



Chillerton & Gatcombe  
Parish Council



**Western Two Ridges Walk** (*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. This walk is notable for the spectacular views of Chillerton Village from high vantage points. There are also views of Culver Down and Portsmouth.

The first half of this route involves a fair amount of uphill walking so requires a degree of fitness. There are also some 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.

There is a steep descent at the end of this walk but the spectacular views are likely to make it worthwhile.

**Access:** Commence walk from St Olave's Church, Gatcombe PO30 3EH

**Grid Reference:** SZ 49236 85090

**Distance:** 4 miles

**Time:** 1 hour 45 minutes

**Difficulty:** The First half of walk includes about half an hour of uphill walking

On entering Tolt copse there is a very narrow path which can be extremely slippery in wet weather. Walking on Chillerton Down can be hard on the legs with paths not only hard to see but also tilting down in the same direction as the slope. (See **Terrain**, below)

Following a descent around the mast and a short climb to the return leg, the route is much flatter until a very steep descent at the end.

**Terrain:** Very narrow track through Tolt Copse

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.** There is one very quiet road between St Olave's Church and Newbarn Farm.

Very exposed to the weather

**Stiles:** None

**Gates:** 8

**Dog friendliness:** Look out for signs denoting where dogs need to be kept on leads

**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 Gatcombe 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 point where the road curves to the right and a track comes off it to the left.

- B** Here, follow the direction of the Public Bridleway sign G6 to Chillerton.  
At the top of the gently rising, slightly stony track, the path to Tolt Copse is straight ahead over some stones laid down to stabilise the ground.
- C** A Public Footpath sign points up the hill into the copse.  
Go around gate showing the sign 'The Bowcombe Estate. Dogs Must Be Kept On Leads'



Continue up hill to a rusty direction sign and follow the sign Public Footpath G9 Chillerton (avoiding track to the right). The path continues upwards for about 100 yards before evening out. This is the only accessible track through Tolt Copse.

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 edge of the path drops away steeply to the left.

The final part of the path through the copse climbs again to a gate donated by the Parishoners of Chillerton and Gatcombe.

On the other side of the gate, the route descends to the left by the side of a fence on the right. Down the slope, as the fence turns to the right, there is a kissing-gate with a plaque commemorating two parishioners, Anne and Martin Cardew. **D**

The route, on the other side, climbs back up the hill to the top of the ridge, in the same direction you have just descended. Keep the fence to your right as you climb and follow the worn track as it sweeps to the left. Look down in the valley for views of Chillerton Village before proceeding towards Chillerton Mast, ahead.

Soon the route may become lost under ground cover so begin to gradually drop down the hillside towards gorse bushes which you need to keep on your left hand side.

Ahead, look for a gate bearing the plaque 'Leo Foster – She Loved This Place'.

Once through this kissing-gate begin to make your way up the hillside again to the ridge where you will find a grassy track which is easier to walk on than the sheep tracks, below. Keep the fence to your right hand side.

**E** Soon you will come across a bench where you can rest for a while to take in the view across Chillerton Village and Chillerton Farm Barns residential area, at the bottom of the ridge you are on. At the southern end of the buildings you should be able to pick out the footpath (G12a) that runs towards the foot of the ridge below you, from the main road. This turns, at the base of the ridge, to continue on a parallel route to the one you are taking. You will eventually need to descend to join this path.

As your route, alongside the fence on your right, takes you nearer to the mast you will, at times when sheep are grazing, come across another fence, directly in front of you, which prevents you from going straight ahead. If you look down to the left of this fence/hedge you will need to find another kissing-gate. Once past this, you will find yourself on a hillside with just sheep tracks to follow. The soundest footing will be found by making your way to the top of the ridge again where you can continue to follow the fence on your right, alongside the mast area. Continue to follow the fence as it passes the mast until it turns away to the right. The corner of the fence is especially noticeable due to the wooden, stile like structures there. Do not climb over these.

From here, you need to gradually make your way down the hill to join the footpath (G12a) which, at this point, is out of sight. It is inadvisable to go straight down, due to the steepness of the slope. Instead, aim towards the hedging you will see on either side of the Bridleway in the distance, which you will join at the end of the path.

Some may find this diagonal descent a little challenging.

You may make out some vehicle tracks which you could follow down. Be aware of a large chalk pit to your right.

Once you reach the footpath, continue along it – keeping the fence and hedging to your left – until you reach a Bridleway gate.

**F** When you reach the gate do not go through it but turn to the right instead and follow the obvious track up the hill, keeping the chalk pit to your right. The track soon becomes sunken as it passes other chalk pits. Continue on the same route, uphill, and follow it as it bends round to the right, beyond the chalk pits. You will soon be facing the TV Mast. Continue to a gate and, once past this, go across tarmac access road to another gate where you will see a sign denoting the area as the 'Bowcombe Estate'.

**G** Here you will note the Public Bridleway sign N146 for Bowcombe. The track is now wide and sound under-foot and easy to follow. The first landmark to head for is a barn and, from there, Dukem Copse. Once the copse is reached, continue through the woods for about 350 yards, looking out for Public Bridleway sign G22 Gatcombe, on your right.

**H** Follow this path and continue on through a gate which displays a sign: 'Cattle/Crops Problem area. Please ensure gate is securely fastened.' Once through the gate, keep to the fence-line on your left which has a gateway after about 150 yards.

Ignore this and continue walking straight ahead, past a dew pond on your left, until you reach a broken gate in the far corner.

Although there is no sign here, you will later see one asking for dogs to be kept on leads. The path now descends to your right passing in front of, and below, the Gorse bushes. Do not follow the obvious path which goes straight ahead. The land here descends very steeply so watch out for your knees! Public Bridleway sign G7 to Garstons, is soon reached and points you straight ahead, continuing downhill. The path continues to descend fairly steeply but offers a definitive view of the valley that hides the village of Gatcombe, stretched out in front of you. At an open gateway, the footpath descends again via a sunken path. There is a perfectly good, and well used, parallel path that follows the higher and drier field route on the left which may be preferred when the correct path is either very muddy or overgrown. Whichever route you choose, you will shortly see a blue direction arrow on a post which points to the right where the path merges in to a farm access track that runs adjacent to the outbuildings of New Barn Farm. Continue down this path until you reach that tarmac driveway which in turn leads to the road that descends in to Gatcombe Village. **B**

You will now be back on the road you started out on so just follow it back to the start.