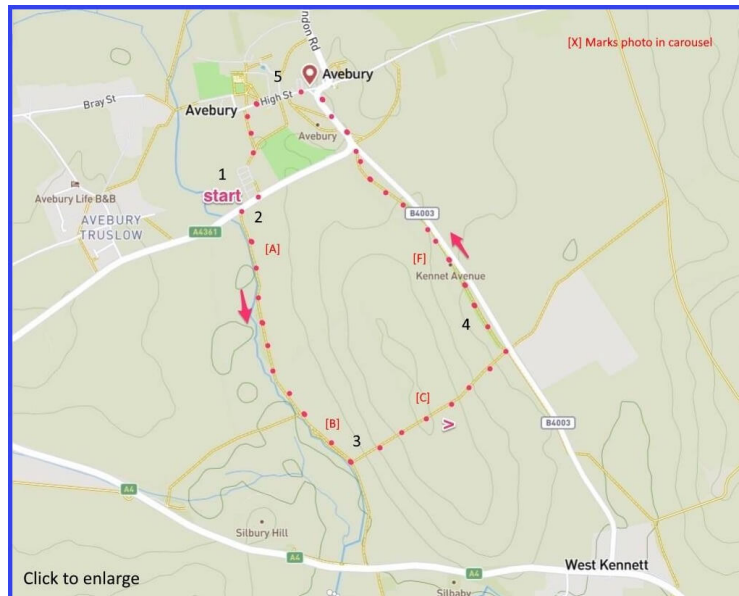




Avebury

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SN8 1QT A short walk (about 3 miles) through neolithic landscape fields, One significant slope. Likely to be other walkers ([click map to enlarge](#). [Click here](#) for arial view) [Click here](#) to download/print PDF



(Routes suggested from each map point + metres to next point)

- 1 Start at National Trust car park. Walk to Beckhampton Road. Right turn. Pick up footpath across this road. 90m
- 2 Follow path alongside river (picture [A](#)). 500m
- 3 With a view of Silbury Hill on your right (pic [B](#)) and 250m from main road, turn left to walk up field incline towards B4003 and a view over the ancient landscape (pic [D](#)). 650m
- 4: Walk along the avenue of stones (pic [F](#)) and into the High Street. 1.2km
- 5: In the village there is some pleasant domestic sights here including the parish church (pic [I](#)). There is a marked footpath nearby that takes you back to the car park. 600m

The pictures below are in the order things were seen on this walk. Clicking on any one will enlarge it (and the slideshow)



[\[B\]](#)



[\[C\]](#)

A walk first alongside the River Kennet, then taking a view of Silbury Hill, then a steep climb to a point where you enter the avenue of Avebury stones. Ending in the village where there are a few buildings to admire, a parish church and a haunted pub. There are likely to be other visitors on and around this walk – although they may be concentrated in the village.

Stones

The 100-stone sarsen circle (and internal smaller circles) within a henge (ditch with high bank) was here before the village (which is 18th century): in fact the circle is the earliest known Neolithic settlement in the country, and the largest in Europe. Perhaps sadly, it's also the only one harbouring a small village and roads that quarter the circle. One of its problems has been the legacy of mediaeval Christians knocking it about as 'pagan' – even plundering the stones when building village houses. Village development has been purposely thinned out since the 1930s, partly thanks to wealthy enthusiast Alexander Kieller (heir to the Dundee marmalade fortune) buying up the village and surrounds for excavation in 1934, taking the Manor House to live in. His passion for the place helped recover it, but the scattering of uneven stones at this site makes it hard for the inexperienced visitor to get a sense of geometry and scale without consulting diagrams.

It's likely that you will get your main neolithic impact when walking down the parallel line of stones (map point 4; pic [G](#)) that comprises the '[West Kennet Avenue](#)' and which seems to have linked the Circle to the nearby [Sanctuary](#) site on Overton Hill. There may have been other linking avenues of this kind to similarly related sites. Your other point of potential visiting impact is Kieller's coach house and stables, converted by him (1938) to a [museum](#) of the site (ironically incorporating plundered stones). Plus the adjacent 17th century timber, thatched Great Barn which has been recently renovated to house a display of Wiltshire rural life.

Hill

You will also walk past chalk-and-clay [Silbury Hill](#) (2400 BC?) – its construction calculated to have needed 10 years, if built by 700 men (arbitrary sums): their labour making it the largest of its kind in Europe. A truncated cone with a flat top (from which you can see the four main neolithic sites in this area). Commentators are fond of saying this work was contemporaneous with (or preceding) the Pyramids (and Silbury is about the same size as some of them). Yet it's not clear what the Hill was for. It doesn't seem to have been used for burial. The '[walking artist](#)' Richard Long has made use of his walk up this Hill to create a successful [gallery piece](#). Point 4 on the map is where you will get a compelling and memorable view (pics [D](#) & [E](#)). This [drone video](#) may help you place it.

Village

That just leaves the village. It has a good share of 18th century and beyond domestic buildings (pic [8](#)). Avebury Manor (C16/17) is on the site of a dissolved Benedictine priory and now owned by National Trust. There is the 17th century Red Lion pub for refreshment – the only pub known to be within a neolithic stone circle. More often overlooked outside the pub is the round stone of an old cider pressing mill. The Red Lion also has its own ghost story. Well several actually. One arises from its former status as a nineteenth century coaching inn (farmhouse before that) – a ghostly carriage clatters through its yard occasionally. Then poor Florrie was put away by her husband who, returning from the Civil War, found her with a lover (killed him also). Florrie's body was thrown down a well – that is now glassed over as a table in the bar.

And finally there is the parish church of [St James](#) (pic [1](#)) some parts of which date back to 1000AD, the south doorway being strikingly Norman. Also find a rare rood screen and loft at the East end – surviving the removal of such catholic things in the Henry VIII period.

If you seek a video account of the place for a bit more detail and context, try this [long version](#) (30') or for something more snappy and a bit less romantic, try this [short version](#) (3').