

**St. James' Church:** A Grade 2 listed building, described in the book 'The Buildings of England, Dorset' by John Newman and Nikolaus Pevsner as "a very simple and unusual church";

July to October.

**Cranborne Common:** the most northerly stretch of Dorset's heathland is a habitat to rare wet heathland plants such as Marsh Gentian whose bright blue trumpet shaped flowers appear from

**Alderholt village:** The Civil Parish of Alderholt was created in 1894 and in the 2001 census had a population of 313 residents.

gone by have been the site of a warning beacon.

**Bonfire Hill:** it has been suggested that this may in times

many as 40 nests which can be seen high in the tree tops.

**Herony:** Herons are often thought about as being solitary birds but from February through into April they come together to breed in a nesting site, called a Herony and containing as



Heron in flight

Part One of a circular walk between Fordingbridge and Alderholt, or combine with Part Two (W29b) which returns to Fordingbridge by field paths along the broad valley of the Allen River.

**Start:** St. Mary's Church in Fordingbridge | OS OL 22 | SU145138 | W3W: sheepish.pavilions.hazel

**Finish:** St. James's Church, Daggons Road, Alderholt | OS OL 22 | SU104126 | W3W: pins.jammy.owls

**Parking:** The central car-park in Fordingbridge, use 'long-stay' section. There is a small car park next to St. James' Church but please be aware that visitors to the church have priority.

**Terrain:** Field paths and tracks with gates and stiles. One short and steep climb. Along Station Road and Blackwater Grove in Alderholt, the roadside footway is used.

**Length:** Approximately 4.15 miles / 6.65 km.

**Approximate time:** 3 hours.

**Dogs:** Please keep dogs on a lead wherever livestock are present.

**Good to know:** Public toilets in the central car park in Fordingbridge.

**Refreshments:** Fordingbridge and Alderholt offer a good variety of cafes, restaurants, pubs and shops. The Sticky Bun tearoom at Wolvercroft Garden Centre: [www.wolvercroft.com](http://www.wolvercroft.com)

*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](https://twitter.com/cranbornechase)



Cranborne Chase National Landscape



[cranbornechase.org.uk](http://cranbornechase.org.uk)



St Mary's Church

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

**A St. Mary's Church:** listed in the Domesday Book in 1086, the church was updated by the Normans around 1150 with further additions around 1230 to 1330. The exterior has changed little since the 16th century. Internal renovations took place in 1840. The churchyard contains a memorial to the last man to be killed in a duel in England, John Alexander Seton.

**B Avon Valley Way:** The first part of this walk forms part of the Avon Valley Path which runs for 34 miles between Salisbury and Christchurch. The path is marked by waymark signs showing an arched bridge coloured green.

## Fordingbridge to Alderholt

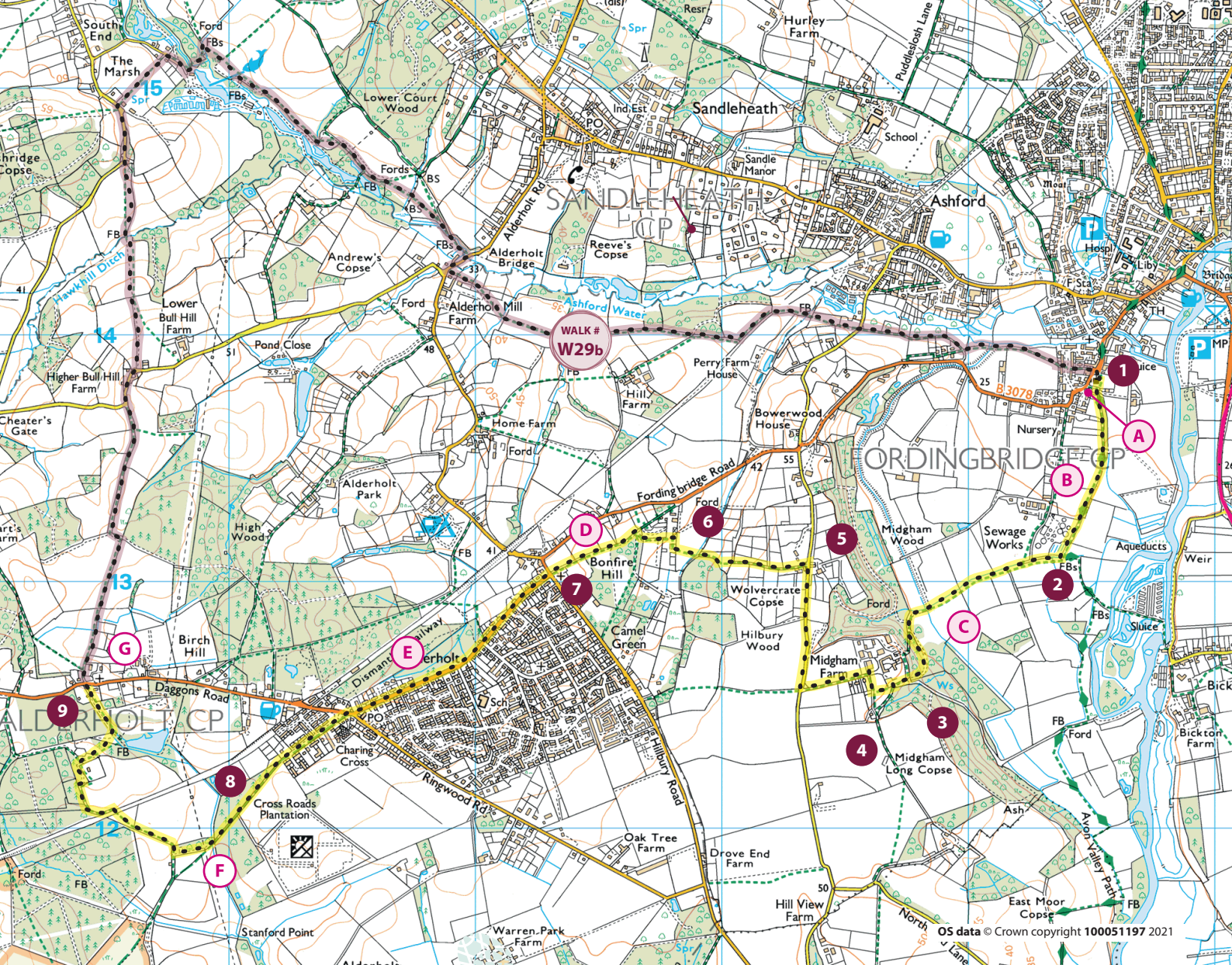
The outward leg of an optional circular walk

WALK #  
**W29a**



Cranborne Chase National Landscape





## Directions

- 1 Pass through the timber lych gate of St. Mary's Church onto the footpath to the left of the church. Leaving the churchyard, take the signposted footpath ahead to pass a house on the right and then between fields. Pass the sewage works to reach a t-junction of footpaths.
- 2 Turn right onto the path along the edge of fields. To the left, across the fields, the nests of a herony sit high in the trees. At the woodland ahead, follow the path which becomes a wider track, curving left and uphill before opening out onto a track at the top.
- 3 Turn right, then at a waymarked post turn left, to a gate and stile into a field.
- 4 Keep straight ahead across the field to a stile on the far side and turn right along the narrow path to a track where a row of cottages stands to your left. The old farm buildings at Midgham Farm are away to your right. Turn left along the track to meet a quiet road.
- 5 Turn right along the road as far as Highfield Farm. Take the signposted footpath through a narrow metal gate alongside two larger gates, along the track past the buildings on your left then between fields until the track turns sharply to the right. Go through the gate ahead of you into a field, with a copse ahead.
- 6 Go downhill to the right of the copse to stiles and a footbridge. Continue uphill and follow the signs through the Wolvercroft Garden Centre with its Sticky Bun Tea Room and through a field with the hedge on the right to a gate and stile into an area of woodland at Bonfire Hill. Across the way is a track beyond which are a gate and stile. Once over the stile, there is a second gate and stile. The footpath then leads downhill to reach the junction of Hillbury Road and Station Road at Alderholt.
- 7 Cross Hillbury Road, continuing through the village along Station Road. Cross Ringwood Road, bearing right along the footway then left into Blackwater Grove, continuing past houses until the road becomes a bridleway between fields and woods.
- 8 The bridleway opens out onto Cranborne Common. Stay on the track until reaching a gate directly ahead. The track turns sharply to the left, but take the signposted footpath to the right. Follow the footpath to a footbridge with stiles and continue until it emerges onto a stone track with an open area to the left used as parking for a private fishing ground through which our route continues. Follow the waymarked path to a gate and stile between houses to reach the road opposite St. James's Church. Cross the road to the parking area next to the Church.

**Part 2 of the walk, reference number 29b, back to St Mary's Church in Fordingbridge, starts here.**