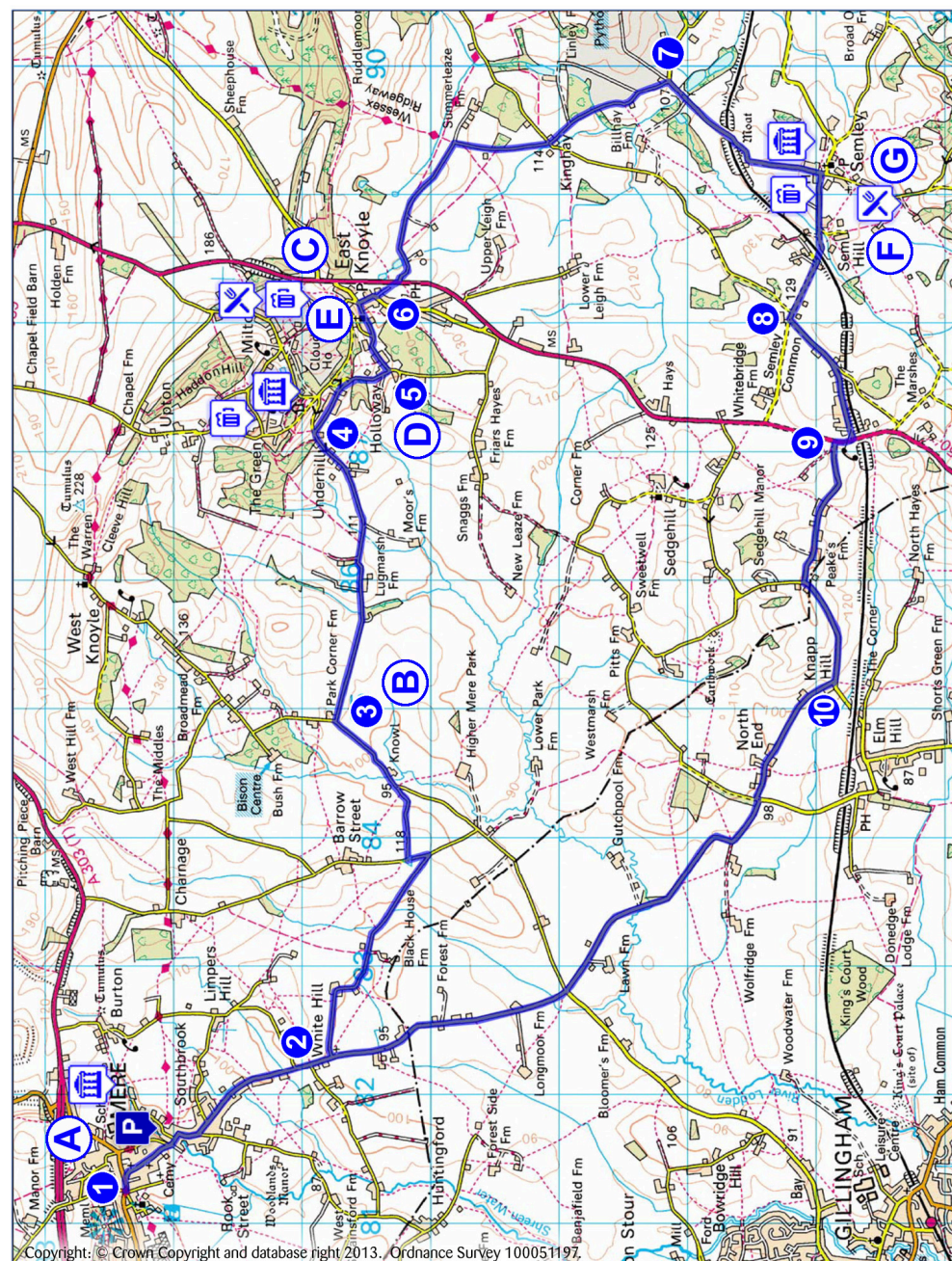


Cycle Trail 9: Mere to Semley

Length of Cycle
16 miles (26km)

Ordnance Survey map: Explorer 143
Cycle Start: ST 812 323



Key

- Cycle route with waypoint
- Parking
- Pub
- Place to eat
- Historic Site
- Nature Reserve
- Point of Interest

Distance: 16 miles (26km)
Time: Allow 2 hrs
Terrain: Mostly country lanes
Difficulty: Moderate - Strenuous
Suitable for: Road Bikes
Start: Car-park along the B3095 Salisbury Road in the centre of Mere near the Market Square
Start Grid Reference:
X : 381200
Y : 132300
Latitude : 51.0897
Longitude : -2.2698

OS Explorer Map (1:25 000)
Warminster & Trowbridge No. 143

Notes & Refreshments:
The Angel Café and selection of country pubs in Mere's Town Centre, The Fox and Hounds pub and Wren's Shop in East Knoyle, The Bennett Arms, Semley Village Stores & Café in Semley

This cycle route takes you to the south east of the historic market town of Mere with its antique shops, through lovely countryside with good views to two historic Nadder Valley villages; East Knoyle, the birthplace of famous architect Sir Christopher Wren, and Semley with its quirky antique and craft shops.

1 From the car-park along the B3095 (Salisbury Road) in the centre of Mere turn L along the main street and by the Post Office take the first turning L along Boar Street, passing a large United Reformed Church. Continue down the lane which has two narrow give way sections, crossing Edge Bridge over Shreen Water and passing The Walnut Tree Inn on the L. Continue straight along Shaftesbury Road heading out of the town until reaching Whitehill and the former St. Matthew's Church (now a private residence).

2 Take a L turn along Wet Lane and continue straight ahead until you reach a T-junction. Turn L, then first R along the lane (Cunnage Lane) heading downhill. At an oblique T-junction turn L over a small bridge, passing the Hovis bakery on your right.

3 Take the R turn along lane near Park Corner Farm sign-posted 'East Knoyle' and continue ahead passing Park Pale and Lugmarsh Farm heading towards the hamlet of Underhill.

4 Upon reaching Underhill, go up the hill and take the first R through the hamlet (following a Wiltshire Cycleway sign) and continue straight on. This road affords wonderful views. After a turning on the L which you ignore, the road bears R. Carry on to the end of the lane where it joins Holloway Lane.

5 Take a sharp turn L onto Holloway Lane and carry on through the small hamlet of Holloway. Pass cottages backing onto the ancient woodland of Park Coppice on the R heading towards the village of East Knoyle, the birthplace of famous architect Sir Christopher Wren. Continue past the impressive former home of the Wren family, Knoyle Rectory (now called Knoyle Place) on your L. Further along is the former village school and opposite a 1300 thatched deer keeper's hut. Admire the beautiful oriental style windows of the former school reminiscent of houses in the Middle East and past the Saxon church of St. Marys which is well worth a visit. Continue past the appropriately named Wren's Shop and take a R turn at the junction along The Street.

6 Take the first L fork into Millbrook Lane. Go through a gate and cross the busy A350 Road (take care as this is a fast road), passing a pond on L and continue along Millbrook Lane. As the road forks into two bear R at entrance to Summerlease Farm which includes the Summerlease Art Gallery which holds lectures and you can visit by appointment only. At the end of Millbrook Lane, go straight ahead over cross-roads heading towards the village of Semley. To your L is Linley Woods, part of the Pythouse (pronounced Pit-house) Estate which includes Pythouse, a fine country house built in 1725 in a classical style

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probably inspired by nearby Phillips House in Dinton. It also has an 18th Century walled kitchen garden, shop and café you can visit.

7 Continue until you reach Pythouse Lodge on your L, at a junction. Turn R here towards Semley. (Alternatively go straight for half a mile to reach the Walled Garden shop and café, open most days except Tuesdays). Billhay Pond is on you R. Continue straight ahead into the village of Semley towards the Church of St. Leonard which is well worth a visit. If you'd like to stop for refreshments, there is a Café in Semley Village Stores or The Benett Arms not far from the Church.

8 Leave Semley passing The Benett Arms on your R. Follow this road under the railway bridge. You will pass Chaldicott Barns on your R, a rural Business Park with craft suppliers, photographers and vintage clothing worth a browse. Opposite Chaldicott Barns, take the first L along Station Road. As the road forks, bear to your R passing the former Semley Train Station buildings, now part of a hub of antique shops worth a visit. .

9 At the end of Station Road, turn R onto the A350 and take the first L. Take great care at the junction with the A350, especially watching on the R for fast traffic coming round the bend. At the T-junction, turn L (Butterstake Lane). After climbing for a while, the road will descend towards the village of Motcombe.

10 At the Motcombe Village sign, where the road forks, turn R at the grassy triangle (follow Byway to Stourhead sign). Continue through the hamlet of North End to the junction. At the junction, take a L and immediately R turn and follow this road as it bears to the R and continue ahead to the crossroads. Go straight across (Shaftesbury Road) back towards the market town of Mere passing the former St. Matthews Church and Wet Lane once again (Point 2) and back along Shaftesbury Road to Salisbury Road and the car-park.

Countryside Code

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people



Points of Interest

A Mere and Castle Hill. Mere is a small attractive Medieval market town on the edge of the Nadder Valley. In the early Medieval period, there was a great Castle on the appropriately named Castle Hill above the town built by the Earl of Cornwall (Richard, younger brother of Henry III) in Chilmark stone. It had 6 towers, a chapel, deep well and dungeon, but it was abandoned after 150 years and its stone was reused in the building of the town. Much land around Mere is still owned by the Duchy of Cornwall. Why not spend a little time discovering Mere with its selection of antique shops, traditional pubs and independent shops. Discover its historical connections with the silk industry during the Victorian era, and the Temperance Movement which began in 1834 and did much to change the habits of drunkenness in the town which resulted from much poverty and hardship. You will find information about both in Mere Library.

B Park Pale. This marks the boundary of a Medieval deer park, an enclosed area to keep deer in bounded by a ditch and bank with a wooden fence of stakes

C East Knoyle and Sir Christopher Wren. East Knoyle is the birthplace of Sir Christopher Wren, one of the most highly acclaimed British architects in history who rebuilt over 50 churches in the City of London after the Great Fire in 1666 including his masterpiece St. Paul's Cathedral. Knoyle Rectory, now called Knoyle Place, was the former home of the Wren family and lived in by Sir Christopher Wren's parents. However, when a fire broke out, the family moved to Haslam's Shop (a former Draper's shop) on the corner of Wise Lane opposite the village shop where Sir Christopher Wren was born. The building was demolished in 1878 due to road widening but a plinth marks the spot where he was born.

D Park Coppice. These woods hold a tragic secret. About one third of the population of the village were lost to the Black Death in 1663 and many were buried in a plague pit in the woods.

E The Church of St. Marys in East Knoyle. This church has been at the heart of East Knoyle village for over 1,000 years. The plasterwork in the chancel is unique and was designed by Sir Christopher Wren's father who was appointed Rector in 1623.

F Semley. The village derives its name from the River Sem which meets the River Nadder near the village. It is a tranquil village largely untouched by time with immense charm. Associated with dairy farming, most villagers at one time or other kept cows-even the vicar and pub landlord! The village even had own railway station and milk depot which distributed an endless supply of milk on a daily basis to the London market. The station closed in 1966 after just over 100 years of operation but some of the former buildings and Dairies Depot (now an Antique Shop) can be found along Station Road which has now become an antiques hub with its antique shops and auction house. It also has over a mile of common land, one of the last remaining areas in the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

G. The Church of St. Leonard in Semley. Built to 19th Century designs by Thomas Wyatt, a highly acclaimed Irish/British architect. In the Lady Chapel, there is a beautiful stained glass window in remembrance to a local girl WPC Yvonne Fletcher who was shot and killed in the Libyan Siege in London in 1984. In the churchyard, is an impressive bronze soldier on horse-back. It is a touching memorial to Lieutenant George Dewrance Irving who died in the first World War aged 36.