



Chillerton and Gatcombe Parish Council
Chillerton Circular Walk

Original directions: S Holloway



A terrific walk for a clear day with views that will not be bettered anywhere on the island. By visiting the less frequented north side of Chillerton Down you are rewarded with distant views over the Solent to Portsmouth and the New Forest and the maritime origins of Newport and Cowes are laid out clearly below you. When you add the southern and western vistas of Chale Bay and the cliffs at Sandown you are reminded that Chillerton really is at the centre of the island.

Access: Chillerton Village Hall, Hollow Lane.	PO30 3EU
Grid Ref: SZ 48692 83771	A
Alternative Access: Layby Public Bridleway G16	C
Grid Reference: SZ 48125 82968	
Distance: 5.0 Miles	Time: Allow 2.0 hours
Difficulty: Fairly strenuous with steep ascents and descents	
Terrain: Open farmland, woodland footpaths & some road walking.	
Stiles: None	Gates: 4
Dogs: Look out for signs where dogs should be on leads	
Bus: No. 6 - Main Road, Chillerton (Newport/Ventnor)	
Parking: Main Road, Chillerton	
Bicycles: Not suitable for footpaths on this route	
Toilets: None	Refreshments: None

Route:

A. With the village hall on your right, take the made-up track, Hollow Lane, walking alongside the small village green with benches ready and waiting for your return! After passing three cottages, the path becomes a sunken, tree covered track eroded by flood water from the higher surrounding farmland.

Following a steady climb the route emerges from the trees. Here, follow the farm track left and then sharp right and continue between two hedgerows. Eventually the track comes to an end at another, running from left to right across it. To the right is a signpost.

B. Here, follow the Public Bridleway sign G15 to Berry Hill and Billingham. (Avoid the G15A route to Ramsdown, along the more obvious made-up track)

Before moving on, take a second to lean on the farm gate in front of you and take in a perfect vignette of rural perfection which appears to have barely changed in a 100 years or more.

From this point, walk along the side of the field, in a parallel direction to G15A, keeping the hedge to your left. This is the open countryside of Berry Hill.



Soon this path opens out providing the first coastal vista across Chale Bay and the island's highest points at St Catherines and St Boniface Down to your left. Ahead you will see the Hoy Monument with its adjacent mast. After a few hundred yards the path turns to the left and descends steeply to a narrow tarmac lane.

Here, turn right and follow the lane (*Berry Lane – unmarked at this point*) to its junction with the main road.

Care is needed when turning right on to the main road as visibility is not good for traffic or pedestrians.

Traffic is intermittent but remain aware while descending downhill for about 200 yards until the layby on the opposite side of the road is reached.

C At the layby follow the clear track sign-posted Public Bridleway G13 (Worsley Trail). From here, note the great mast on top of Chillerton Down as this is where your direction of travel will eventually take you. As you enter the National Trust owned land, via the first gate of this section, you will see a sign for Chillerton Down. *Watch out for Mountain bikers here!* After about 100 yards, there is a path on the left which you need to ignore. Follow the main path as it bears right. The track you are walking can be very muddy during the winter but is clearly defined by deep tractor tyre ruts. When you reach the next gate, follow the curving, upward path in the direction of the blue arrow on the gate, keeping the chalk pits to the right of you. *This area is a sun-trap and a good stop off point for a nammet, even in January or February!* Pass through another gate and continue uphill.

The route becomes sunken and slightly indistinct but even if you take the higher one, to the left, you will end up at the same place facing the aerial, now clearly in view. Pass through the next gate on to a tarmac access road. Cross over to another gate where you will see a sign denoting the area as the Bowcombe Estate. Here you will note the Public Bridleway sign N146 for Bowcombe. **D**

Beyond the gate, dogs will need to be on leads if sheep are grazing

From here, follow the very clear farm track in the direction of a distant barn. The track along the ridge is wide and firm, at any time of year, but may have large puddles in winter.

Walking at this height above sea level, you may be fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of Buzzards soaring below you! Continue past the barn and begin to enjoy the distant views over the Solent to Portsmouth and the Millenium Tower or the excavations of Bardon Vectis, ahead to the right. At the end of the field, continue along the track as it enters the woodland of Dukem Copse which displays many signs of the Estate's game bird rearing activity. Continue through the woods for about 350 yards, looking out for Public Bridleway sign G22 Gatcombe, on your right. **E**

Once reached, take the 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. Ignore the gateway after about 150 yards and continue walking straight ahead, past a dew pond to the left, until reaching a broken gate in the far corner. *Take a moment to enjoy the panorama encompassing one of the finest views available anywhere on the island as you take in Culver Down in the distance and the beautiful valley below you.*



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 steeply so watch out for your knees! Public Bridleway sign G7 to Garstons, is soon reached and points you straight ahead, downhill. The path continues to descend fairly steeply but offers a definitive view of the valley that stretches out in front of you. At a gateway, the footpath continues downwards via a sunken path.

Here, a parallel route may be taken by the side of the higher, drier field when the sunken 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 with a farm access track that runs adjacent to the outbuildings of New Barn Farm. **F**

Continue down this path until you reach the tarmac farm driveway which in turn leads to the road that descends in to Gatcombe Village. Here you will encounter a post with direction signs. Follow the G6 Public Bridleway sign towards Chillerton, straight ahead, on another distinct path that rises uphill in the direction of the tree line of Tolt Copse. **G**

The path crests to a rise at the entrance to the copse. Turn left here and shortly you will reach a sign post. Ignore the descending path to the right and take the route labelled G8, Public Bridleway to Brook Lane, straight ahead along a clear farm track. *There are small glimpses of Chillerton to your right.*

After a short while, the path becomes more made up and descends sharply to the tarmac of Brook Lane. Turn right on to the lane and descend downhill to the concrete bridge over the pretty brook. **H**

At the main road, turn right into the village and walk the length of main road to the village hall, - your start point - is reached. *You can now enjoy the benches on the Village Green!*

