



The outer and inner Avebury stone circles, which surround the majority of the village.

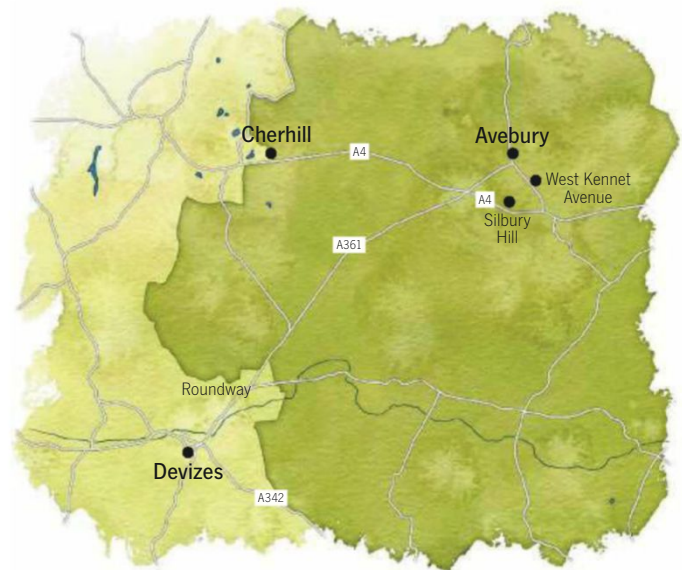
*“The mystic ring now scarcely traced  
Is by a grassy dike embraced,  
Circling the whole about.”*

**Mary S Cope, ‘From Western Lands’**

the animal with 14 tons of chalk. “Last time, we did the head and tail,” says David. “This year, we’re focusing on a front leg which is looking a little out of shape. The chalk sits on a network of timber ledges, which help to keep it in place. Over time, the level of chalk drops due to erosion from wind and rain, so we have to top it up. The natural chalk here is grey, which is why we source a white alternative from a quarry near Romsey in Hampshire. The horse looks much brighter afterwards.”

The work, which also involves light weeding of the site, is funded by donations. Much of the money comes from walkers drawn to the area by the nearby panoramic views from the Calstone and Cherhill Downs. This is both a Site of Special Scientific Interest and part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The white horse is not the only manmade attraction to enhance the landscape. To the right of the horse, at the top of Cherhill Hill sits the Grade II\* listed Lansdowne Monument. This 120ft (36½m) tall stone obelisk was built in 1845 by the 3rd Marquis of Lansdowne to commemorate his ancestor Sir William Petty, a 17th century economist, scientist and philosopher. It was designed by Sir Charles Barry, the architect of the Houses of Parliament. Near the monument are the banks and ditches of Oldbury Castle Iron Age hill fort. Originally a Bronze Age enclosure dating circa 1000BC, this was later



developed into a hill fort in the Iron Age. Up to 20 circular features have been discovered inside its walls, thought to be the remains of timber roundhouses.

### Made to last

This is a landscape where man has long made a lasting mark. Well before the likes of Alsop were carving horses into hillsides, the ancient inhabitants were staking their claim in other impressive ways. Five miles to the east of Cherhill is Avebury, one of the principal ceremonial sites of Neolithic Britain. Along with Stonehenge 24 miles away, it was designated a World Heritage Site in 1986.

“Avebury is best known for the henge monument,” says Peter Oliver, a National Trust area ranger for the site. “That comprises a great outer prehistoric circle of approximately 98 stones, the biggest in the world, plus two smaller inner circles with 28 and 29 stones each. It is surrounded by a circular ditch and >