

The Meres Meander

A choice of short and longer walks around Shropshire's meres

Short walks

Walk 1: 1.6 km (1 mile) circular walk around Ellesmere. Allow $\frac{3}{4}$ hour • **START from:** Canal Wharf, Wharf Road, Ellesmere • *GRID REF:* 399345

Walk 2: 1.6 km (1 mile) circular walk around Colemere Countryside Heritage Site. Allow $\frac{3}{4}$ hour
START from: Colemere Countryside Heritage Site.
GRID REF: 436328

Longer walks

Walk 3: 4.8 km (3 mile) circular walk from Colemere Countryside Heritage Site. Allow $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours • **START from:** Colemere Countryside Heritage Site • *GRID REF:* 436328

Walk 4: 11 km (7 miles) from Ellesmere to Colemere Countryside Heritage Site via the Llangollen Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal. Allow **4 hours** • **START from:** Canal Wharf, Wharf Road, Ellesmere • *GRID REF:* 399345

MAPS: OS Explorer 240/241

PARKING is available in **Ellesmere town centre**, **the Mere** and **Colemere Countryside Heritage Site**.

All the walks are fairly level with some undulating sections but no big hills.

For public transport enquiries contact
Traveline 0870 608 2 608
Website: www.traveline.org.uk

Mountain-high ice stretched across North Shropshire 18,000 years ago. Very slowly, over the next few thousand years, it melted, leaving behind the wonderfully distinctive landscape you see today: hummocky hills and hollows and dozens of shallow lakes or meres.

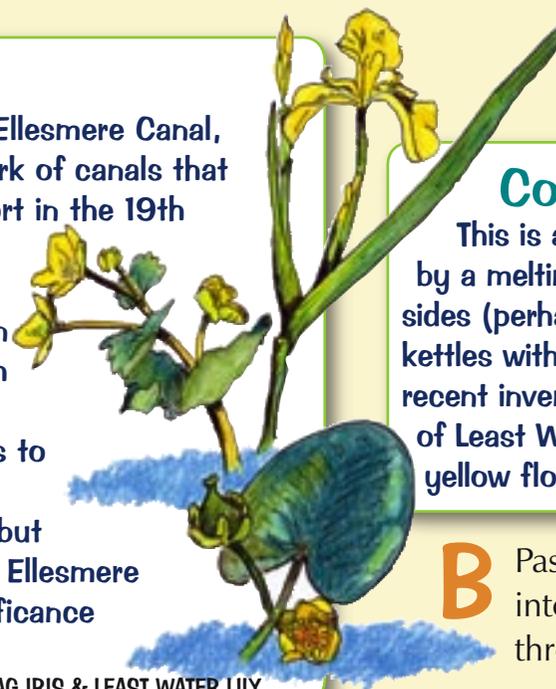
Walk 1

- 1 From the town centre car park follow the signs to the canal wharf.
- 2 From the canal wharf follow the towpath and walk over the first bridge.

Continue on the left side of the canal past **Ellesmere Marina**.

Canal wharf

Originally known as the Ellesmere Canal, this was part of a network of canals that formed the main transport in the 19th century for industrial materials such as coal. Now called the Llangollen Canal, it is still busy with narrow-boats used for pleasure. The canal leads to a place on the Mersey once called Netherpool, but which became known as Ellesmere Port, reflecting the significance of the canal.



YELLOW FLAG IRIS & LEAST WATER LILY

3 Turn off the towpath at the signpost for the **Woodland and the Mere**. Go through the woodland wildlife reserve, cross the road on to Castle Field and take in the panoramic views of the Mere.

4 Walk down to the Mere front where refreshments are available.

5 Promenade along on the Mere front, following the signs to the **Cremorne Gardens** and back to the town centre.

Walk 2

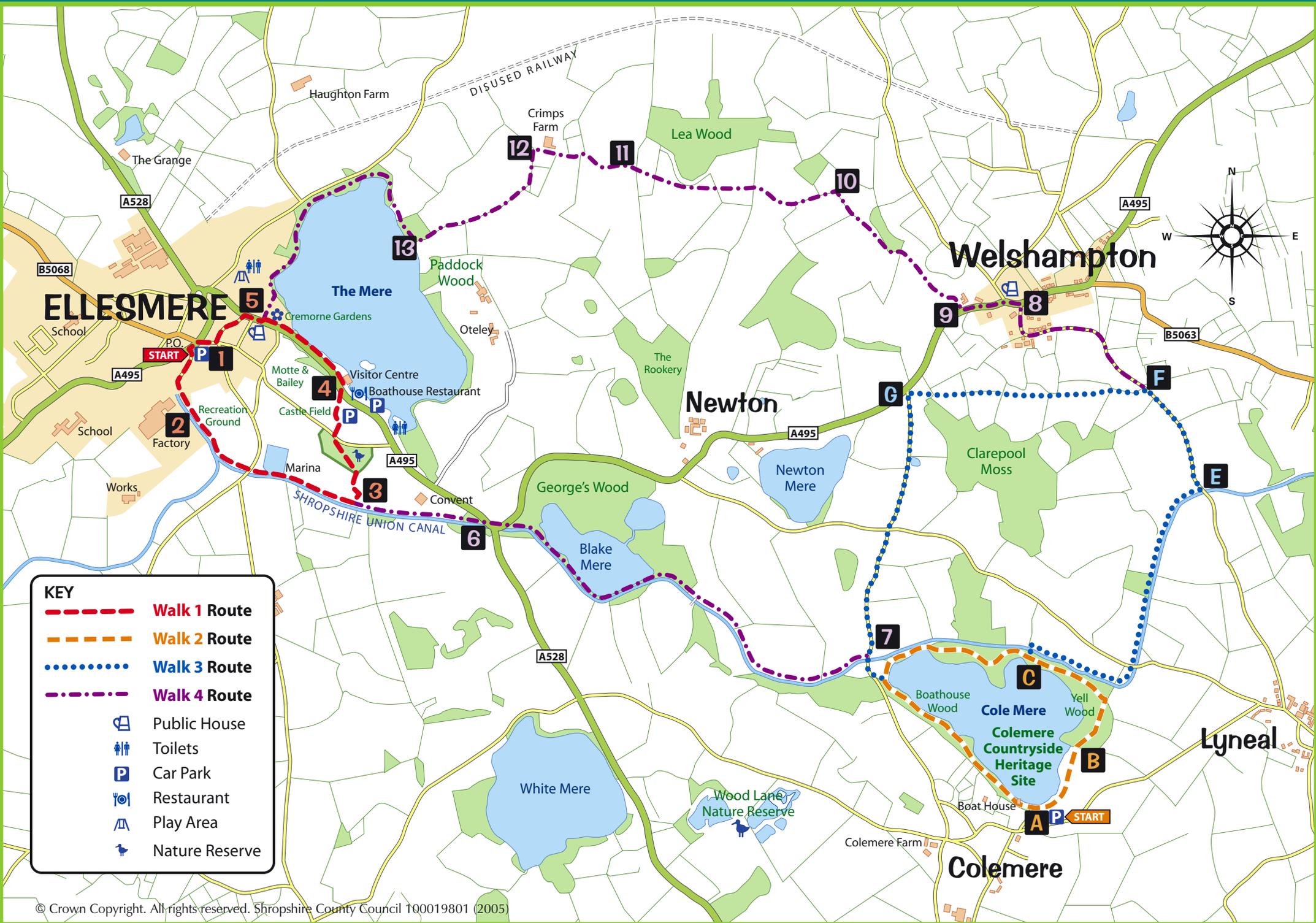
A From the car park at **Colemere Countryside Heritage Site** head through the kissing gate by the mere and follow the path along the mereside.

Colemere

This is a classic 'kettle hole' mere, created by a melting chunk of glacier with steep, deep sides (perhaps more of a cauldron shape, but kettles with spouts and lids are a relatively recent invention). England's only known colony of Least Water Lily grows here, its small yellow flowers open in late summer.

B Pass through another kissing gate into **Yell Wood** and follow the path through the wood.

Walk 2 continues overleaf



KEY

- - - Walk 1 Route
- - - Walk 2 Route
- Walk 3 Route
- . - . - . Walk 4 Route
-  Public House
-  Toilets
-  Car Park
-  Restaurant
-  Play Area
-  Nature Reserve

Further Information



Remember the Countryside Code:

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs even when going out locally
- 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.

www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

Walking is good for you!

Walking five times a week for 30 minutes helps you keep healthy.

Other walks in Shropshire

Information on other walks in Shropshire can be found by visiting:

www.shropshire.gov.uk



DISCLAIMER The publishers have made every effort to ensure the information in this publication was correct at the time of printing. If you have any comments regarding this publication please contact Northern Shropshire Countryside Service, Swan Hill, Ellesmere, SY12 0DQ • Tel: 01691 624448

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C Walk up the steps to have a look at the canal from the bridge

D Continue around the mere passing through a kissing gate crossing a small stream by the waters edge and on to a further kissing gate which takes you into **Boathouse Wood**. Follow the path along the southern shore of Colemere, past the **Boat House** back to the car park.

Walk 3

Follow the direction on walk 2, up to **C**. Here cross over the canal bridge and then turn right along the towpath.

E At the third bridge leave the canal, turn right and follow the road to **Welshampton**.

F On the road to Welshampton, after passing a cottage on your left, turn left and go through the gate onto the Public Footpath. Cross the first field and go through the next gate, then follow the fenced path on the right hand side of the field. Go through the gate at the end of the fenced path and follow the path ahead through five fields.

G Go through the gate onto the lane and turn left. Follow this lane until you cross over the canal bridge (7).

Continue past a cottage on the right, then turn left through a kissing gate into Boathouse Wood and follow the path along the southern shore of Colemere to the car park.

Walk 4

For those who prefer a longer ramble, the longest of the Mere Meanders combines the three shorter walks. Starting from **Ellesmere town centre** car park (1), follow the Shropshire Union Canal towpath, past the Marina, through the Ellesmere Tunnel (6) and past **Blakemere** on your left.

Blakemere and the canal

The canal is a great place to see wildlife. The hedgerows, banks and ditches provide safe thoroughfares for voles, field mice and hedgehogs, hunting grounds for bats, food and nesting places for birds. Look out for kingfishers and dragonflies.



Immediately after the second bridge turn left up the steps (7), then turn left again and follow the lane.

Continue past a cottage on the right then turn left through a kissing gate into **Boathouse Wood** beside Cole Mere. Go past

the boathouse (built in the 19th century for fishing and shooting parties) and follow the path around the southern and eastern shores through **Yell Wood** to the canal bridge **(C)**.

Cross the bridge and turn right along the towpath. At the third bridge leave the canal **(E)**, turn right and follow the road all the way to **Welshampton**. At Welshampton turn left along the main road **(8)** and when you reach the end of the village, taking care, cross the main road and take the public footpath through the farmyard **(9)**.

Go through the farm and follow the track until you reach a kissing gate between two hedges. Go through the gate and follow the path past a pond on your left. Carry on along the footpath keeping the fence to your left taking care to follow the fence when it bends sharply to the left **(10)**.

Follow the footpath ahead **(11)** which leads you onto a farm track to **Crimps Farm (12)**.

With the farm buildings to your right, follow the track to the left through the next field until you come to a path between the fence and a hedge, which takes you down to the side of the mere.



WIDGEON, GOLDENEYE & TEAL

The Mere

The Mere at Ellesmere is the largest of the North Shropshire meres, plummeting to 19 metres in its darkest depths. Fish such as roach, perch and bream make a fat living here. The waters, rich with rock minerals washed through the ground, are heaving with plankton - a feast for fish and dragonfly larvae. Look out in spring for water lilies and yellow flag irises in the marshy areas at the water's edge.

Turn right through the gate and follow the path through the wood over a field down by the Mere **(13)**.

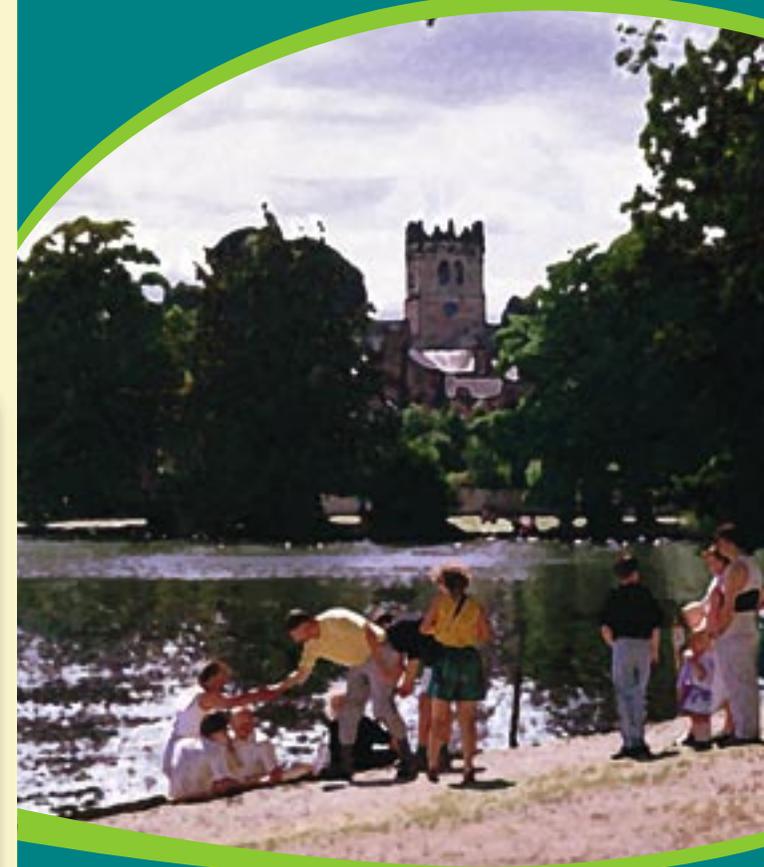
Keep on the path around the edge of the Mere to **Cremorne Gardens (5)** and follow the signs back to the town centre. Alternatively you can keep walking round the mere to the **Meres Visitor Centre (4)**.

Wintering wildfowl roost on the Mere; widgeon, teal and pochard gather in rafts on the surface along with the occasional goldeneye, goosander and hundreds of black headed gulls. Pike, most fiercesome of freshwater fish, have been known to snatch the odd gull for supper.

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Whatever your interests – beautiful countryside, wildlife, exercise, something to do with the kids – these walks are for you!



Enjoy our walks and improve your health!