

## Memorable MG Route – guide and directions

### Newbury to Castle Combe along the old A4

The route is west from Newbury through Hungerford and on to Marlborough, Calne and Chippenham. Wonderful rolling chalk downland scenery is a feature of much of the route with many sights and interesting diversion options on the way together with suggestions for refreshment stops.

Route miles	Route guide	Diversion miles
	<b>Map:</b> you will need Ordnance Survey Landranger Sheet 174 (1:50,000 or 1.25 inches to the mile).	
	<b>Diversion Option 1: Highclere Castle</b> Before you have begun the route West along the A4, there is a most interesting diversion option some 5 miles to the south of Newbury on the A34. Please refer to the Memorable MG Route article for more details.	11.1
0.0	<b>Depart Newbury on the A4</b> initially heading northwest and then west for Speen and Hungerford. Newbury is just south of M4 J14  Cross the bridge over the A34 (Newbury Bypass) in a deep cutting below.  Pass through the curiously named roadside hamlet of Halfway.	
	<b>Diversion Option 2: Kintbury village</b> Turn off left from the A4 about 1.5 miles from the hamlet called Halfway. Kintbury is an attractive Berkshire village on both the Kennet & Avon Canal and the railway line from Reading to Taunton.	3.1
	<b>At Hungerford</b> there are two diversion options.	
	<b>Diversion Option 3: Hungerford town centre and the Kennet &amp; Avon Canal</b> Turn left (south) for the attractive town centre of Hungerford which is approached by crossing the Kennet & Avon Canal. In the early morning sunshine the canal here is a beautiful sight.	0.9
	<b>Diversion Option 4: Hungerford Common</b> Continue south from Hungerford town centre up hill and cross cattle grids onto the common. Here you can see cattle grazing on the common and distant views (SSE) of Combe Gibbet at Inkpen and Walbury Hill, high points (at over 950ft) in the area.	1.3
9.1	<b>Depart Hungerford on the A4</b> heading west.  Pass through the village of Froxfield on the A4.  <b>Wonderful views are a feature of this section of the route:</b> on the right (north) the rising downland with arable farming and to the left (south) fields stretching across to the woodland on the higher ground. One area of woodland is on Bedwyn Common and then the much larger Savernake Forest to the southwest which meets the road (A4) as you begin to approach Marlborough. In fact the hill down to Marlborough is called Forest Hill. To the north at this point is Stitchcombe Hill – see page 4 below.  <b>Map:</b> at this point you reach the western edge of the Ordnance Survey Landranger Sheet 174 (1:50,000 or 1.25 inches to the mile) and you will need to switch to Landranger Sheet 173 for the remainder of the route.	

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- 19.1 At Marlborough** there is good reason to stop because, not only is the layout of the town impressive and the architecture very interesting, it has a wide centre (claimed to be the widest in England) providing both good vistas and very convenient parking, but there is another major attraction – the Polly Tea Rooms. Here you can enjoy some of the finest cream teas and ice creams.

**Depart Marlborough** on the A4 passing Marlborough College on the western outskirts of the town. The road then opens up with smooth bends and undulations which provide a great deal of pleasure for an MG driver. The roadside hamlet of Fyfield is reached in less than 3 miles.

**Wonderful rolling chalk downland scenery** is the key feature of the next section of the route to Calne. On both sides of the A4 there are many ancient earthworks, ditches and burial mounds (for example the west Kennett Long Barrow – see page 4), hill forts, sites of Roman villas and race horse training courses. On the left (south) is the River Kennet with its source just northwest of Avebury.

**The Ridgeway** crosses the A4 on Overton Hill just before the roadside hamlet of West Kennett. This ancient route runs south-north at this point heading for Hackpen Hill on the Marlborough Downs to the north, but for much of its length across the Berkshire Downs it runs west-east. A well known section in Berkshire is at the ancient hill fort of Uffington Castle with the famous White Horse on the north facing scarp slope.

**Silbury Hill** is soon seen ahead close to the A4. There is a large lay-by on the lefthand side of the road just before you reach the Hill which is a convenient place to stop. A visit and climb to the top of this ancient 130ft man-made mound has always been an enjoyable event but in 2007 access has not been allowed. Major works to stabilise sections of the Hill following the collapse of exploratory tunnels and excavations over the last few hundred years have been in progress but hopefully access will resume when those works are complete. But even from the roadside the Hill is an impressive sight.

- 25.3 At Beckhampton**, a small roadside village at the junction of the A4 and the A4361 to Swindon, there are two diversion options.

### **Diversion Option 5: Great Stone Circle at Avebury**

**2.1**

Turn right on to the A4361 for marked Swindon and in a mile you reach Avebury. Parking outside the village as you approach from the south and then walking in is best as parking in the centre of the village is very restricted. The Great Stone Circle is impressive and well worth a visit.

### **Diversion 6: Science Museum Swindon**

**14.4**

Continue north on the A4361 from Avebury with views to the right (east) to Hackpen Hill on the Marlborough Downs. A little further on a lay-by on the left is a wonderful spot for long views over the valley to Lyneham (military airfield), the village of Wootton Bassett and the M4 and Swindon further north. The museum is located on Wroughton Aerodrome, a large airfield to the east of the A4361 before you reach the hill down to the large village of Wroughton. The entrance to the museum is well sign posted but you will need care turning right off this road as traffic travels at considerable speeds. It is essential to check the opening times of the museum online or by telephone before including this option in your itinerary.

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**Return to Beckhampton** by travelling south on the A4361 and rejoin the A4

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for Calne.

- 32.1 At Calne** the architecture of the former bacon curing and sausage industry is a reminder of the former dominant activity in this market town. There is a motor museum here – see page 4. The route then continues to Chippenham.

### Diversion Option 7: Bowood House

4.8

Some 2 miles West of Calne, a turning to the left (south) takes you to the small village of Derry Hill and Bowood House just to the south of the A4.

**Return to the A4** using the A342 from Derry Hill and shortly you begin the descent to Chippenham.

- 38.8 At Chippenham** you need to take great care navigating round the town to the south and then west and finally north. Follow the signs for A420 Bristol East and the M4 J17. On the northern section of what feels like a ring road, you will see A420 Bristol East marked where you turn sharp left (west). The turning for Castle Combe (B4039) arrives in just over a mile – take care it is easy to overshoot this junction.
- 41.2 Turn right on to the A4039 to Yatton Keynell and Castle Combe.** In less than 2 miles you pass through the village of Yatton Keynell and then you reach the motor racing circuit in a further mile.
- 44.3 At Castle Combe Circuit** there are three entrances to the Circuit on this road – the first is a spectator entrance for the hairpin corner called Quarry, the second the main spectator entrance and the third is the competitors' entrance. The main spectator entrance has the benefit of good facilities and is close to the competitors' paddock area, spectator banking and a well run tea room. Note: the entrances to the Circuit are before you reach Castle Combe village which can get very congested with visitors. Should you decide to visit the village, you will almost certainly have to park well outside the village and walk in.
- 47.2 Biddestone is a good place for lunch** at the White Horse on the village green. There is good car parking next to the village pond and church alongside the pub. To reach the village you backtrack from the Circuit to the centre of Yatton Keynell where you take the appropriately names Biddestone Lane (south) and then you reach the Biddestone village in less than a mile.

### Diversion 8: Lacock Abbey

8.8

Lacock Abbey is around 4 miles south of the Chippenham ring road or you can reach it from the Castle Combe via Biddestone, Corsham and Gastard.

**An alternative lunch spot** is either the George in Lacock village or the Bell Inn at Bowden Hill just to the east of the village which has received another CAMRA award in 2007. The Bell Inn is the location of a regular Club natter and is well recommended by John James of the T Register who lives at Keynsham to the west. Full details are in the Memorable MG Route article.

47.8

The diversion options are simply suggestions for visits that you might select as individual additional features for the route. They are not intended to be an extended route. With the stops for all these options, the total route of some 95 miles plus sufficient time to enjoy each optional visit would make for a heavy day which would run counter to the aims of a Memorable MG Route.

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### **Additional notes on local places of interest from David de Saxe**

David has sent some brief notes of some of the many points of interest around Marlborough where he lives. They are set out below moving from near Hungerford west to Overton Hill as you approach Beckhampton on the A4 west of Marlborough. (9.9.07)

#### **Hungerford Common and views to Inkpen**

The views from Hungerford Common to Inkpen are mentioned in the guide. A detour to Combe Gibbet is hugely worthwhile - just park at SU 369621 (Sheet 174) and then there is a short walk. The views to the north over Berkshire are stunning - don't miss them.

#### **Wilton Windmill near Bedwyn**

This working mill at SU 276616 (Sheet 174) is two miles south of Great Bedwyn but do check for operating days.

#### **Crofton Pumping Station**

These beam engines are very near the windmill at SU 262623 (Sheet 174) which is two miles southwest of Great Bedwyn and one mile west northwest of Wilton Windmill and are marvellous machinery and in fine working order for pumping water into the Kennet and Avon Canal. Check for operating days.

#### **Stitchcombe Hill**

Stitchcombe Hill is just north of the A4 as you approach Marlborough with Savernake Forest on your left to the south. There are really wonderful views over the Kennet valley from this hill (just under 600ft high) at SU 225691 (Sheet 174).

#### **White Horses**

There are at least six white horses in Wiltshire - not counting the good pub the guide quite rightly mentions at Biddestone! - I mean chalk ones on hillsides. Arguably the best of these is on Walker's Hill near Alton Barnes at SU 107638 (Sheet 173) which is three miles south of the A4 at Overton Hill. You take a turn marked for East Kennett. It is best seen from the road between Alton Barnes and Stanton St Bernard at SU 103624 which are both very close to the Kennet and Avon Canal in the Vale of Pewsey. Alternatively you can park just south of the White Horse at SU 109628 and then walk up the hill to reach it.

#### **West Kennett Long Barrow**

West Kennett Long Barrow at SU 105677 (Sheet 174) stands on the top of a hill to the south of the A4 between Marlborough and Beckhampton. Following the A4 west out of Marlborough pass by Fyfield and West Overton. You will climb Overton Hill where the Ridgeway crosses the modern road (A4). Overton Hill is covered in round barrows and also the remains of a stone circle to the south of the A4 known as The Sanctuary. Pass through the village of West Kennett and just before you reach the huge mound of Silbury Hill there is a car park to the left of the road. Follow the signed footpath up the moderately steep hill for half a mile. See also a very useful website at:

[http://www.prehistoric.org.uk/wiltshire/west\\_kennet.html](http://www.prehistoric.org.uk/wiltshire/west_kennet.html)

That website has a very interesting panoramic video from the top of the West Kennett Long Barrow at: [http://www.prehistoric.org.uk/wiltshire/west\\_kennet\\_pano.html](http://www.prehistoric.org.uk/wiltshire/west_kennet_pano.html)

#### **Atwood's Motor Museum at Calne**

Although it is a bit of a jumble located at SU 004694 (Sheet 173) it is a good place to visit on a wet day.

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### Maps for the route

You will need to review the route with a road atlas or map so you can see much of the detail along the route and the diversion options. You can use a road atlas (a Philips Navigator Atlas for instance, which claims to show every road in the country), the relevant Ordnance Survey maps (the necessary Landranger sheets are mentioned in the route guide) or one of the online route finder services.

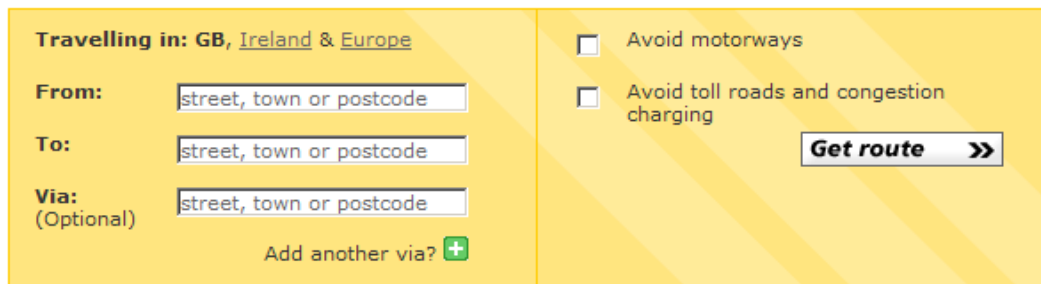
### AA online route planner service

The AA have a useful online service which enables you to set the starting point and destination and then force the route to go through particular places using the "via" options.

[http://www.theaa.com/travelwatch/planner\\_main.jsp?database=B](http://www.theaa.com/travelwatch/planner_main.jsp?database=B)

## Route Planner

You can search for a route using **street** or **postcode**, **town**, **city** or **place of interest** (eg sports ground, hospital, train station, airport). Get driving directions and a detailed map of your journey.



Using the Route Planner box above on the AA website, the route from Newbury via Hungerford, Marlborough, Calne and Chippenham to Castle Combe Circuit can be found by entering:

From: **Newbury**

To: **Castle Combe Circuit**

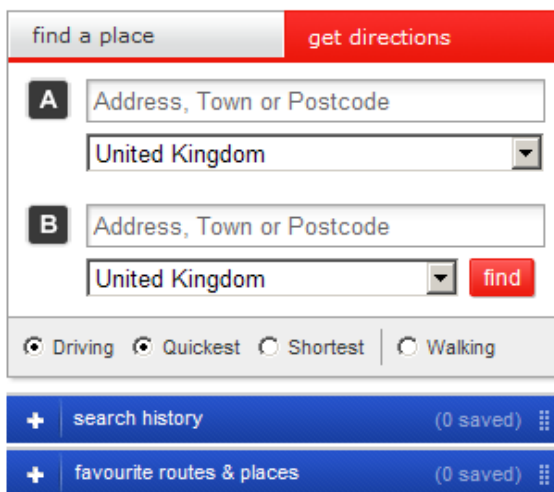
Via: enter four via options as **Hungerford, Marlborough, Calne and Chippenham, Wiltshire**.

Finally: check the "**Avoid motorways**" check box on the righthand side of the entry form.

Click: "**Get route >>**"

### Multimap route service

Multimap is a useful way of finding route directions with a map.



The route from Newbury via Hungerford, Marlborough, Calne and Chippenham to Castle Combe Circuit can be found using the Multimap route finder. Just follow these easy steps:

Go to the Multimap website at [www.multimap.com](http://www.multimap.com)

Select the tab "**get directions**".

Enter at **A: Newbury**

Enter at **B: Castle Combe Circuit**

Check the "**Shortest**" button.

Click "**find**".

The route will pop up and you can work your way through the map and study the route directions too.

### Maps

We have not included copies of maps as part of this route guide because of the internet and publishing copyright fee costs. Do get the two Ordnance Survey Landranger maps or a good road atlas.