

WALK 7 4.25 miles

Colyton, Downhayne Brake, Gittshayne, Colyton

A lovely walk through fields and along tracks and the opportunity to see one of the best views of Colyton and the Axe Valley.

Timing: Allow 2.5 hours to complete the walk at a relaxed pace.

Terrain: There is one long, steep hill with a corresponding descent.

Number of stiles: 0.

Refreshments: pubs, tea rooms, and restaurants in Colyton.

Toilets: in Colyton car park opposite the Colcombe Castle pub.

Abbreviations used in the text:

FB: Footbridge.

KG: Kissing gate (a narrow gate hung in a stock-proof U or V-shaped enclosure).

PG: Pedestrian gate (narrow gate designed for walkers).

SP: Signpost.

WM: Waymark (a Devon County Council sign with a yellow arrow on a green background bearing the legend 'PUBLIC FOOTPATH', or a blue arrow on a white background indicating a 'PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY').

Always follow the Country Code <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code>. The most important advice is

- keep to public rights of way
- leave gates as you find them (either closed or open)
- keep your dog under effective control

Route description

1 From the Market Place in the centre of Colyton, walk **downhill** keeping the Colcombe Castle pub on your **right**. A few metres beyond The Little Shop, leave the road and walk **left** down Church Path keeping the railings on your **right**. Just beyond the War Memorial **turn left** down a short alleyway that joins a road.

2 **Continue ahead** along the road noting the elaborate gateway of Colyton House on your left. **Ignore** Rosemary Lane on your right and **continue** to reach a road junction where you should **bear right** to the picturesque Chantry Bridge.

3 **Cross** the bridge and immediately **turn left** through a **KG** at an East Devon Way **SP** to enter a field. Follow the well-defined path that runs close to the river to reach a **KG (SP)** that gives access to a charming, narrow woodland glade. **Continue ahead** through the glade to a **KG (SP)**.

4 Pass through the **KG (WM on a short post)** and continue along the well-defined path that leads to a **FB** with **PG** and **WM**.

5 **Cross** the **FB** noting that the **WM** indicates that you should continue **straight ahead** along a path that runs through the **middle** of the field. (There's another path that runs near the seat on your left and follows the river bank, but this is **not** a public right of way.)

6 Follow the path across the **middle** of the field to the far end where the two paths meet beside the river at a **KG (WM)**. **Continue ahead** along the riverside path ignoring the substantial **FB (WM)** on your left, to reach a **PG (WM)** and **FB**.

7 Continue across the middle of the field to a **FB** and **KG (WM)** and then on ahead across the field on a path that just touches a bend in the river to reach a **PG (WM)** and **FB**, then aim for the substantial footbridge that can be seen ahead.

8 **Do not cross the the bridge** but **turn right** and follow a track for 110 metres (2 mins) to reach a lane where you should **turn left**.

9 Follow the lane for 470 metres (8 mins) to a road junction at Streathayne. Ignore the turning on the right and continue for 300 metres (5 mins) to the **next farm (Lawdeshayne) on the right-hand side of the lane**.

10 **Turn right** along the access road that runs uphill for 40 metres to the farmhouse, which you should pass on your **right**, to reach a **gate** after which the surface deteriorates to become a track enclosed with hedges.

11 After 600 metres (10 mins), the track divides. Take the **right fork** which climbs steeply for 1130 metres (20 mins) to reach a road opposite a forestry plantation on Parehayne Hill.

12 **Turn right** along the road for 670 metres (12 mins) to where the road bends sharply **left**. Here **turn right** into a track which should be followed for 1500 metres, ignoring a track that runs off to the left shortly after passing a conifer plantation, to reach a lane.

13 **Turn left** along the lane for 30 metres to where it makes a 90° turn to the left. Here **bear right** onto a track.

14 After 90 metres (90 secs) the track forks. Take the **right fork** and continue along the track for 500 metres (9 mins) to reach the access road to Gittshayne Farm. Here **turn right** and walk for 120 metres (2 mins) to a road.

15 **Turn left** along the road for 50 metres, then **turn right** into a wide bridleway (**SP**) with a **gate** and **stile** set back from the road. This track ends at a **gate** and **stile (WM on gatepost)** that gives access to a field.

16 Cross the **stile** and follow the hedge on your **right** to where it turns **sharp right**. At this point, **turn left (SP at the corner of the hedge)** and follow the obvious footpath that gently curves **left** through a large field to reach a **PG (WM)** and **FB**.

17 Continue in the same direction along the clear **FP** that runs beside the River Coly to a **WM** on a low post that directs you through a **KG (SP)** into a delightful woodland glade to reach a **KG** at the far end.

18 Continue along the well-walked path keeping close to the river bank to a **KG** and **SP** at a road adjacent to the picturesque Chantry Bridge. **Turn right** and at the next road junction **fork left** and then continue ahead until the road turns sharp **right**. **Continue ahead** through a broad alleyway and then **turn right** to pass the War Memorial and reach the bottom of Market Square.