



Chillerton & Gatcombe  
Parish Council



**Western Two Ridges Walk** (*Anti-clockwise Route*)

Directions devised by: D Jones & R Payn



This circular route gives the opportunity of walking up high for much of the time to overlook the land below. The beginning of the walk involves a steep climb and, therefore, requires a degree of fitness. There are also other short, steep slopes which can be very slippery when wet. For those who are unsteady on their legs or who suffer from vertigo, this route may be unsuitable. Walking poles would certainly aid confidence over the more challenging sections.

The second half of the walk is notable for the spectacular views of Chillerton Village from high vantage points. There are also views of Culver Down and Portsmouth.

**Access:** Commence walk from St Olave's Church, Gatcombe PO30 3EH **Grid Ref:** SZ 49236 85090  
(To map point **A**)

**Alternative Access:** Layby Public Bridleway G13 (To map point **E**) **Grid Ref:** SZ 48125 82968

**Alternative Access** is also possible from Brook Lane to Tolt Copse: (To map point **H**) **Grid Ref:** SZ 49196 84391

**Distance:** Approximately 4 miles

**Time:** 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> hours of steady walking

**Difficulty:** **Fairly Strenuous ascents and descents and an often-slippery woodland path.**

**This is quite a demanding walk and strong shoes or boots are a must.**

**Walkers need to be reasonably agile and mobile. Not suitable for walkers with mobility impairment of any kind.**

Chillerton Down is open access land, owned by the National Trust, and free for rambling anywhere. Therefore, pathways are hard to find in many places.

On this particular walk, the ridge is recommended and walking is easier there. When on the ridge, however, the gates on the Down necessitate a brief decent in two places before climbing back up to the ridge again.

Very exposed to the weather (Sun and wind – no shelter)

**Terrain:** The start of this walk involves an immediate, steep ascent to 160 metres above sea level. Once at the top of the climb the walking becomes relatively flat along Newbarn Down until another climb around Chillerton Mast to the return leg of the route on Chillerton Down. After that, there is an impression of descending slowly to the end of the route, with some short steep sections.

On entering Tolt copse there is a very narrow path which can be extremely slippery in wet weather.

**Stiles:** None

**Gates:** 8

**Dog friendliness:** Look out for signs denoting where dogs need to be kept on leads but also be aware that there are likely to be sheep grazing in several areas of the walk.

**Bus access:** Route 6 near the turning into Gatcombe Road (opposite the road sign for St Olave's Church)

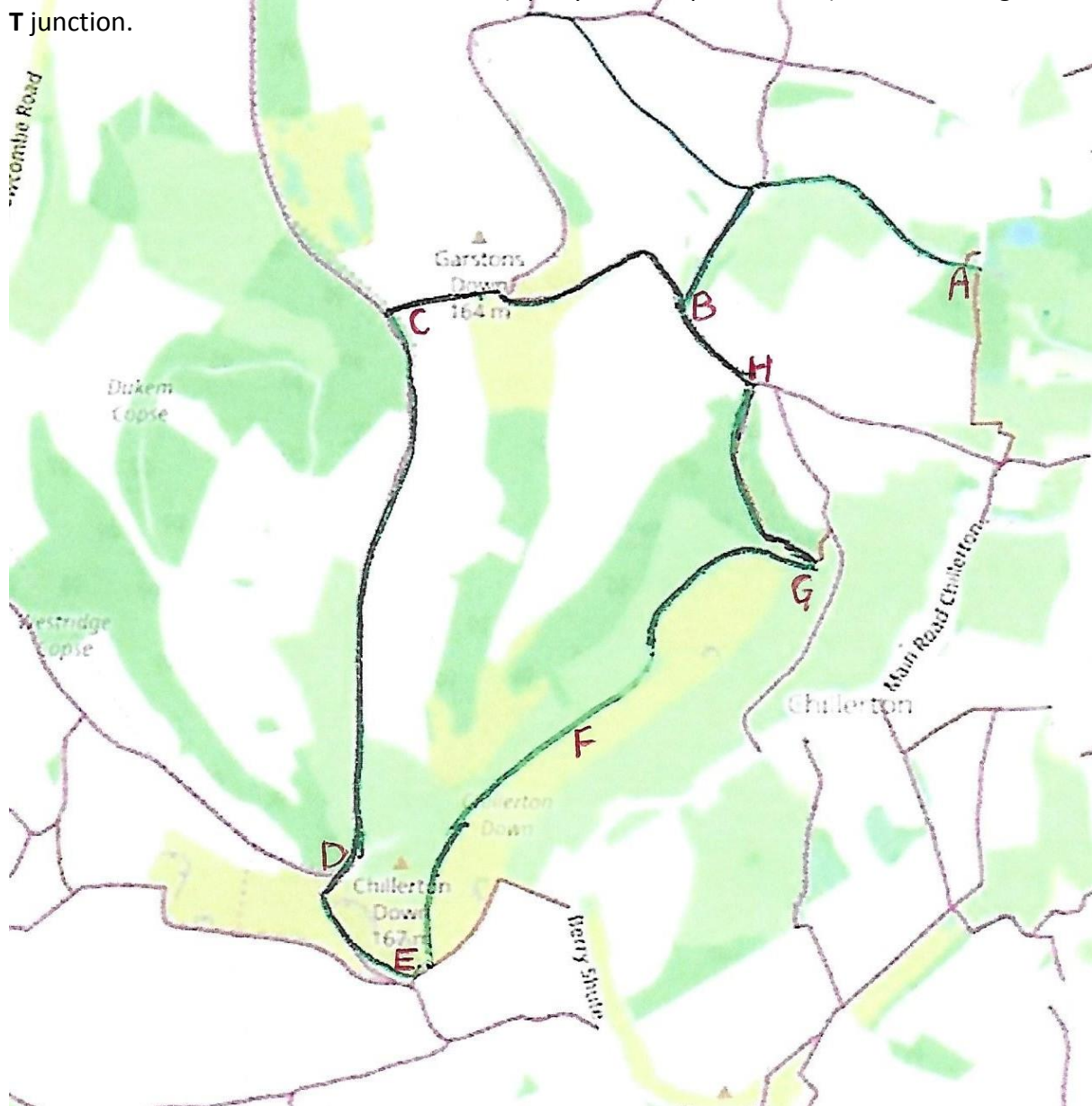
**Parking:** Along the road outside St Olave's church.

**Bicycles:** Not suitable for footpaths on this route

**Toilets:** None

**Refreshments:** None

**Route: A.** From St Olave's Church, walk along the road into Gatombe Village. Continue straight on, ignoring Rectory Lane on the right, to the junction with Snowdrop Lane. Here follow the road to the left, Newbarn Lane (Byway G7b Shepherds Trail), until reaching a T junction.



**B.** Here, follow the Bridleway sign G7, right, to Garston's Down. Skirt Newbarn Farm, on the right, and, at the end of the farm buildings, turn sharp left onto the down. You will begin to see green metal signs on gates for the Bowcombe Estate. This is the largest estate by area on the Island and although it has an arable/sheep rearing arm, its main business is in running pheasant and partridge shoots. Look out for a sign asking for dogs to be kept on leads. The steep upward track first runs through a sunken path bordered by overgrown hedgerow trees. This track is sometimes extremely muddy so it is possible to follow a parallel path which borders the field to your right. It finally enters open down land proper, with a white chalk track and springy turf on either side. Once in the open, this would be a good time to stop, turn round and enjoy the view across the East Wight as far as the chalk Culver Cliff and ships in Sandown Bay. Towards the Arreton valley you will see St Georges Down gravel pits and a large solar farm to the left, and the village of Rookley to the right.

A signpost to the left is signed G22 to Dukem Down. Follow this route which involves a continued steep climb.

You will pass through a broken gate and continue past an old dew pond on your right. Avoid the gateway after this and continue straight ahead to the next gate which will lead you into Dukeham Copse. Follow the short path the a Public Bridleway sign at a wider track running from right to left in front of you.

**C.** Follow the sign to the left, along the track which will take you along Newbarn Down. The first landmark to head for is a barn. The track continues towards Chillerton Mast, ahead on the left, until a gate is reached.

**D.** Go through this gate and across a tarmac road to another gate. The path on the other side of this gate descends steeply around to the left, skirting a chalk pit. The path becomes sunken and you pass by other chalk pits on your left. After the final pit you will reach a gate.

**E.** Do not go through this but turn left, instead, and walk up the hill, on the grass, towards a wooden marker post – keeping the chalk pit to your left. You may find tractor tracks going up towards the mast but, if not, make your way up to the fence surrounding the mast. Once at the fence, turn right and, keeping it on your left hand side, walk along the ridge.

The grass on which you are walking is fairly firm. After a short walk you may find, at certain times, when sheep are grazing, you may encounter a fence/hedge in front of you preventing you from following the ridge. In this case, drop down the hill and look for a kissing gate about half way down. Once through this climb up to the ridge top again where you will find a seat on which to take a rest and take in the view of Chillerton Village and the converted Chillerton Farm Barns. **F.**

When you set off again, you will soon need to drop down the hillside again to find the next kissing –gate, as the way ahead reaches a line of trees and a fence. Once through this gate, the ground is quite rough and may be overgrown. Eventually, though it becomes smoother as you reach the ridge again. Stay on the ridge until you approach Tolt Copse. The wearing of the ground shows where to go, which is following the fencing, on your left, downhill towards a kissing-gate at the corner of the field. **G.**

Once through the gate, turn 180 degrees left, and follow the same fencing back up the hill again, keeping it on your left hand side. You will find a gate to the copse on your right hand side. On the other side of the gate there is a very narrow path where the land drops away steeply to its right.

The path through Tolt Copse may prove to be challenging due to its narrowness in places and the numerous exposed tree roots which are a potential tripping hazard. It can also be slippery when wet.

The route now descends through the copse towards a wider track leading out of the copse. Pass by the gate (ignoring the path that turns left immediately after it) and continue downhill to meet the bridleway, leaving the trees behind. **H.** Follow the bridleway briefly to the left and then right as it continues downhill, over a chalky track towards the Bridleway sign at the junction with Newbarn Lane.

**B.** Here, turn right to return along the road back to St Olave's Church.