

WALK 4 4 miles/6 km

Colyton, Lexhane, Watery Lane, Gittshayne, Colyton

An easy walk along the Umborne Valley. There are no steep hills.

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

Terrain: Mostly on level field paths and along minor lanes that carry little traffic. Some sections are likely to be muddy after rain.

Number of stiles: 8.

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

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

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

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').

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, **bear right** and walk down Church Path keeping the railings on your right. Just beyond the War Memorial **turn left** down a short, wide alleyway between houses 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 ahead** to reach a road junction where you should **bear right** to the enchanting Chantry Bridge.

3 **Continue along the road** for 150 metres (3 mins) and **fork right** (**SP** 'Umborne') at the first road junction, then walk past the children's playground. Just beyond **Road Green Farm**, look for a **gate** and **stile** (**SP** and **WM**) on your **right** set back a little from the road.

4 Cross the **stile** and walk **diagonally uphill** across the field in the direction indicated by the **WM** (there is no visible path). On reaching the brow of the incline, aim directly for the **far left** corner of the field (if there is an electric fence across the line of the path, grasp one of the stakes, pull it out of the ground and hold it above your head, pass underneath, then replace the stake) to reach a **stile** (**WM**) and **FB**.

5 Cross the **stile** and **FB** and follow the hedge on your **right** to a **PG (WM)**, then continue in the same direction alongside the hedge for 80 metres (90 secs) until approximately halfway along the field looking for a **stile (WM)** in the hedge on your **right**.

6 Cross the **stile**, climb to the top of the bank and then **turn left** and follow the well-defined path that runs on top of the bank above the River Umborne until reaching a **FB**.

7 Cross the **FB (WM)** and walk diagonally **left** across the field towards a **stile (WM)** in a wire fence. Cross the **stile** and walk diagonally **left** across the corner of the field to a **FB (WM)**.

8 Cross the **FB** and walk through a large field on a faint path generally keeping close to the hedge on your **right** to reach a **stile (WM)**. Cross the **stile** and continue in the same direction to a substantial **FB (WM)** over the River Umborne.

9 Cross the bridge and **turn left**. The next section is the most difficult of the walk. This unkempt field tends to be marshy and you have to watch your steps carefully. The line of the path is not always clear, but you should follow the belt of straggly trees on your left for 150 metres (3 mins) that will bring you to a stream. You are looking for a **FB (WM)** on your **right** that may not be immediately visible as it lies adjacent to a dense thicket of brambles

10 Cross the **FB (WM)** into a field, a little-used caravan site, and walk diagonally aiming towards Shute House that is visible on the far hillside. This will bring you to a **gap** in the high hedge on the far side of the field (it may be obscured by caravans). If it is not immediately obvious, walk to the entrance of the site and **turn left** along the concrete road towards Lexhayne Farm (ignore the stile in the fence on the right-hand side of the road).

11 The concrete road curves round to the **right** through farm buildings, and immediately after passing through them, you will see a **gate** on your **right (WM)** on gatepost).

12 Pass through the **gate**, but instead of following the direction indicated by the **WM**, **turn left** and follow the field-edge, parallel to a stream, for 160 metres (2.5 mins) to a **FB** and **stile (WM)** on your **left**.

13 **Cross** the stile and follow the fence on your **left** until approximately 50 metres from the top of the field. Here you should **bear** slightly **right** and aim diagonally towards a **stile (WM)** visible in a wire fence. **Continue ahead** across a small paddock to a **PG (SP)** and continue for a few metres to reach a dead-end lane.

14 **Cross** the lane to enter a wide enclosed path that crosses a **FB** and a wooden fence with a top rail that can be raised slightly and slid to one side for easy access. **Continue ahead** to cross another **FB (WM)**.

15 Follow the clearly defined path that curves **left** and heads towards the far **right corner** of this large field.

16 Pass through a **PG (WM)** and follow the hedge on your **right** for 40 metres (40 secs) to a **stile** and **FB (WM)** in the hedge on your **right** that gives access to a lane.

17 **Turn left** along the lane (known locally as Watery Lane). The surface gradually improves, and after 1 kilometre (15 mins), reaches the Colyton - Honiton road.

18 **Cross** the road and follow a track (an old county road) that runs between hedges for 200 metres (3 mins) where you will encounter a tiny watercourse that runs over the track. 10 paces later, **turn left** through a **gate (WM)**.

19 Follow the hedge on your **left** and then **turn left** through the first gate (**WM**) and cross a culvert, then immediately **turn right (WM)** on post) and follow the hedge on your **right**.

20 Follow the hedge for 110 metres (70 secs) until just over halfway along the field where you will find a **stile (WM)** on your **right**. Cross the **stile** and walk **downhill** parallel to the hedge on your **right**.

21 At the bottom of the field pass through a **gate (WM)** and continue in the same direction ignoring gates on your **right**. On reaching the farmyard at Gittishayne, continue ahead through **gates** following the **WMs** and **SPs** and then **bear right** to reach a lane (**SP**). **Turn left** and follow the lane for 120 metres to the Colyton - Northleigh road.

22 **Turn left** along the road for 50 metres (1 min), 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)** that gives access to a field.

23 **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**.

24 **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.

25 **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.

