

Explore Whatcombe

3.5 Miles | 5.6 km Moderate

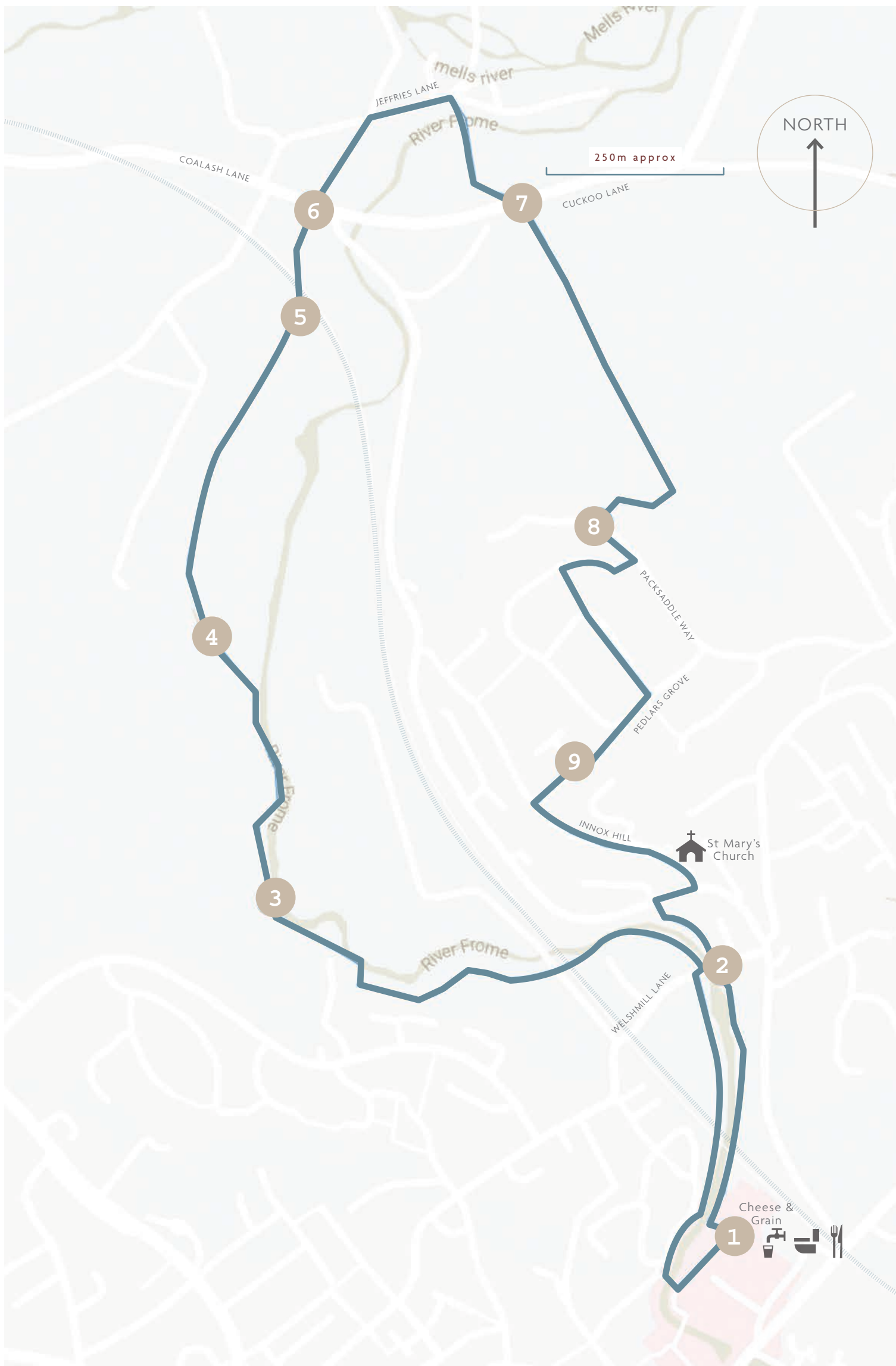
A circular walk following the River Frome across Whatcombe Fields, passing the Whatcombe Wall and the old fulling mills at Jeffries Mill. It climbs up to the Packsaddle estate, with lovely views of the Orchardleigh Estate and Frome town, before returning to the Cheese and Grain.

Route written by Miriam and Chris Hare.

START

- 1** At the Cheese & Grain, head north-west past the canoe club, under the railway bridge, passing the pump track and the children's play park.
- 2** When you reach Welshmill Lane, turn left over the bridge and immediately right following the footpath sign directing you along "Riverside path to Low Water". The River Frome is now on your right.
- 3** The tarmac path takes you through a meadow and houses. The path turns left and then right signposted to Spring Gardens. Go through the gate, and through Whatcombe Fields. When entering the third field, the footpath leaves the tarmac path, it goes straight on over the field. Head for the telegraph pole and kissing gate straight ahead. Go through the kissing gate. There is a view of Selwood Manor in the distance. Cross the field and go through the stone stile.
- 4** Follow the path straight ahead with trees and then a wall to your left. Whatcombe Farm is on your left. Go through the kissing gate, passing the Whatcombe Wall canal embankment on your left (part of the Dorset and Somerset Canal that was never completed). There are poplar trees on your right.

- 5** Go through a kissing gate. Stop look and listen and beware of trains before crossing the railway track. Go through another kissing gate. Cross the pasture, through another kissing gate onto Coalash Lane.
- 6** Cross the road and take the footpath straight ahead having crossed the stile. Then go over the next stile into Jeffries Lane. Turn right, passing Jeffries Mill on your left. When you reach a sign saying Private Road to the right take the public footpath to the right between two walls. Take the footbridge over the river. Go through the gate and straight across the field. Cross the drive to the house and take the footpath up the slope heading towards the left. Go through the gate.
- 7** Cross Cuckoo Lane again, through the kissing gate straight ahead. Keep going straight up the field to the hedge right at the top of the hill, past the cider apple trees. At the hedge at the top of the field turn around to see the view over to the Orchardleigh Estate, turn right, then go through the kissing gate into Packsaddle Way.



- 8** Turn left onto Packsaddle Way, after approx. 20 yards turn right along Pedlars Grove with a children's play park on your right. At the end of the play park take the footpath on your left which leads to Farmhouse Drive. At the end of the footpath turn left. At the end of Farmhouse Drive take the footpath which leads into Pedlars Grove. Turn right past the children's play area and after approx. 20 yards take the footpath between the houses going straight on down the steps into Over Innox Road.
 - 9** Turn left down Innox Hill with views over Frome to your right, past St Mary's Church at the bottom. Turn right into Lower Innox, and after 20 yards at Mill Close cross Lower Innox and take the footpath alongside the river. Cross Welshmill Lane. Turn right over the bridge and immediately left. Take the footpath, keeping the River Frome on your left (along the other side) until you reach the Jenson Button Bridge over the river, into the Market Yard Car Park. The Cheese & Grain is on your left.
- FINISH**

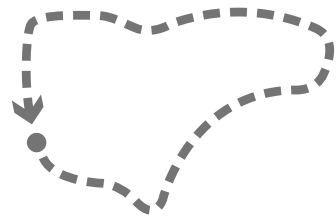
Key

	Church		Take Care
	Public Toilet		Route Marker
	Water Refill		Walking Route
	Refreshments		Pub





FROM WALKS



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Respect

Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors.

Leave gates and property as you find them.

Follow paths where crops are growing. Use gates or stiles if possible.

Avoid climbing walls or fences. Don't disturb ruins or historic sites. Don't interfere with machinery or livestock.

Protect

Protect plants and animals and take your litter home. Be careful not to drop matches or smouldering cigarettes.

Keep your dog under effective control so that it does not disturb or scare farm animals or wildlife.

Always clean up after your dog and get rid of the mess responsibly.

Enjoy

Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs.

Trees you might find

Ash



Height up to 35m
Bark pale brown to grey and fissures as the tree ages
Twigs smooth with distinctive black, velvety leaf buds arranged opposite each other
Leaves 3-6 opposite pairs of light green oval leaflets with a single leaflet at the end
Flowers small purple flowers growing in spiked clusters at the tip of twigs
Fruits winged fruit or 'keys' form in late summer and autumn

Silver Birch



Height up to 30m
Bark white and sheds paper-like layers, becoming black at the base. As it ages, the bark develops dark, diamond-shaped fissures
Twigs smooth with small dark warts
Leaves small, light green and triangular with a toothed edge
Flowers long yellow-brown catkins, commonly known as 'lamb's tails' and short, bright green catkins
Fruits female catkins thicken and become dark crimson

Hawthorn



Height up to 15m
Bark brown-grey, knotted and fissured
Twigs slender, brown and thorny
Leaves about 6cm long, toothed
Flowers white (occasionally pink), 5 petals, highly scented and grow in flat-topped clusters
Fruits deep red known as haws

Common Beech



Height 40m+
Bark smooth, thin and grey, often with slight horizontal etchings
Twigs dark brown with distinctively sharply pointed leaf buds not pressed against the twigs
Leaves oval and pointed with a wavy edge. Lime green with silky hairs, becoming darker and hairless
Flowers tassel-like catkins hang on long stalks; flowers grow in pairs surrounded by a cup
Fruits the cup becomes a prickly, woody case enclosing one or two beech nuts (or beechmast)

Blackthorn



Height 6-7m
Bark dark brown and smooth
Twigs black-purple, forming straight side shoots which develop into thorns
Leaves oval, toothed, pointed and tapered at base
Flowers white five-petalled flowers appear in March and April
Fruits blue-black fruits about 1cm and perfect for sloe gin

Sweet Chestnut



Height up to 35m
Bark grey-purple and smooth, developing vertical fissures with age
Twigs purple-brown with red-brown oval buds
Leaves glossy, 16-28cm long and 5-9cm wide. Oblong with a pointed tip and toothed edge
Flowers long, yellow catkins
Fruits spiky green cases hold shiny red-brown nuts ready for Christmas

Alder



Height up to 28m
Bark dark, fissured and often covered in lichen
Twigs light brown, spotted stem turning red towards the top
Leaves Young twigs are sticky purple or grey leaf bud; dark green leaves are 3-9cm, racquet-shaped and leathery with serrated edges.
Flowers male catkins are 2-6cm long and turn yellow; female catkins are green and oval shaped
Fruits catkins become woody and appear as tiny cone-like fruits in winter

Hazel



Height up to 12m
Bark smooth, grey-brown which peels with age; bendy, hairy stems with oval, blunt and hairy buds
Twigs bark can peel in younger shoots
Leaves round/oval, doubly toothed, hairy and pointed at the tip
Flowers catkins are yellow and hang in clusters; flowers are tiny and bud-like with red styles
Fruits oval fruits hang in groups and mature into a nut with woody shell surrounded by leafy bracts (modified leaves)

Ginkgo Biloba



Originating from China, Ginkgo biloba is neither a broadleaf or a conifer and has its own division, Ginkgophyta. The only tree left in its division, it's often known as the 'living fossil tree' as fossil records show that species closely related to today's Ginkgo have existed for over 200 million years. Frome has its very own Ginkgo outside the library!

Elder



Height around 15m
Bark grey-brown, corky and furrowed
Twigs green, unpleasant-smelling, hollow or have a white pith inside
Leaves buds are ragged-looking; leaves have 5-7 toothed leaflets which smell unpleasant when touched or bruised
Flowers creamy-coloured, highly scented, five-petal flowers on large flat umbels 10-30cm across
Fruits small dark purple berries

Rowan



Height 15m
Bark smooth and silvery-grey
Twigs start hairy, becoming smoother
Leaves buds are purple and hairy; leaves comprise of 5-8 pairs of leaflets, plus one at the end. They are long, oval and toothed
Flowers dense clusters of creamy-white, five-petal flowers
Fruits clusters of scarlet berries, enjoyed by birds

Judas Tree



The Judas Tree (*cercis siliquatrum*) is believed to have arrived in the UK in the 17th century and if you're lucky to be in Frome in late April – May visit Victoria Park where you can enjoy its stunning deep pink/purple flowers.

There are two ideas for how it got its common name 'Judas Tree', the first pertaining to the myth that Judas hung himself from this tree after his betrayal of Jesus Christ. The second is that it's a derivation from the French Arbre de Judée (tree of Judea) where the tree was a common sight.

The name *Cercis* comes from the Greek *kerkis* "shuttle" because of the seed pods' resemblance to a weaver's tool; *siliquatrum* comes from Latin *siliqua* "pod".