

BADBURY RINGS

5 miles

O/S Map reference no. ST960031 Postcode: BH21 5DD

DIRECTIONS: Take B3082 out of Wimborne signposted to Blandford. After approximately 2½ miles you will see the entrance to Kingston Lacy House on the left. Continue for a short distance to the start of the Beech Avenue. About a mile along the Beech Avenue you will find on your right the entrance to Badbury Rings (part of the Kingston Lacy Estate and now owned by the National Trust). It is clearly signposted. (No parking charges)

ROUTE: From the car park take the path at the far end keeping parallel with the point to point field. Follow this path uphill to a T-junction. The copse ahead of you is called The Oaks. (See points of interest) Turn right and follow this path downhill to a meeting point of four paths. (Look in the field on the left and note the ancient oak stump). Turn left past King Down Farm and after a downhill run take the next turning on the right. Continue for ½ mile and go straight ahead at the next junction. At the next junction take the right hand path. Continue for ½ mile and take the second path on the right and after ½ mile you will be back to the crossroads by the field with the old oak. Go back along the path through The Oaks copse and turn left to return to the car park.

TERRAIN: Very stony and hard going in places. Look out for pot-holes in the paths in places. The views are tremendous so it is worth doing it at least once in your life!

POINTS OF INTEREST: William Bankes who owned much of the surrounding countryside, including Badbury Rings, planted The Beech Avenue in 1835. There are supposedly 365 pairs planted over 2½ miles along the Blandford Road leading to the entrance to Kingston Lacy. After many trees fell in the great storm of 1990 an outer avenue was planted to ultimately replace the original. Three concentric rings of ditches and banks make up the Iron Age hill fort of Badbury Rings. It was unsuccessfully defended by the local tribe, the Durotriges, against the Roman invasion in about 43 A.D. This ancient hill fort is well worth a climb to the top but you will have to leave your bike behind and dogs are not permitted inside the rings due to sheep grazing. Looking west from the car park it's possible to see the long black aeroplane hangars on the World War II airfield and make out the signal tower of the army camp at Blandford on the horizon. The Oaks is the name of the copse you will reach after the first ½ mile. It dates back 700 years and efforts are being made to preserve the older oaks against the encroachment of non indigenous trees and allow the oaks to die naturally to let endangered fungi feed on the decaying trees. You will see many bright coloured butterflies and wide variety of wild flowers on these chalky grasslands. Many different types of crops are grown in the surrounding fields.

