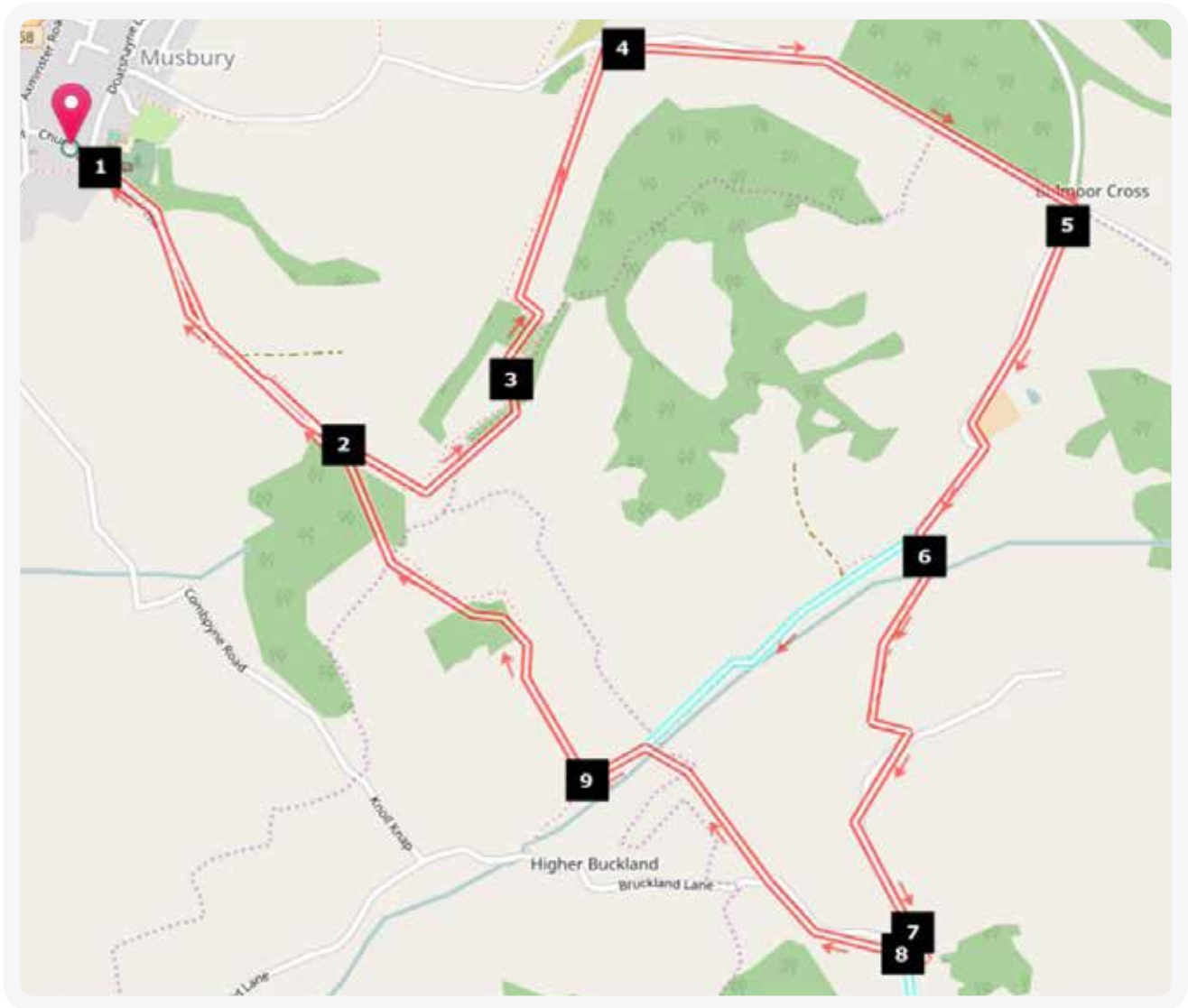
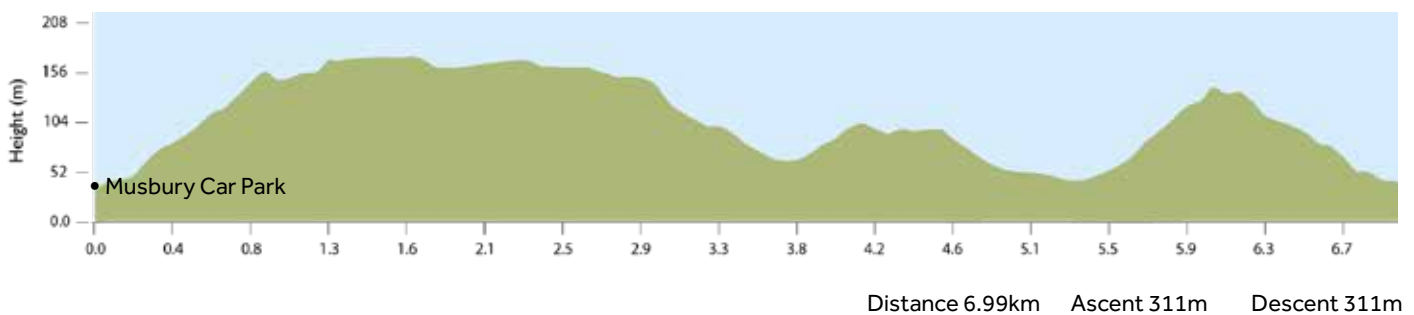


# Musbury Castle Circular



**Difficulty:** Moderate  
**Walking time:** 2 hours 30 minutes  
**Length:** 7.0km / 4.4mi



## Circular Route 12

# Musbury Castle Circular



**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Walking time:** 2 hours 30 minutes

**Length:** 7.0km / 4.4mi

**Start location:** Musbury Car Park (Grid Reference SY275946)

**Route Summary:** This 4.4 mile walk commences at Musbury car park and follows the East Devon Way to Musbury Castle and Combpyne.

**Map:** Explorer 116 Lyme Regis and Bridport

### Description

**[1] From the Musbury crossroads go straight over the road with the Spar on your left and Golden Hind public house on your right.**

Continue up the road towards the School and St Michael's church. The car park is on the left just before the Church. Keep the church on your left, go up the incline towards the farm and through some farm buildings.

As the track turns left look for a stile on the right, go over the stile diagonally across the field, keeping the telegraph pole on your left. Aim for the gate in the middle of hedge line above you.

Go through the kissing gate, this is the base of Musbury Castle, an Iron Age hill fort. Go up the hill past the first gate on your right.

The village of Musbury takes its title from the Old English name of the ancient hill fort rising above it, the name loosely, and amusingly, meaning 'ancient place overrun by mice'...a descriptive way of saying that it's deserted!

The church of St Michael sits high above the village, half way on the hill beneath the fort. The oldest part of the present-day church is the tower, which dates from 1420, but it is thought that an earlier structure would have existed on the same site; possibly a far simpler building without aisles, situated where the nave is now.

Like many buildings in the area, it is built of local flint rubble and freestone blocks; Beer stone having been used for the dressings to the openings, quoins, parapet coping and internal arches. Ham stone was also used, particularly in the tower parapet, and the roof is made of slate. Quarry tiles were laid in the sanctuary and aisles when the church was rebuilt during the 19th century, and the old stone slabs let into their former places.

The most prominent feature of the church is the Drake family memorial, which was built in 1611 and further extended circa 1646. The figures represent, from left to right, Sir John Drake and his wife, Amy, Sir Barnard Drake, his wife Garthrud, and Sir John Drake and his wife, Dorothy.

**[2] The path divides, the East Devon Way turns right through a five bar wooden gate but carry on up the hill. At the top turn left on an upward track until you get to the plateau that is Musbury Castle. Musbury Castle is an Iron Age Hill Fort**

**[3] The views from the top of Musbury Castle over the Axe Valley and to the English Channel are superb. Look down over the Axe Valley and Colyton to the Golden Hind pub 155m below.**

Retrace your steps to the track and turn left, North. Follow the winding footpath until it comes into a field. Turn left and head for the stile. Cross the stile, turn right, North, and follow the field boundary to a seat and stile.

After admiring the views climb over the stile and follow the field boundary to the road.

## Circular Route 12

# Musbury Castle Circular



**[4] Turn right and proceed East along the quiet by-road.** Take care, this is a little used by-road with wide grass verges

**[5] Take the first turn right at Bulmoor Cross and follow the old drover's road past Hart Farm.**

Go straight on down the East Devon Way avoiding the route to Combpayne. Go over the stream and keep it to your left.

**[6] Turn left, South along the track.**

The track descends steeply and crosses a stream. Continue on up the track to Lower Farm.

The track can be rutted and muddy. In heavy rain it becomes a shallow stream.

**[7] At Lower Farm turn right, pass the cottages on the right and head down the road to a gateway and footpath sign.**

Follow the field boundary until you reach a stile, cross the stile and head for the footbridge. Cross the footbridge and turn immediately left. You are now back on the East Devon Way with good views up to Musbury Castle.

### Optional extension of approximately one mile to Combpayne Church

#### St Mary the Virgin, Combpayne

Set in the valley of Combpayne the Church now serves the joint Combpayne-Rousdon community. With possible Saxon origins the Church dates from 1240; renovations occurred in the late 19thC and 1950-51.

Notable are the tower's 13thC arch, the unusual saddleback roof, the 13thC Beer stone font, the Last Supper triptych and the remains of a rood staircase. Two of the three bells date from 1400, and historic murals include a ship perhaps drawn by a 14thC seafarer.

**[8] Turn right and head up the field boundary to a gate with adjacent stile.** Go over the stile and head up hill following the way marked route to a kissing gate and steps at the base of Musbury Castle.

After taking a breather, carry straight on following the East Devon Way signs back to the car park or bus stop.

Take care if walking down the road to the bus stop.

**Route developer:** James Baldwin

**Route checker:** Ted Swan