the right, climbing over another stile next to the stone wall and into a field. Please keep dogs on a lead as sheep graze this field. Keeping the fence on your left, make your way down the hill and over the stile at the bottom.
2. Walk through this small wooded area, keeping the fence and outbuildings on your left. The path can get quite narrow and overgrown in places. You will eventually emerge on the driveway of a private house. Continue down the drive and out onto the road where you will turn left towards Lockeridge village. Please take care when walking down this road as there are no pavements.
3. When you reach the play area on your right cut through it diagonally to the left and cross the minor road to reach the entrance gate to Lockeridge Dene. Lockeridge Dene contains what is known as a sarsen stream – a valley filled with sarsen stone boulders – which provides the perfect habitat for rare lichens and mosses. Take a moment to read the interpretation panel at the entrance, then follow the well-trodden path along the valley and up the slope behind the house in the middle of the site. As you reach the top

minor road and takes you along minor roads without pavements through Lockeridge village, so please take care.

of the slope you will find yourself in the middle of a large well-used badger sett. If you're lucky you might spot some trails of old bedding (dried grass) or even badger fur caught up on the fences. Turn left and pass through the gate into the other half of the Dene.

4. Carry straight on following the path along the slope, which has fantastic views of the sarsen boulders in the valley below. You will eventually drop down onto the valley floor – turn left immediately, as if you're going back on yourself, and follow the well-trodden paths along the valley back towards the house. Just before the house, bear right towards the road and a gate with a stile. Climb over the stile, carefully cross the road and turn left, walking back along the road for around 100 yards (91 metres).
5. Just beyond the 'Lockeridge Please Drive Carefully' sign, turn right onto a bridleway signposted 'Huish' and follow the narrow path up the hill. When you reach a large metal gate, pass through it, keeping to the left of the field to continue up the hill. Pass through another gate with a bridleway sign and continue straight on.
6. When you reach a major junction with a hardcore track, turn right onto this track which is signposted as a bridleway. Keep following the hardcore track until a crossroads where the hardcore ends and it becomes a trackway. Continue over the crossroads and follow the trackway until it begins to bear round to the right.
7. At this point cut through a gap in the vegetation on your left to join the main byway which runs along the southern perimeter of the woods and turn left onto it. Follow this path through beech and bluebell woodland, listening to the calls of the pheasants and bird song or smelling the scent of wild garlic in the air.
8. At the crossroads where the byway, the Wansdyke and a bridleway all join, continue straight on (it's signposted 'Byway Open to All Traffic' and 'White Horse Trail'). Continue straight on round the bend – the Wansdyke should now be on your left with fields to the right.
9. At the next junction turn left to pass through a row of wooden bollards, then turn immediately right onto a path signposted 'Public bridleway' and 'Wansdyke Path'. Continue on this path with the Wansdyke on your left.
10. When you get to a waymark post at a T-junction turn left, still following the Wansdyke Path. Around 10 yards (9 metres) further on, turn right and continue along the Wansdyke Path with the Wansdyke now on your right. Continue on past the junction with the Easy Access Trail, following the bridleway sign. Just past the second bench on your right, the Wansdyke veers off at 90 degrees to the right – carry straight on at this point.
11. When you reach a T-junction you leave the Wansdyke Path and turn left. Carry on down the hill, following the bridleway signs, until you reach a tarmac road.
12. Turn right onto the road and 50 yards (46 metres) further along you will see a picnic area – the perfect place to stop for lunch or a snack. Continue on along the tarmac road, past the picnic area on your left until you come to a bridleway sign.
13. Turn left here and pass through the pedestrian gate into a grassy field. Cross the field diagonally to the left and continue uphill until you spot a gate in the top left-hand corner.
14. Go through the gate and bear right at the first bridleway sign. Continue following the bridleway signs through this part of the wood and you should eventually start to descend down a steep and slippery hill. Continue following the bridleway signs down the hill until you reach the bottom.
15. At the bottom, turn left onto a track, ignoring the bridleway sign ahead of you. Continue along this track, straight across at a crossroads, until you reach a hardcore road.
16. Turn right onto the hardcore road and follow it up the hill, passing through a kissing gate at the top and into the car park where you began the walk.

End point: West Woods forestry commission car park, (off Ryles Lane/Hillside Lockeridge).
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