

The Route

National Route: 45

Distance: 4.5 miles, but can be extended (see below)

Terrain: mostly traffic-free and fairly level

Public transport: railway station at Swindon

Bike hire: Coate Water Country Park - 01793 610507

Maps: Chiseldon Timberland Trail leaflet available locally from libraries or TICs, or from Great Western Community Forest on 01793 466324 or www.forestweb.org.uk/timberlandtrailchiseldon.pdf
OS maps: Explorer 169, Landranger 173

Tourist information:
Swindon TIC - 01793 530328, Marlborough TIC - 01672 513989, Avebury TIC - 01672 539425

Towns to search for on Sustrans website mapping:
Swindon, Chiseldon

Swindon to Chiseldon



The route through Coate Water Country Park

National Route 45 is signed on cycle paths from the railway station at Swindon. The route heads south-eastwards beside the road towards Coate Water Country Park. The route to the main entrance (loos and the café) is a dead end - you need to stay on the road for 200 metres to get to the cycle route through the park. Please note that there is no cycling allowed on the dam wall.

Coate Water Country Park is a popular local amenity, especially in the summer, so please give way to pedestrians. It's excellent for walkers, and you can hire a boat for a gentle row on the lake, or even try your hand at crazy golf. The route continues as the Chiseldon Timberland Trail through the country park, and then crosses the M4 on a concrete helter-skelter, and then you are following the old Swindon to Marlborough railway through an oak wood, famous for its bluebells in late spring.

The village of Chiseldon still has visible signs of its ancient roots. It is overlooked by the Iron Age earthwork that is all that remains of Liddington Castle; it is linked to the Ridgeway, possibly Britain's earliest road; and the Devil Stone beside

the entrance to Parsonage farm, with its faint image of the Grim Reaper, is almost certainly pre-Christian.

If you want to keep riding, there are three mostly traffic-free options south of Chiseldon, but these are best tackled on a mountain bike in dry conditions.

Follow National Route 45 south-westwards along the Old Ridgeway to the junction with National Route 4 where turning right onto National Route 4 will take you to Avebury. A walk around the ancient stone circle is highly recommended. If you continue to Chippenham, you can catch a train back to Swindon (about 25 miles from Swindon to Chippenham).

Alternatively, at the junction with National Route 4, turn left to Marlborough, and then return to Swindon on the railway path which, south of Chiseldon, can be rough in places (about 28 miles in total).

The flatter alternative is to continue southwards on the railway path to Marlborough (see warning above) and then double back (10.5 miles each way from Swindon to Marlborough).