

## Wessex Self-Guided Tour (7 nights) – Day-by-Day Summary

(L = longer option(s) available, S = shorter option(s) available)

### **Day 1 Arrive Bath**

After arriving in Bath and checking into your accommodation, you can go and collect your rental bicycle, explore the town and/or go for a short warm up ride to check out the bike and equipment.

### **Day 2 Bath to Heytesbury 58km / +782m**

You leave Bath along the traffic-free Two Tunnels NCN route which exits the city to the south. At Wellow you pedal east through the village of Hinton Charterhouse to visit Farleigh Hungerford Castle. Turning south you ride through Rode, and on through Dilton Marsh and Corsley, entering the Longleat Estate from the north. Riding through the estate, you can stop to take a tour of Longleat House. Leaving the estate you continue through the villages of Crockerton, Sutton Veny and Tytherington to finish in Heytesbury.

### **Day 3 Heytesbury to Salisbury 31km / +166m (L)**

Backtracking from Longbridge Deverill, you ride through **Longleat Estate**, stopping to visit the magnificent **Longleat House** if you wish. Leaving Longleat you skirt around the southern outskirts of Warminster to meet the valley of the River Wylde at Tytherington. The ride down the beautiful valley takes you through a series of picture postcard villages that line the river – thatched cottages, ancient coaching inns and medieval churches are everywhere. Arriving at Wilton, you may choose to visit **Wilton House** before heading for Salisbury with its magnificent **Cathedral** and its ancient market place.

### **Day 4 Salisbury Loop 54km / +523m (L, S)**

The loop is a ride to the west of Salisbury visiting Old Wardour Castle and the villages of Tisbury, Donhead St Andrew, Barwick St John and Bishopstone. You may also want to use the day for a visit to Stonehenge (there are buses to Stonehenge from Salisbury with the entrance fee included in the ticket) and / or Salisbury Cathedral.

### **Day 5 Salisbury to Devizes 58km / +425m (S)**

Leaving Salisbury to the north, you can take a short detour to **Old Sarum** before continuing along the valley of the River Avon to Amesbury, close to Stonehenge. There is the option of an out-and-back ride from Amesbury to **Stonehenge** on backroads (mostly) with a short off-road section. On arrival at the visitor centre you will lock your bikes and make your way to Stonehenge on foot or by the shuttle bus. (Note that it will be wise to book in advance if you plan to visit the monument). You then return to Amesbury by retracing your outward route. From Amesbury you ride north, continuing to follow the River Avon through a series of villages to Upavon, where you bear west, bypassing Pewsey and following a series of quiet country lanes to Devizes.

**Day 6            Devizes Loop****61km / +498m (L, S)**

For most, the main focus of interest on today's ride is the ancient site of Avebury, to the northeast of Devizes. You leave Devizes by backtracking on the previous day's ride into Devizes as far as the village of Beechingstoke, before turning east to ancient Pewsey (look for the statue of King Alfred). Turning north you ride to historic **Marlborough** (look for the **Marlborough White Horse** above the town, Marlborough School, alma mater of the Duchess of Cambridge, and the wide expanse of the Market Place.

Riding west from Marlborough you climb, drop and then cross the main A4 to the village of **Avebury**, where you can wander amongst the stone circles and visit the **Alexander Keiller Museum** to learn about the excavation of this remarkable site.

Leaving Avebury, you return to Devizes passing by the **Alton Barnes White Horse** (watch for hang gliders) and following the path of the **Kennet and Avon Canal**.

**Day 7            Devizes to Bath****42km / +365m (L, S)**

You leave Devizes following the Kennet and Avon Canal west to the **Caen Hill flight of locks**. The 29 locks have an impressive rise of 237 feet in 2 miles. Continuing west you reach the canal side village of Semington where you have a route decision.

- 1) continue along the Kennet and Avon Canal to Bradford-on-Avon and on into Bath
- 2) or turn north through bustling Melksham and continue to the village of Lacock to visit **Lacock Abbey** and the **Fox Talbot Museum** (Fox Talbot is credited as being the father of photography). Continue north through picture postcard **Biddestone** and **Castle Combe** (setting for the original Dr Doolittle film) before turning south again and dropping steeply to meet the Kennet and Avon Canal at Batheaston, just to the east of Bath.