Membury Castle Loop and a hunt for the Golden Hind – 3.3km

This is quite a hilly route with muddy parts so sensible shoes required
There are also cows so take care if you have a dog with you

Route

Blank Map so you can see the OS map markings

The objective is to navigate this route and find as many Golden Hinds as you can

= Golden Hind
**Start** at Membury car park

Turn left out of car park and turn left up the road towards Greendown

Where the road bends to the left you will see a footpath sign straight ahead, climb the steps and follow the footpath across the field to the gate.

Once through the gate take the footpath across the field to the gate on the far right corner.

Cross the road where you will see a footpath sign.

Follow the footpath (the little yellow arrows on gates etc. will point you in the right direction) you will be walking with the field boundary on your right (the thin black line on the map show the field boundaries). You will be walking around Membury Castle.

When you go through the kissing gate keep going down the field and go through a metal gate at the bottom right of the field.

Keep in towards the hedge on the left there is a small bluebell wood you can see and some very old oaks, walk past a water trough and a couple of meters on the left you will see a large ash tree – *look very carefully and you will see that the tree is hollow*.

![Ash leaves to help you identify the tree](image)

Follow the tree line and rejoin the footpath – if you look to the left in the field you will see a post with a yellow footpath arrow to show you the way.

Go through the gate onto the road turn left and walk up the hill

Where the road takes a sharp left by East Membury Farm you will see a stile and a footpath sign, climb over and climb up the field, you are aiming for the top left corner of the field where you will find another stile.

You are now at Membury Castle (brief history at the end of the sheet) go strait up and over and go through the gap in the bank and down the hill towards the gate.

Cross the road and take the track to the right of the house opposite the gate. At the end of the track there is a small wooden gate, go through it.

Follow the footpath walk down the field keeping to the left (take care its wet underfoot) until you see a metal gate to the right of the field – go through that.

Turn right and follow the track until you reach the road.

Turn left and follow the road down into Membury and walk back to the car park.
History Bits

The Boat on the signs comes from Devon coat of arms

The arms were officially granted on October 11, 1926. Crest and supporters granted 6th March 1962.
The red lion is that of Richard, Earl of Cornwall and King of the Romans. The crown denotes royal descent. The chief illustrates the maritime heritage of the County, in particular Sir Francis Drake's ship, The Golden Hind. In 1962 a crest and supporters were added. The crest has a Naval crown for the long association of the Royal Navy with Devon. From this rises a pony's head. This represents Dartmoor, where wild ponies still roam. The dexter supporter is a bull for agriculture and the sinister a sealion for the sea. Thus both the inland and coastal communities of Devon are shown. The motto was that used by Sir Francis Drake and means By Divine Aid.

Membury Castle
Membury Castle is a univallate hillfort (Having one raised edge or wall surrounding a depression), located on the southern end of a narrow steep sided ridge- backed hill situated between the River Yarty and the River Axe. The defences enclose a narrow oblong area of about 1.3ha which has three main entrances one of which may be of much later date and one of which is modern. The defensive circuit may at one time have been provided with a ditch on at least two sides, although this is no longer visible. The elongated interior of the monument is about 225m in length north-south with a maximum width of 60m east-west. Quarries dug internally to provide soil for the rampart are clearly visible along the inside of the western bank and elsewhere on the circuit. This has had the effect of creating a raised and domed area towards the centre of the hillfort most particularly noticeable in the northern part of its interior. The earth/stone rampart was recorded by Sir Cyril Fox as being steep with chert facing. On its western side this rampart survives 5.8m wide with an angled outer slope littered with chert blocks; internally the bank is near vertical and 2m high. Whilst the bank of the rampart continues on all sides, on the east it is lower and has largely been incorporated into a later hedge bank. The steeper natural defences on this side suggest that the effectiveness of the bank may have been supplemented by the scarping of the natural hillside rather than the raising of a substantial rampart. A possible original entrance exists at the south west corner where the southern rampart terminal projects forward and outwards to provide a gap about 3m wide. Another entrance is located on the north eastern side which, if contemporary with the monument's construction, has been much altered with small enclosures placed just within the rampart perhaps during an episode of utilising the monument for stock enclosure and control in more recent times; a remnant of the partially levelled rampart can still be seen following its original course where these works have taken
place. The only level approach was from the north where an entrance might have been expected but here the rampart carries across the ridge at right angles to it with no apparent break other than a gap of clearly modern origin.

Univallate hillforts are defined as enclosures of various shapes, generally between 1ha and 10ha in size, situated on or close to hilltops and defined by a single line of earthworks, the scale of which is relatively small. They date to between the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (eighth - fifth centuries BC), the majority being used for 150 to 200 years prior to their abandonment or reconstruction. Slight univallate hillforts have generally been interpreted as stock enclosures, redistribution centres, places of refuge and permanent settlements.

I found 5 golden hinds (some posts had more than one but I only counted that as one)