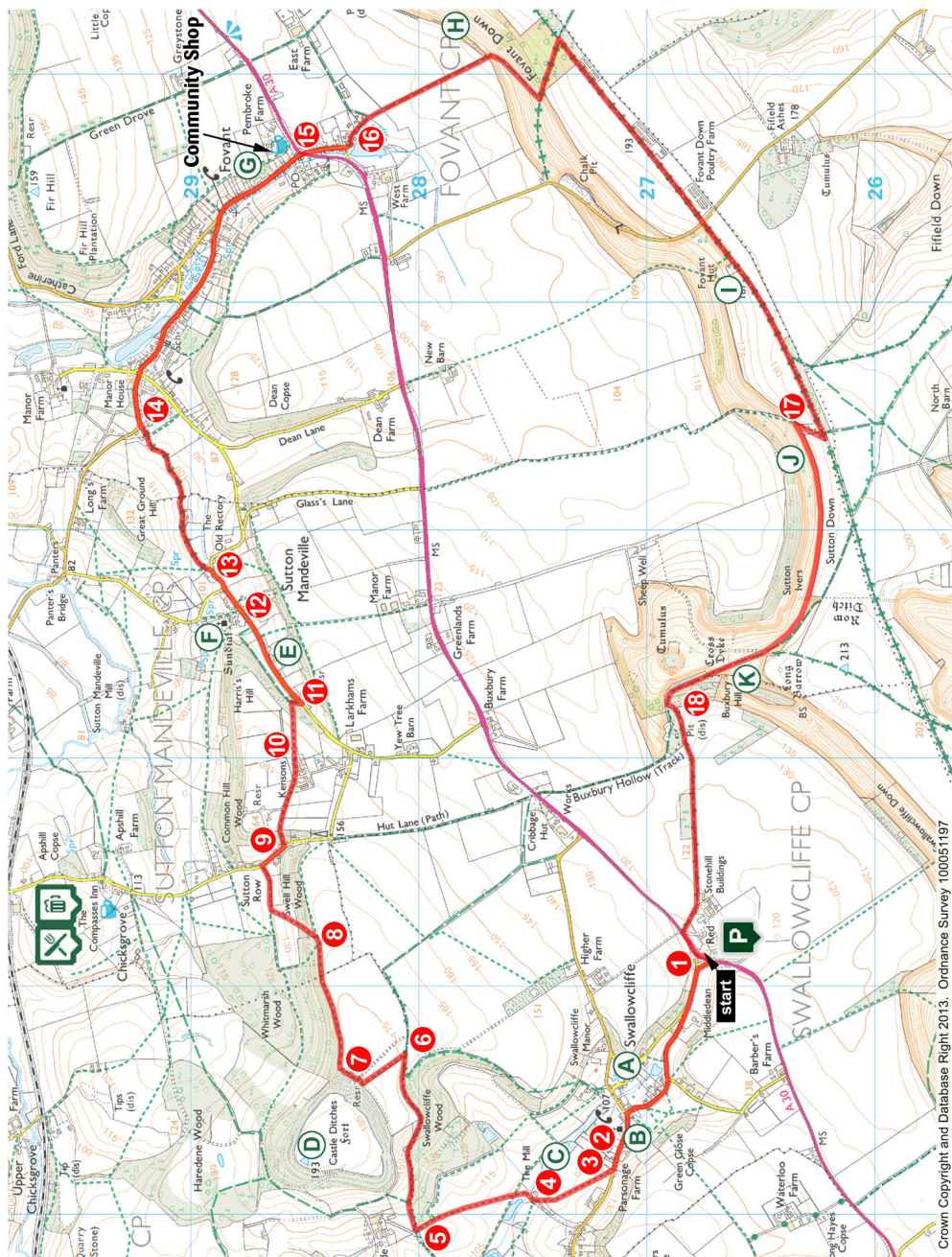


Walk 4: Around Swallowcliffe 'the Cliff of the Swallow'

Length of Walk
9 miles (15 km)

Ordnance Survey map: Explorer 118
Walk Start: ST 97097 26759



Key

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

Distance: 9 miles (15km)

Time: Allow 6 hrs

Terrain: 2 steep inclines and a number of steep declines, fields, paths, country lanes - a more strenuous walk - 8 Stiles

Start: Lay-by along A30 (please note; on occasion this area is used as a chippings storage area by Wiltshire Council but the rest of the time it can be used for parking)

Start Grid Reference:

X : 397097

Y : 126759

Latitude : 51.040176

Longitude : -2.0427791

ST 97097 26759

OS Explorer Map (1:25 000)

Shaftesbury & Cranborne Chase No. 118

Notes & Refreshments:

You will pass Fovant Village Shop (check opening times) in Fovant Village. Ansty Pick Your Own Farm Shop and Cafe, near Ansty SP3 5PX is also a short drive away along the A30 on the left.

On this circular walk journey through three pretty historic villages; Swallowcliffe known since Saxon times as 'the Cliff of the Swallow', Sutton Mandeville, and Fovant, all nestled at the foot of the downs. The area has an air of timelessness. Explore 2 ancient churches, ancient iron-age hill forts, hills and downs, and enjoy glorious views of the Fovant Badges and surrounding countryside along an ancient ridgeway.

1. From the A30 lay-by near Red House Farm, cross over the road (this road can get very busy so please cross with care) past a cottage called The Old Post Office on the R. Continue straight ahead down the lane, bear L at a fork and continue straight on through the picturesque village of Swallowcliffe with its thatched roofs, turning R towards Tisbury to go past St Peter's Church on the R.

2. After visiting the church, continue straight on along Rookery Lane up a slight incline.

3. After Church View Cottage on the R, follow the footpath way-marker up a small flight of steps and head diagonally across a field in a northerly direction to where the hedge curves round in a semi-circle at the bottom of field. Continue over the stile and straight ahead onto the lane, then bear R towards The Mill.

4. Facing The Mill, you will see a footpath sign indicating to turn L following a short section of stream. Cross a stile and turn R downhill with the old mill to your R. Continue straight ahead following a bridge over the stream and then over a stile and across two large fields with a fence/stile in between them, heading in a north-westerly direction towards Swallowcliffe Wood.

5. As you approach the edge of Swallowcliffe Wood, go through a 5-barred gate (not the footpath gate to your R) onto a track leading to Withyslade Farm, and then turn R following the northern boundary of the wood, keeping the wood on your R until you reach the edge. This is a lovely stretch of path, which becomes a sunken path.

6. Continue straight ahead with trees on R for approximately 100m to a way-marked post. Turn L across a field towards Castle Ditches and the woodland fringing it.

7. Before the woodland, ignore the track ahead and turn R along the edge of the field with woodland on L heading towards the telecommunications mast in the distance. Enjoy open views across the attractive valley on your R to the most northerly of Cranborne Chase's two magnificent chalk ridges. At the field boundary, cross the stile in the corner and continue ahead.

8. Cross the next stile you reach on the L between the boundary of Whitmarsh Wood and Swell Hill Wood and continue down slope through the wood over another stile into a field. Cross this and continue diagonally R across field and through two metal farm gates onto a track, then turn R onto Lagpond Lane.

9. Opposite Chapel Cottage, turn R and after 90 metres, turn L by a house/garage to follow footpath marker up a very steep incline through woodland and continue along footpath to lane and turn R. Follow this and when the lane bears to the R towards Kensions Organic Farm and the Veg Shed shop (check opening times), take the grassy track straight ahead.

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10. At a wooden footpath sign, turn R from what has become the farm track into the field and continue alongside the hedge and R again following the footpath signs, over the stile downhill through woodland. At bottom of the woodland, turn R towards Sutton Hill Lane.

11. At Sutton Hill Lane, turn L past Cromwell Manor. Continue straight on through the village of Sutton Mandeville.

12. Take the first turning L to All Saints Church. Retrace your steps back to the lane.

13. Continue past the turning to Tisbury on the L and where the road bends to the R before you reach the Old Rectory, take the L turning along a lane signposted Glebe Cottage. Continue past Glebe Cottage on R and continue along footpath through woodlands and along hedgerow past fields heading towards the village of Fovant.

14. At the end of the footpath, turn R onto Moor Hill Lane which merges into Tisbury Road and then bear R onto the High Street through Fovant village past the village shop on the L to the junction of the A30.

15. Cross over the A30 (take care this is a busy road) and continue along Brook Street. At the end of the lane, turn R through metal gate at a sharp bend to the L and before farm sheds follow footpath straight on through fields towards the downs. Bear R up a steep incline across Fovant Down to the top with lovely vistas all around. If you glance to the L, you will see great views of the famous Fovant Badges. Follow the path, bearing L through bushes.

16. Continue up on the L when the track joins another coming up from R, then through gate onto the lane and R onto the Old Shaftesbury/Salisbury Drove used by farmers to take livestock to market in Salisbury and Shaftesbury. Go past Fovant Down Poultry Farm on the L and across a road which leads from Fovant to the tiny village of Fifield Bavant and past The Fovant Hut on the R.

17. After The Fovant Hut, continue along the Shaftesbury Way for about 1 mile, past an unmarked bridleway on the L, till you come to a metal gate on the R. Turn L following the field edge, with hedge on L and along grassy track heading in a westerly direction through an area known as Sutton Down. When another track comes in from the R, continue ahead, along sunken path.

18. Bear R onto a track downhill, and then fork L between ancient earthworks and past two ancient burials sites believed to date back to the Neolithic period or New Stone Age (6,000 years ago). This includes a long barrow on the L and Bowl Barrow on the R which occupies a very prominent position on Buxbury Hill-a conical spur which now has mature trees growing on it (the Barrow is barely recognisable). Bear L and continue downhill past Stonehill Buildings on L with Red House Farm in the distance and continue to the end of lane where it joins the A30, and turn L along verge for a short distance back to the A30 lay-by.

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 Swallowcliffe. The Anglo-Saxon word is Swealewan Cif. Its name was first recorded in an Anglo-Saxon Charter of AD940 where there is reference to King Edmund giving land to a place which country folk jokingly called 'the cliff of the swallow'. The name has stuck ever since.

B St Peter's Church. Built in 1843 and designed in Norman style by Sir Gilbert Scott, a great architect involved in the design of over 500 churches in Britain including the Albert Memorial for Queen Victoria. This is not the first church of St. Peter to be built in the village; the original one lay in flood meadows and regularly flooded so was demolished. Every year at the end of June, the church comes alive with flowers to celebrate St. Peter's Day.

C The Mill. Used to be a working mill until the beginning of the 20th Century when it was converted into a house. Before this, it had milled flour for hundreds of years.

D Castle Ditches - an old Iron Age Hill Fort, once called Oakley Castle in the 14th Century and later 'Castle Ditches' in the 16th Century due to the ditches and banks enclosing it. All buildings are long gone but you can still see remains of the deep ditches that would have once protected the Fort.

E Cromwell Manor. A 15th Century building and private house that once sheltered Parliamentarians or Roundheads during the English Civil War when they were fleeing from a failed attempt to capture nearby Old Wardour Castle owned by the Arundell family, powerful catholic landowners and strong Royalist supporters. Later, the Parliamentarians lay siege to the Castle and the family surrendered only to win it back a year later!

F All Saints Church. One of the Church of England's many secret delights and well worth a visit. It is a beautiful little medieval church with its Norman watch tower backs onto Harris's Hill. The yew tree in the churchyard was planted in 1780 and it has a rare sundial right of the path dating back to 1685. An earlier Saxon church is said to have existed on the site and three ancient burial sites are found here.

G Fovant Village. Used to be the centre of a large military training area during WWI where thousands of British and Australian soldiers carried out their training before going into action.

H The Fovant Badges. A remarkable series of WWI Military Badges carved deep into the chalk hillside by British and Australian soldiers on their way to war. Above the Fovant Badges is the ancient hill-fort of Chiselbury.

I The Fovant Hut. Now a private house but at one time may have been a place where the passengers waited for the coaches. It is a good spot to see corn-bunting in the spring/summer, their call sounds like jangling keys, and flocks of lapwing and golden plover in the winter.

J Sutton Down. Covered in species rich chalk grassland, important for wildlife, and also rich in archaeology with ancient burial sites and field systems dotted across the landscape. There is also Open Access Land nearby.

K Buxbury Hill. The site of several Scheduled Ancient Monuments; its clump of beech trees covers a Bronze Age bowl barrow (rounded shape) excavated in 1922, a probable Neolithic Long Barrow (elongated shape) on the left which may have covered many burial chambers, and an undated Cross Ridge Dyke.