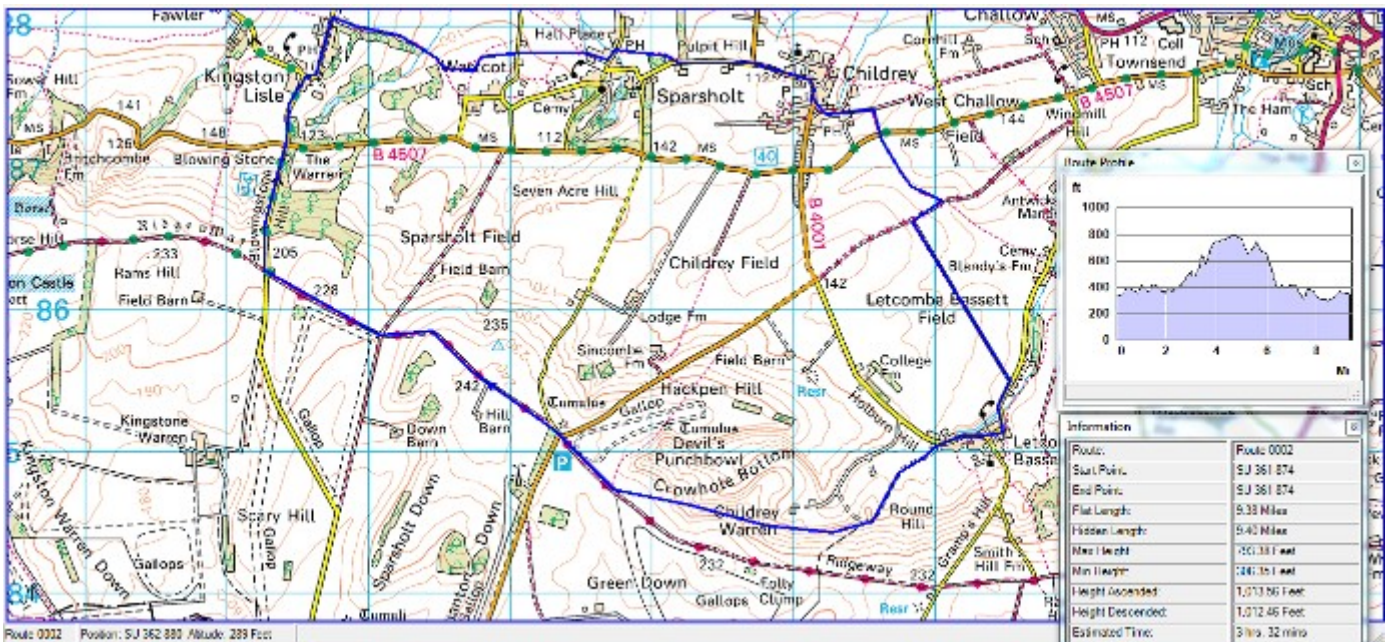


Circular pub walks on the Ridgeway

Some years ago, Friends of the Ridgeway member sent to the then Secretary some walks for publication in the Newsletter. At that time, two of the ten walks were published but the others for some reason were left unpublished. Recently they have been sent in again and the first of the unpublished walks is shown below.

Childrey –Devil’s Punchbowl – Kingston Lisle-Sparsholt

This walk starts in the beautiful village of Childrey nestled in the downs, crossing to Letcombe Basset and the up to the Devils Punchbowl and along the Ridgeway before dropping down Blowingstone Hill to Kingston Lisle and the Blowingstone Inn before returning to Childrey.



Maps: OS Explorer #170 OS Landranger #174

Strenuous climb @ paragraph # 8

Distances: Start to " Blowingstone Inn " in Kingston Lisle 7 miles.

Start to " The Star Inn " in Sparsholt = 8.5 miles.

Total distance 9.5 miles.

Directions:

- 1 Driving from the Wantage direction on the B4507, at the junction with the B4001 in a dip, turn right into Childrey and park in the High Street. There is room past the duck pond on the right (SU 361 874) in a lane to the right of the Working Men's Club & Reading Room. They even provide a bench here for putting your boots on!
- 2 Walk back along the High Street now with the pond on your left towards "The Hatchet" PH. Just before the pub, turn left into Stowhill, marked 'cul de sac'. After 250 yards, where the lane divides, take the right hand branch marked 'dead end except for access', climbing for 230 yards until you reach a path leading off to the right with a left hand waymark.
- 3 Turn right here along a tree-lined track, opening out to a grassy track, to meet the B4507 after 200 yards. Cross here and continue straight on into a field marked 'footpaths to the Letcombes'. Continue straight on for almost half a mile as the path bends to the left to reach a crossing tree-lined track.
- 4 Turn right along the rutted track, climbing gently for 260 yards until a left hand track appears. Turn left onto this track with views ahead up to the Ridgeway and Segsbury Camp. Continue straight on between open fields for almost one mile to meet Bassett Road which connects the two Letcombe villages.
- 5 Turn right towards the village of Letcombe Bassett, once famous for the watercress beds in the Letcombe Brook, a spring-line stream. As you descend the hill there are lovely views of the brook on both sides, which you cross via a bridge. Now climb into Letcombe Bassett bearing right past Rectory Lane on your left. Carry straight on, ignoring Gramps Hill on the left.
- 6 As you start to leave the village, turn left after a children's playground past a pair of semi-detached houses to the right. There is now a signpost giving information on the new Permissive Footpath which will take you along the left hand inner side of the Devil's Punchbowl up to the Ridgeway. The path then veers half right across a field, clearly visible and waymarked by small piles of stones to the right of the path.
- 7 At the top of the field head towards a right hand post and wire fence. Follow the fence. Where it ends after 250 yards, turn right on a grassy track for 30 yards to a metal gate and metal kissing gate. After this the path divides three ways; take the middle route straight on downhill towards a right hand tree line and fence on a grassy track. Follow this track with the tree line to your right. After ½ a mile, you reach a gate with another signpost and map near a cattle trough.
- 8 Now bear half right climbing steeply towards the fence corner post, watching out for rabbit holes. Here bear left following the right hand fence for 200 yards up towards a metal kissing gate. This route is easier than a direct climb through the middle of the gully. There are tremendous views back towards the Letcombes, Didcot, the Wittenham Clumps and the distant Chiltern escarpment.
- 9 Now continue straight on uphill to a waymark beside another metal gate. Here, turn right with the fence on your left for 100 yards to another sign post and continue straight on until, with the fence to your left, pass through another metal kissing gate. Now climb straight on towards another left hand fence and follow this for 1/3 mile to a left hand kissing gate.
- 10 Turn left through the kissing gate and immediately pass through a gap in a second fence, crossing a field on a clear track to reach the Ridgeway beside the remnants of an old ladder stile. Turn right onto the Ridgeway for 1/3 mile to cross the B4001. Carry straight on, on a tarmac road beside a left hand grassy triangle and where the road bends right towards Sparsholt, continue on the Ridgeway.





- 11 After almost one mile on the Ridgeway, passing a drinking water tap near Hill Barn, continue on past a crossing track to Sparsholt Field. Half a mile further on you meet the minor road from Lambourne to Kingston Lisle - Blowing Stone Hill. Turn right, descending past a cottage garden on the right containing the Blowing Stone, (a large sarsen with a hole in it; if you blow hard enough, you produce a horn-like noise) to cross the B4507 again, and straight on towards Kingston Lisle. In the village turn right at a T junction, continuing as the road bends left then straightens. The 'Blowing Stone Inn' is 300 yards along on the right.
 - 12 Turn right out of the PH for 150 yards past a bus shelter, then turn right again opposite a black timber-clad building named 'Rat Flat' into Drove Way. Continue straight on for almost $\frac{1}{2}$ mile past a right hand belt of woodland. At the end of the woodland, the path bears right climbing gently, then bearing left past another right hand tree belt.
 - 13 Where this tree belt ends, turn right to meet the fence of Westcot Farm; now turn left continuing with the fence on your right to the top right hand corner of the field, towards a pair of houses, left white and right black. Go over the stile at the end of the fence to the right of the black house in the field corner to reach a minor road between house names 'West Lee' and 'Beech Tree Cottage' (the black house).
 - 14 Turn right here for 70 yards and just past a brick house with a detached garage, turn left onto a signed public footpath and carry straight on into a field with a right hand fence. At the end of the fence cross a wooden stile & turn left between trees. Where the trees end continue across an open field for 200 yards to meet a crossing track. Here turn right for another 200 yards to the edge of the field, then continue on a grassy track between houses to reach West Street in Sparsholt.
 - 15 At the end of West Street, turn left into Watery Lane; the 'Star Inn' is opposite. Turn right out of the pub for 70 yards and opposite a white house turn right again over a stile onto a public footpath across a grassy meadow, towards a very tight kissing gate in the fence ahead. Go through this gate and across another grassy field with a coppice on your right. At the end of the coppice, the path bears right through a fence gap, climbing gently for 140 yards to meet a right hand gate and stile. Go over the style and turn left into Pulpit Hill.
 - 16 Follow this road for $\frac{2}{3}$ mile back into Childrey and as it bears right, back to the start.
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