

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

A Castle Rings. This is an Iron Age Hill Fort and Scheduled Ancient Monument (on private land and sadly you see little of it). It covers an impressive 12 acres in size and is over 700 ft high. Its defence ditch is over 52ft wide and 14ft high, though now overgrown with copse woodland. Interestingly, in the 1980s, there was an exciting archaeological find connected to the ancient Durotriges tribe, a Celtic tribe living in Briton prior to the Roman Invasion.

B Oyster's Coppice. This is a beautiful ancient woodland owned by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. The woodland has nothing to do with seafood! Its name is derived from the old English name Ecowestre which means sheepfold. The wood supports all three species of woodpecker and is regularly managed to encourage a diversity of wild plants to develop. Enjoy the colourful displays of scarce wild daffodil, bluebell, ramsons and yellow archangel in spring. From the bench, you can enjoy views across open countryside to Pythouse, a country house built in 1725 and rebuilt in 1805 by John Benett, the then owner and amateur architect. Described as a 'fine classical house', it is similar in style to Philipps House in Dinton.



Oyster's Coppice



Memorial at
St Leonard's Church

C The Church of St Leonard. This was 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 of a local girl, WPC Yvonne Fletcher who was shot and killed in the Libyan Embassy 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 served in The Sherwood Foresters who died in 1915 aged 36 years.



D Semley Plague Stone. This can still be seen at the edge of the wood just past Calais Cottage (now renamed Caleston) shown on the map. It commemorates the plague of 1665 utilising the base of a former Medieval cross. Sustenance was left presumably by the residents of Semley for the benefit of the parishioners of Donhead St Mary who had apparently been stricken by an outbreak of the plague.



Journey back in time to imagine what life would have been like for the previous inhabitants of Semley, through the ages from life in the ancient Iron Age Hill Fort named Castle Rings, to its rich industrial history in the 1800's supplying fresh milk to London from its own railway station, and more recently as a developing antiques and crafts centre.

Start: The Benett Arms in Semley.
Ordnance Survey Explorer Series Map 118. OS
Grid Reference ST 891269 | W3W sprays. blip.caressing

Parking: The Benett Arms Car Park directly opposite the pub on the edge of the village green, or at the roadside near the Village Stores and Cafe.

Terrain: Field and Woodland Paths, and quiet lanes. Some long steady climbs along the road sections.

Length: Approximately 4.5 miles / 7.2km.

Approximate time: 3 hours.

Dogs: Please keep dogs on leads along the road sections and through the nature reserve and the fields where there may be livestock.

Refreshments: The Benett Arms and the Semley Village Stores and Cafe.

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://www.cranbornechase.org.uk)



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Semley Through the Ages

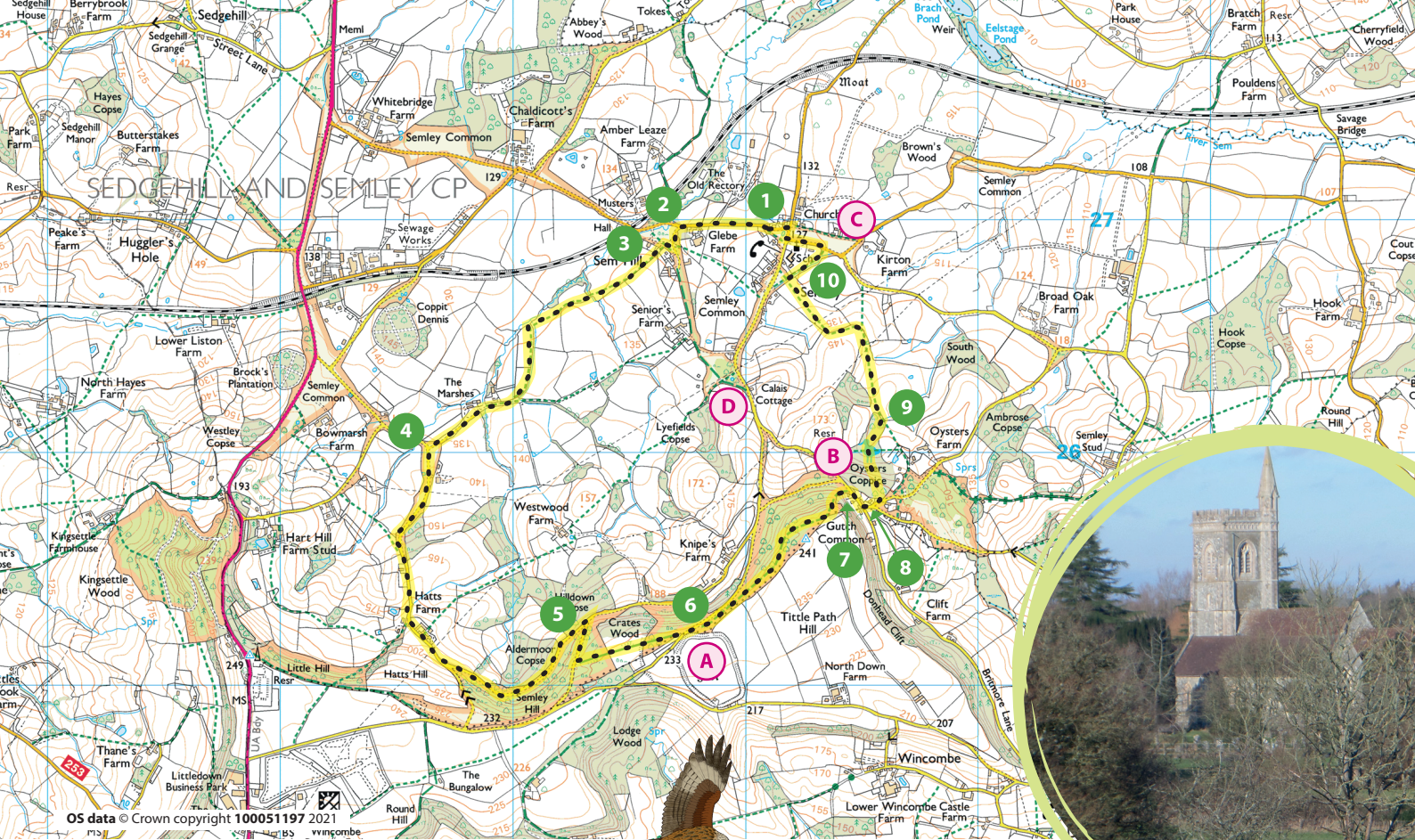
From the Iron Age to the
Industrial Revolution

WALK #
W9



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Directions

1 With your back to the Benett Arms, a traditional country pub which has been trading since at least 1867, located close to one of the most extensive village greens in Wiltshire, turn right along the road. If you have parked near the Village Stores, take the footpath across the green, past the tree-lined pond, to the Benett Arms.

2 Stay on the road until just after Glebe Farm on the left, then turn left into the lane named Sem Hill. At the footpath sign on the right, follow the path along a track and through a metal gate on the left.

3 Go through the next gate and straight ahead along the edge of the field. There may be cattle in this field. At the end of the field, a gate to the right takes you through a narrow belt of trees. Go over the fence (there is no stile) into the next (marshy) field and head diagonally to the left across it to a metal gate into the next field. Turn left along the field edge then at the end, go left over a stile onto a stone track. Turn right and follow the track past Upper Marsh Farm to the road.

4 Turn left and stay on the road, ignoring all turns to the right as it climbs steeply to pass Hatts Farm, on the left. At the next road junction fork left into a minor lane that leads downhill then levels through ancient woodland.

5 At the end of the lane turn right and climb steeply uphill along the road. A bridleway signpost on the right of the road points across it to a narrow woodland path into Crates Wood. At the first fork in the path bear right and stay on this path, ignoring all side paths, until it ends at a road.

Good to know...

Cattle, especially if they have calves and if you have a dog with you, may feel threatened and become defensive. If they start to approach you, let your dog go free; the cattle will be more likely to pursue the dog than they will you, and the dog will return to you when it is safe to do so.

6 Turn left, downhill along the road, until reaching an area on the right where there is space to park two or three cars. A path from here leads up the bank into the wood, bearing to the left. Keep left, then follow the winding path inside the top edge of the wood, alongside fields on the right.

7 When you reach a clear fork in the path, the bridleway follows the higher ground but then drops very steeply on a tricky path to the road at Gutch Common; it is an easier and safer route to take the left fork downhill through the wood, then when reaching the road, to turn right and then right again at the next junction and uphill along the road to the pretty hamlet of Gutch Common.

8 Pass Fairview Cottage, which has a red postbox set into the wall, on the left of the road, and immediately turn left at the road junction. Keep left to pass Woodside Bungalow and then turn left across the grass beside the bungalow to go through a small gate at the top of the wood, into the Oysters Coppice Nature Reserve.

9 Through the gate, take the path to the right, down through the coppice, past a bench from which there are lovely views. Continue down through the wood. Do not go through either of the first two metal gates on the right but do go through the third metal gate. The line of the path is clear to see as it bears diagonally to the left, downhill across the field.

10 As the path rises up the slope of the field, bear left to a metal gate in the field corner. Do not go through the metal gate in the hedge on the right. Walk downhill along the edge of the next field, alongside the hedge on the right, to a gate through which the path continues across the wide grass verge to the road. Turn right, back to the Village Stores, the church and the Benett Arms.