

# A BOOT UP NORTH WILTSHIRE PUBS

Robert Wood

The watery vein that runs through North Wiltshire is not the Thames, which soon disappears into Oxfordshire, but the Kennet & Avon Canal. Throughout the area there is a pleasing mix of downland (the Marlborough Downs and the downs above the M4 east of Swindon) and woods and forest (West Woods and Savernake Forest). The ridges offer opportunities to secure unforgettable views of the countryside around.

As might be expected, the Romans were here and feature in four of the walks. The Civil War was here too, and features in the walks centred on Malmesbury, Aldbourne where there was a tussle in 1643, and Devizes where north of the town at Roundway Hill the Royalists won their last victory later in 1643.

With its variety there can be fewer better areas for walking. And the pubs aren't bad either.

The ten circular walks, ranging from 3.5 to 9 miles, suit the needs of families, groups of friends or individuals looking for a gentle stroll or a longer walk, and reflect the many varied facets of the area – its people, its history, and its working landscape and will help first time visitors to experience some of the great scenery the area has to offer. The ten walks are: Malmesbury and Little Somerford; Bremhill and Maud Heath; Devizes and Roundway Hill; Clyffe Pypard and Bincnoll Castle; the Lydiards and Purton; Pewsey and the Kennet & Avon Canal; Wansdyke and West Woods; Aldbourne and Snap; Savernake Forest, Great Bedwyn and Wilton; and Wexcombe, Chute Causeway and Hippenscombe.

Halsgrove's new-format guidebook, containing maps, photographs and useful information will ensure a great walking experience. Packed with colour, the book is an ideal reminder of a visit to the area.

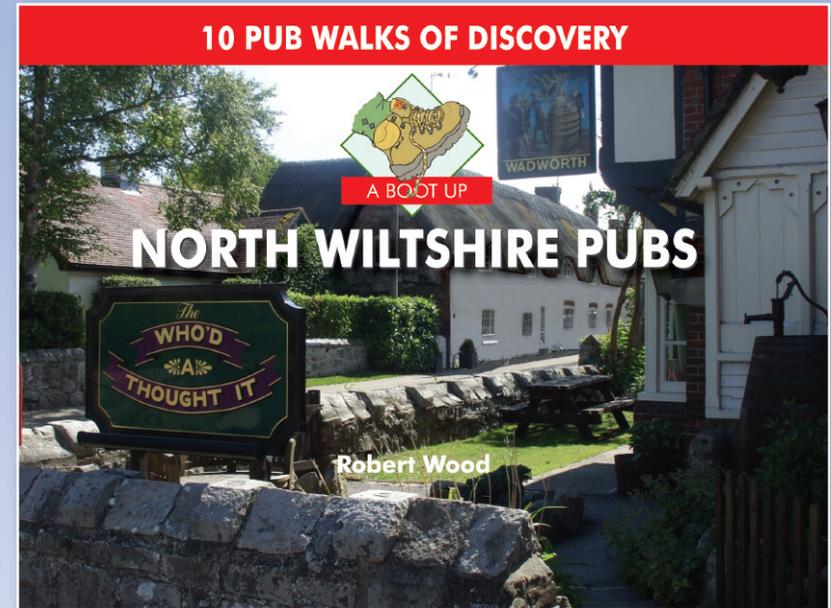
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In previous lives Robert Wood was a researcher, an academic and a business psychologist. Now he concentrates on writing walking books. He has written *A Boot Up the North Hampshire Downs*, *A Boot Up the Berkshire Downs* and *A Boot Up the Chilterns*, also for Halsgrove.

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Halsgrove Publishing, Halsgrove House, Ryelands Business Park, Bagley Road,  
Wellington, Somerset TA21 9PZ Tel: 01823 653777 Fax: 01823 216796  
[www.halsgrove.com](http://www.halsgrove.com) e-mail: [sales@halsgrove.com](mailto:sales@halsgrove.com)

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**2** Bremhill and Maud Heath

known as "Brimble", Bremhill is a very pleasant corner of the world with its stepped cross (restored), its church and its old houses all in close proximity.

Go up to St Martin's church (1200) and pick out a path that skirts the churchyard. Pass through an old iron gate and continue to another old iron gate on the right. Proceed past the fine Manor House to reach a road and the Dumb Post Inn.

Once you are ready to depart the immediate vicinity do make that short drive to Islkneys and the 64 circles (946257) where Maud Heath took on and conquered the Avon marshes.

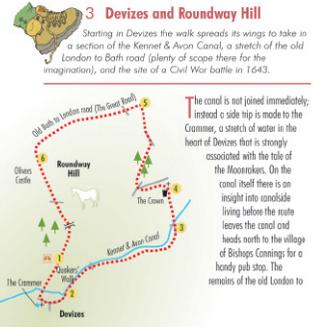
**3** Devizes and Roundway Hill

Starting in Devizes the walk spreads its wings to take in a section of the Kennet & Avon Canal, a stretch of the old London to Bath road (plenty of scope here for the imaginative), and the site of a Civil War battle in 1643.

The canal is not joined immediately; instead a side trip is made to the Cummur, a stretch of water in the heart of Devizes that is strongly associated with the tale of the Mootswallow. On the canal itself there is an insight into canal-side living before the route leaves the canal and heads north to the village of Bishops Cleeves for a handy pub stop. The remains of the old London to

**Levels:** 4/5  
**Length:** 8 1/2 miles  
**Terrain:** Good walking often no less. There are two slightly steeper sections.  
**Park and Start:** Roundway Park, Devizes at the point where it is crossed by the Newer Bridge (SR 011162).  
**Maps:** OS Explorer 157

**Devizes and Roundway Hill**


Example of a double-page spread.

Right: The 'Who'd a Thought It'

Below: The Swan, Wilton



Above: Malmesbury skyline

Left: The Dumb Post Inn

Below: The Broad Town White Horse

