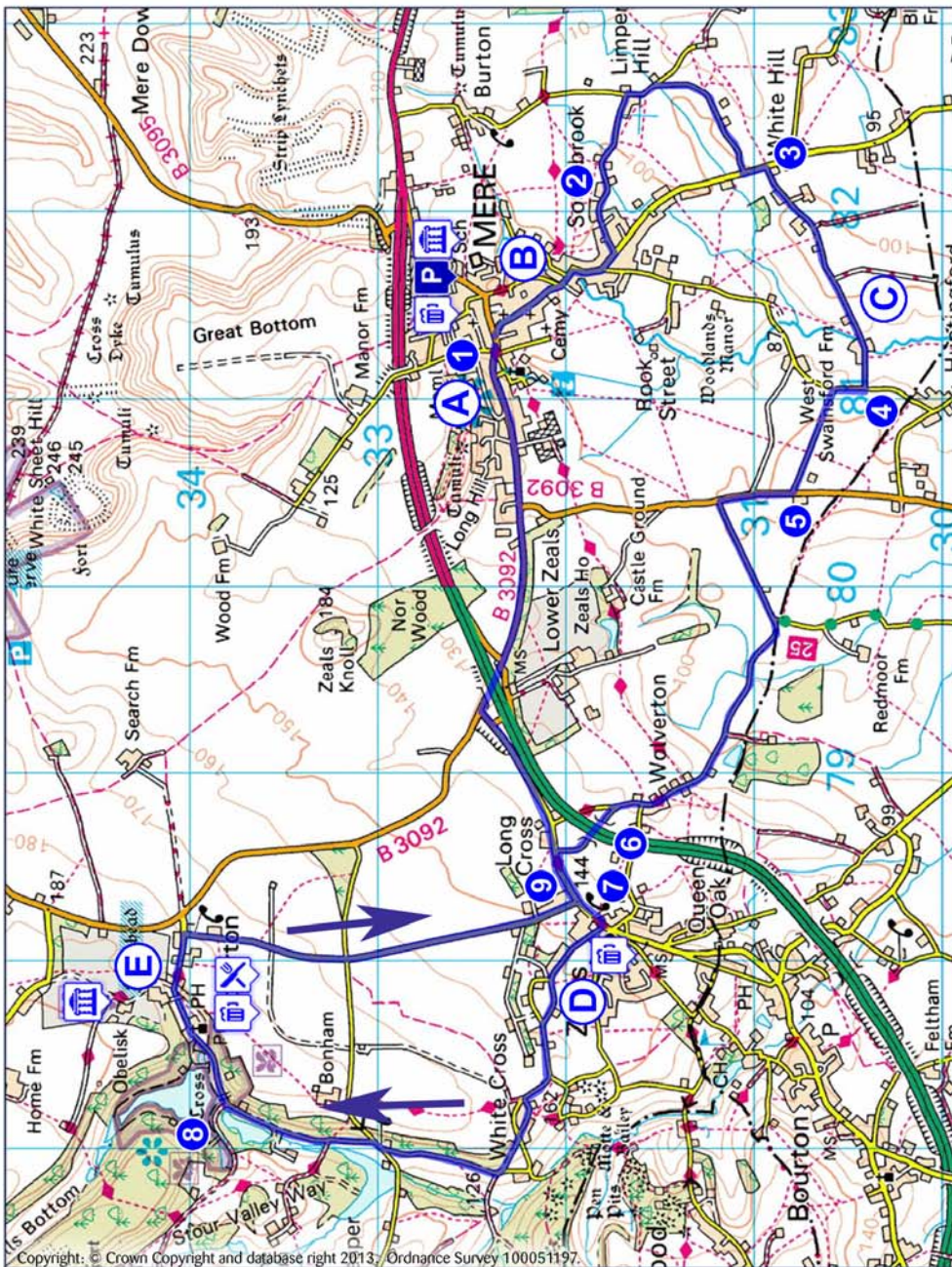


Cycle Trail 10: Mere to the magnificent Estate of Stourhead

Length of Cycle
11 miles (18km)

Ordnance Survey map: Explorer 143
Cycle Start: ST 815 325



Key

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

Distance: 11 miles (18km)

Time: Allow 1.5 hrs

Terrain: Mostly quiet roads and lanes with moderate gradients

Difficulty: Moderate

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 : 3381500

Y : 13972500

Latitude : 51.0915

Longitude : -2.2655

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 Bell and Crown Inn in Zeals, Stourhead has its own own Restaurant. There is also the Spread Eagle Pub on the Estate

A superb circuit which starts from the Medieval Market Town of Mere with its rich textile history, through quaint hamlets and villages and then onto a loop round the magnificent world famous historic National Trust property and gardens at Stourhead

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 and cross Edge Bridge over Shreen Water. Bear R around the bend to the Walnut Tree Inn.

2. At the Walnut Tree Inn, go straight across mini-roundabout and continue straight on along Shaftesbury Road turning L along Southbrook Lane. At T-Junction, turn R along lane and as the lane forks bear R and continue to end of lane.

3. At T-Junction, turn L onto Shaftesbury Road, then first R (White Hill) and continue downhill crossing Shreen Water by the remains of Hinks Mill, a former silk mill.

4. Ascend to T-junction, turn R along Woodlands Road and then first L, signposted Gillingham.

5. At the T-junction with the B3092 (Mapperton Hill), turn R heading north for a short distance, then take first L signposted Wolverton. Carry on past the turning on the L and ascend through the hamlet of Wolverton.

6. Pass beneath the A303 and turn L heading westwards along New Road to the village of Zeals.

7. Opposite the Bell and Crown pub where you can stop for refreshments, turn R up Chapel Lane and after half a mile, swing north following the Stour Valley to the beautiful village of Stourton and the National Trust's magnificent Stourhead which is well worth a visit.

8. From Stourton, ascend lane passing archway across the drive leading to Stourhead House and entrance to the National Trust car-park. Shortly before the B3092, turn R heading southwards down Bells Lane to the end and back to the village of Zeals.

9. At the T-junction, turn L along New Road and continue straight ahead to the B3092. Turn R passing under the A303 and follow road (Castle Street) straight on into Mere with its friendly High Street of independent and antique shops, cafe and pubs.

This information is intended only as a general guide. Recommended Ordnance Survey maps are listed.

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Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, 4 Castle St, Cranborne, Dorset, BH21 5PZ

Find more walking, cycling & riding routes, places to stay, attractions and places to visit at: www.discovernadder.org.uk



Cycle Trail 10: Mere to the magnificent Estate of Stourhead

Length of Cycle
11 miles (18km)

Ordnance Survey map: Explorer 143
Cycle Start: ST 815 325

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 with its variety of traditional pubs and independent shops, it is well worth spending time browsing around. Its name is probably derived from the Saxon word Mere meaning marsh or boundary. Mere had a castle in the early Medieval period just 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. The Duchy of Cornwall still remains a large landowner around Mere today. Textiles were a mainstay of the local economy until late Victorian times with a thriving cottage industry. There was also a strong Temperance Movement which began in 1834 and did much to change the habits of drunkenness in the town, the result of much poverty and hardship. More information about its history can be found in Mere Library.

B Edge Bridge. The name is derived from when edge tools were once made and sharpened in a workshop here beside the Shreen Water using a water wheel for power.

C Hinks Mill. Opened by Charles Jupe as a local silk mill in 1830, other mills soon followed. It has a large water wheel, and also living accommodation. Silk would arrive unwound in cocoons, after being cleaned, it would be wound onto bobbins and graded before being sent onto Warminster for spinning. At its peak, the Mill employed over 170 people; mostly poorly paid young girls.

D Zeals and Zeals Airfield. Its unusual name is derived from the Old English word Sealh meaning a small willow or sallow. There is evidence of human activity in the area since Neolithic times. The Pen Pits to the north of the village were quarried in Roman times. St. Martin's Church of a Gothic design is worth a visit and there are also a set of Tudor style almshouses, both built in the 1800s. There was an airfield - Zeals Airfield located along Bells Lane, formerly RAF Zeals which operated between 1942-46. In 1943, RAF Fighter Command used it as a base for Spitfires and Hurricanes and it was later used for glider training.

E Stourhead. Magnificent Palladian Mansion and world famous garden which when opened in the 1740s, was described as 'a living work of art'. It has been in the ownership of the National Trust since 1946 and is one of their finest gardens. The gardens were designed by Henry Hoare II with classical temples, mystical grottoes and rare exotic trees set out around a large lake. The Stourhead Estate covers over 2000 acres in total of chalk down, ancient woods and farmland. Towering over the Estate at over 160ft high is King Alfred's Tower. The brick folly was built in 1772 near the location of Egbert's Stone where the Saxon King Alfred the Great defeated the Danish in AD 878.

