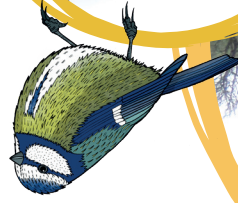




**The Alirmen's Memorial**

**Shreen Water**



**Bridleway to the Downs**  
(between points 5 and 6 overleaf)

**B** **Brushmaking in Mere.** In 1922, Fred and Bill Coward founded a brush-making company in Mere, which they named 'Hillbrush' because their premises were situated below Castle Hill. From the start, the brushes were branded with the logo of a salmon, in recognition of Bill Coward's love of fly fishing. Hillbrush is now established in modern and state-of-the-art premises on the western edge of the town, the factory has a visitor centre open to the public which houses a museum, restaurant and shop.

**C** **The Alirmen's Memorial.** Beside the bridleway along The Drove, within the Beech Clump on the hill, stands a memorial to the twenty alirmen of the Royal Air Force who lost their lives here on 19th February 1945 when their Dakota aeroplane crashed here, having taken off from the airfield at nearby Zeals. A plaque bears the names of those twenty men and also of a twenty-first man, the pilot, who was severely injured and subsequently died.

**B** **White Sheet Hill** is the site of a 5000 year-old Neolithic enclosure, a circular earthwork, round barrows and an Iron Age hill fort. A designated nature reserve over part of White Sheet Hill provides a rich habitat for butterflies and flowers. The byway that passes along the ridge of the hill is part of a Roman Road that would have been part of the main road through Selwood Forest and also of the ancient main road between London and Exeter that is now provided by the A303.

**A** **Mere Castle and the Town of Mere:** In the 1250s AD Richard, Earl of Cornwall built a castle on what is now Castle Hill. The castle was abandoned in 1398 and disappeared over time as its stone was used for building in the town. While the medieval street pattern still survives, the town was rebuilt after major fires in the 16th and 17th centuries. The clocktower in the centre of the town dates from 1868.

**Points of Interest on this route**  
(see map overleaf for locations)

A circular walk from the historic and pretty town of Mere onto the West Wiltshire Downs, visiting both the Iron Age hill fort on White Sheet Hill and Castle Hill.

**Start Point:** The Salisbury Street car park in Mere.  
OS: 142 and 143 | ST814323 | W3W: weary.flux.steps.

**Parking:** The Salisbury Street Car Park in the town of Mere.

**Terrain:** Footpaths, bridleways, byways and quiet lanes. Hilly with one steep climb from Manor Hill to White Sheet Hill, a steep descent from Whitesheet Hill to The Drove, and a steep climb up to descent from Castle Hill.

**Length:** Approximately 5.7 miles/9.12km, or 6.75miles/10.8km if exploring the hill fort at Whitesheet Hill.

**Approximate time:** 3 hours.

**Dogs:** Please keep on short lead wherever livestock is present.

**Refreshments:** There are shops, a cafe and pubs in Mere and a restaurant at the Hillbrush Factory Visitor Centre. .

**Good to know:** There are public toilets in the Salisbury Street Car Park. There is an alternative car park on Castle Street. Mere Footpath Group has published a pack of six more walks, varying from 1.5miles/2.4km to 4 miles/6km which can be purchased at a modest cost from locations including the Post Office, Library, The Angel Tearooms, Sprout and Flower and The Butt of Sherry. There is also a booklet of a historical trail around the town, A Mere Meander.

*The information is only intended as a general guide. Please check local arrangements.*



**Respect everyone**  
**Protect the environment**  
**Enjoy the outdoors**  
**Follow advice and local signs**

Share your pictures with us at **#cranbornechase**



**Cranborne Chase National Landscape**



**cranbornechase.org.uk**



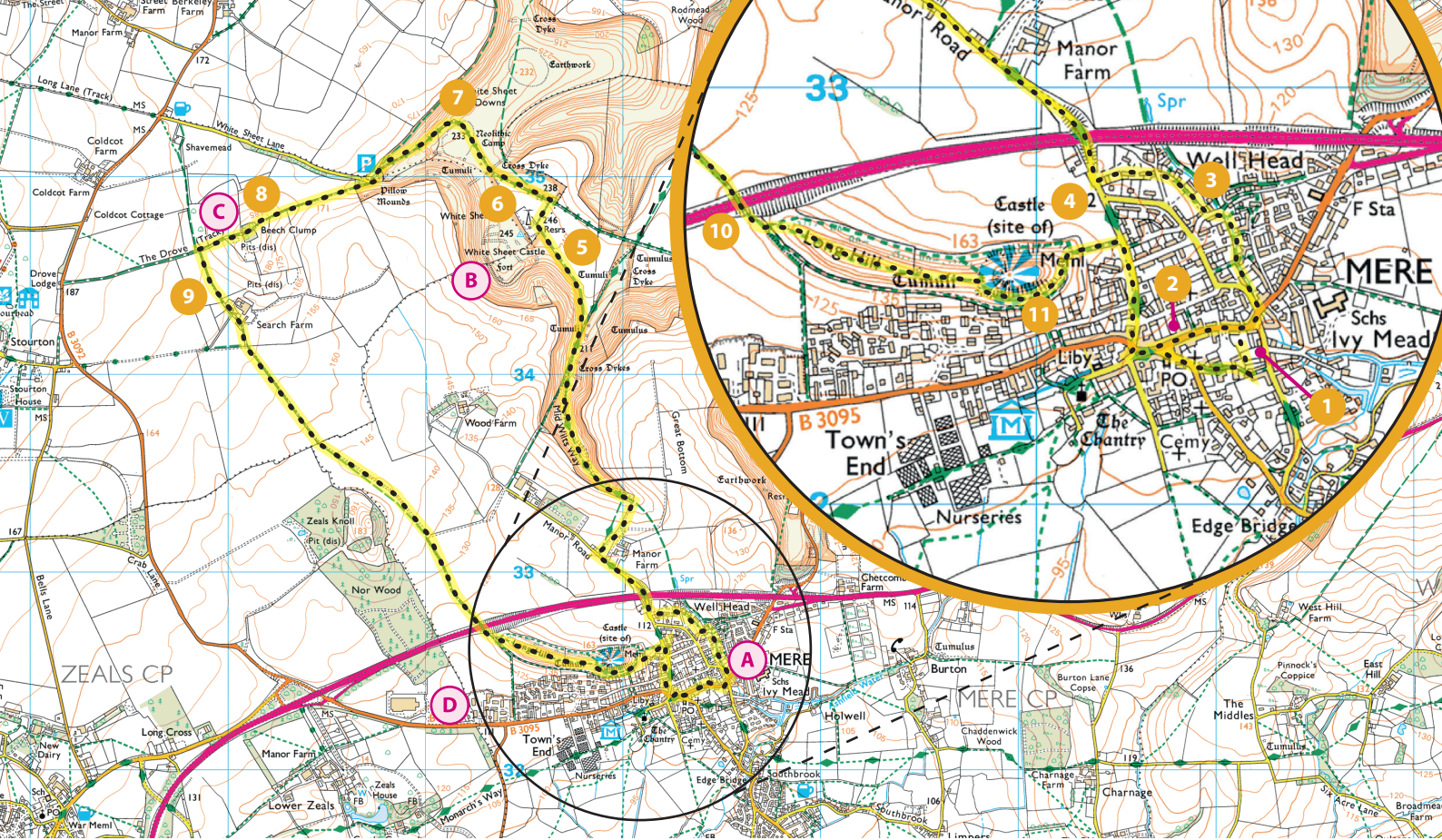
**Cranborne Chase National Landscape**



**Mere and Whitesheet Hill**  
Defences of the West Wiltshire Downs

**WALK # W37**





## Directions

- 1 From the rear of the Salisbury Street Car Park steps to the right of the doctors surgery lead down into Dark Lane. Turn right to the end of the lane then right again onto Boar Street, which leads to The Square and the clocktower in the centre of Mere.
- 2 At the end of Boar Street, turn sharp right onto Salisbury Street and cross the zebra crossing to the opposite pavement. Continue along Salisbury Street, past the car sales garage on the left and the entrance to the car park on the right. As the road bends sharply to the left, turn left into the Upper Water Street (there is no street name sign here) but on the right hand side of the road you will shortly see a footpath that leads along the left bank of a stream. Follow the path alongside the stream, which is named Shreen Water. The stream is crossed by a number of picturesque footbridges. Count them, as at the eleventh bridge our route turns left along a lane for a few yards and then turns right onto a signposted public footpath.
- 3 Follow the footpath past allotments on the left to emerge onto a lane. Go straight across between the bollards and through a gap in the wall onto a footpath which leads to the right and then bends to the left into Jack Paul Close. Continue in front of the houses to meet and turn right along Manor Road.
- 4 Keep straight ahead along the road to pass two driveways to houses on the right, Manor House and Great Barn, then turn right through a gateway onto a signposted bridleway along a farm track.
- 5 Where the track divides, take the branch that leads to the left uphill onto the Downs passing through two more gates with views to the right over the wonderfully named Great Bottom. Stay on the track until reaching a gate on the left into a field.
- 6 Go through the gate and continue along the edge of the field with the fence immediately on your left. Stourhead House and the distinctive shape of Alfred's Tower on the skyline can be seen. When you reach the fence that surrounds the Iron Age hill fort and the raised bank of the covered reservoir at White Sheet Hill, bear to the right across the field to a gate onto a byway along a stone track, which forms part of an Roman Road that, to the left

would also have been the main the road through the medieval hunting forest of Selwood and to the right all the way to Sarum (Salisbury) and ultimately to London as the main route from Exeter, in the county of Devon.

- 7 Turn left along the byway. Next to a stile in the fence on the left, an information board bears information about the historic hill fort and the remnants of a Neolithic Causeway on Whitesheet Hill. Either cross the stile or continue along the byway to a gate into the hill fort to experience 5000 years of history; you will need to return to the byway and turn left to continue your walk.
- 8 Stay on the byway, following it around a sharp bend to the left and downhill to a small informal car park on the left. Cross to the far side of the car park to turn right onto a bridleway along The Drove. Be careful to avoid any holes in the surface of the bridleway; badgers may have been active. Continue along the edge of the fields and uphill to pass through a beech clump in which stands the Airmen's Memorial (see Point of Interest C).
- 9 Follow the bridleway downhill through a gate and then immediately turn left through another gate onto a bridleway along the edge of fields, to Search Farm. Cross the farm access road and follow the track past the cottages. At the end of the next field bear left and then right to continue with the hedge on your right. Castle Hill, on the edge of Mere, stands ahead in the distance.
- 10 The bridleway crosses a bridge over the A303 road. Bear to the left up the grass slope to go through the gate in the fence ahead and continue uphill to the top of and along the ridge of Long Hill until it drops down to another gate, with the higher mound of Castle Hill directly ahead. A path leads to the top of Castle Hill, but you will need to return on the same path to continue your walk back into Mere.
- 11 Follow the path around the edge of Castle Hill, bearing to the left until reaching a flight of steps on the right onto a path that leads down to Manor Road. Turn right along Manor Road and back to The Square in the centre of Mere. Return to the car park either by Salisbury Street or by Boar Street and Dark Lane.