

Walk 7.

WHERWELL via The Test Way and Church Lane

Abbreviations: turn right **TR**; turn left **TL**; straight on **SO**; footpath **FP**; bridle way **BW**.

Distance: about 2.4 miles (3.8k).

Time: about 1 hour.

Difficulty: easy

The walk starts at the **Abbot's Mitre Public House**.

1. With your back to the pub you will see a triangular green on the far side of the village street. It has a telephone box and an old grindstone on it. Cross the street and you will see a narrow gravel track running between the **Grindstone Green** on your right and a thatched cottage (Abbot's Rest) on your left. A fingerpost points to **The Common**. Walk along this track.
2. Shortly, you will come to a pedestrian gate. Go through it, making sure you close it after you. Cross the wooden bridge over the **Abbot's Stream**. You are now on **Chilbolton Cow Common** a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Conservation grazing by cattle takes place from late spring until autumn.
3. Go **SO** along a grassy **FP**. Cross a gravel track. You will see three houses on your right. The middle one is the **Old Inn**. Continue along the grass path until it merges with a gravel **BW**. This is the **Test Way**. Follow the **BW** to the right and cross over the **Purleygigg Bridge**. Follow the **BW** straight ahead until you come to the **Long Bridge**. Cross over the bridge admiring the views of the River Test as you do so. You are now leaving the parish of Chilbolton and entering the parish of Wherwell.
4. When you get to the tarmac road **TL** and walk a few yards and then **TR**. You will see a fingerpost indicating the **Test Way**. Climb up the steps ahead of you and **TR** where you see a broken stile. Ignore a grass **FP** that heads to the left up a hill and carry **SO** along the grass **FP**. You will see a white painted house on your right. You go gently up hill until the path bends sharply to the right. Go through the wooden barrier and you have reached the hairpin bend on the hill on the Wherwell-Andover Road. The **Test Way** is way-marked here.
5. Cross the road and head downhill for a few yards. You are looking for a small gap in the bank on the left of the road way marked **Test Way**. **TL** climb up the steps and follow the narrow **FP**. After about 300 yards the path emerges onto tarmac. On your right you can see the Home Guard Club. In front of you to your left is a row of semi-detached houses. This is **Beech Grove**. You will also see the **Test Way** way marked **SO**.
6. Walk along Beech Grove until, after the last house, the road becomes a narrow, shady **FP**. The **Test Way** is way marked on a telegraph pole on the right. Carry **SO**. You come to a wide gravel track in front of you. **TL** and descend the steps onto this track. This is **New Barn Lane**.
7. When you reach the track **TR**. You will see an old railway bridge ahead of you. This used to carry the Longparish Branch Line which ran from Fullerton Junction to Hurstbourne. Passenger services ended in 1931. It was used for freight until 1956. It was busy during WW2 as there was an ammunition dump near Longparish. Walk under the bridge. You will come to the village street with the Old Forge on your right.

8. **TR** and walk a few yards along the road. You will see a T junction ahead of you. There is a triangular green with a war memorial in the middle of it. Follow the road as it bends to the left in front of a charming terrace of thatched cottages. You will see them on many a Hampshire calendar. You are now in Church Lane. Walk to the end admiring the thatched cottages. You will pass the Old Vicarage on your right. You will then come to a lych gate. Go through it and you are in the graveyard of Wherwell Parish Church. Follow the gravel path past the church. You will come to a small wooden gate. Go through it and head for a tarmac lane in front of you.
9. **TR** and walk along this lane. You will pass the Mill House on your right. This used to be a water mill attached to Wherwell Priory. Continue **SO** until you reach a cross roads. In front of you This is the White Lion Public House.
10. **TL** and walk along the Fullerton Road. It is a quiet road with attractive houses on both sides. After about 500 yards you will find yourself back at the Long Bridge and you rejoin the Test Way (way marked).
11. **TL** and cross the bridge. Continue **SO** along the **BW** until you get to the Purleygigg Bridge. Cross over it and **TL**. Follow the river bank. You will see a bench in front of you. Follow the path past it. You will come to a pedestrian gate. Go through it and follow the path as it goes behind the **Old Inn**. Go through another gate and keep **SO**. Ignore the path and gate on your right.
12. You will come to another gate. Go through it. You are now in **Frog Lane** with a ditch on your right. Go along the lane until you reach the village street. Ignore a kissing gate on your left. When you reach the street **TR** and walk about 300 yards. The Abbot's Mitre is on your left.

You have finished the walk. I hope you enjoyed it.

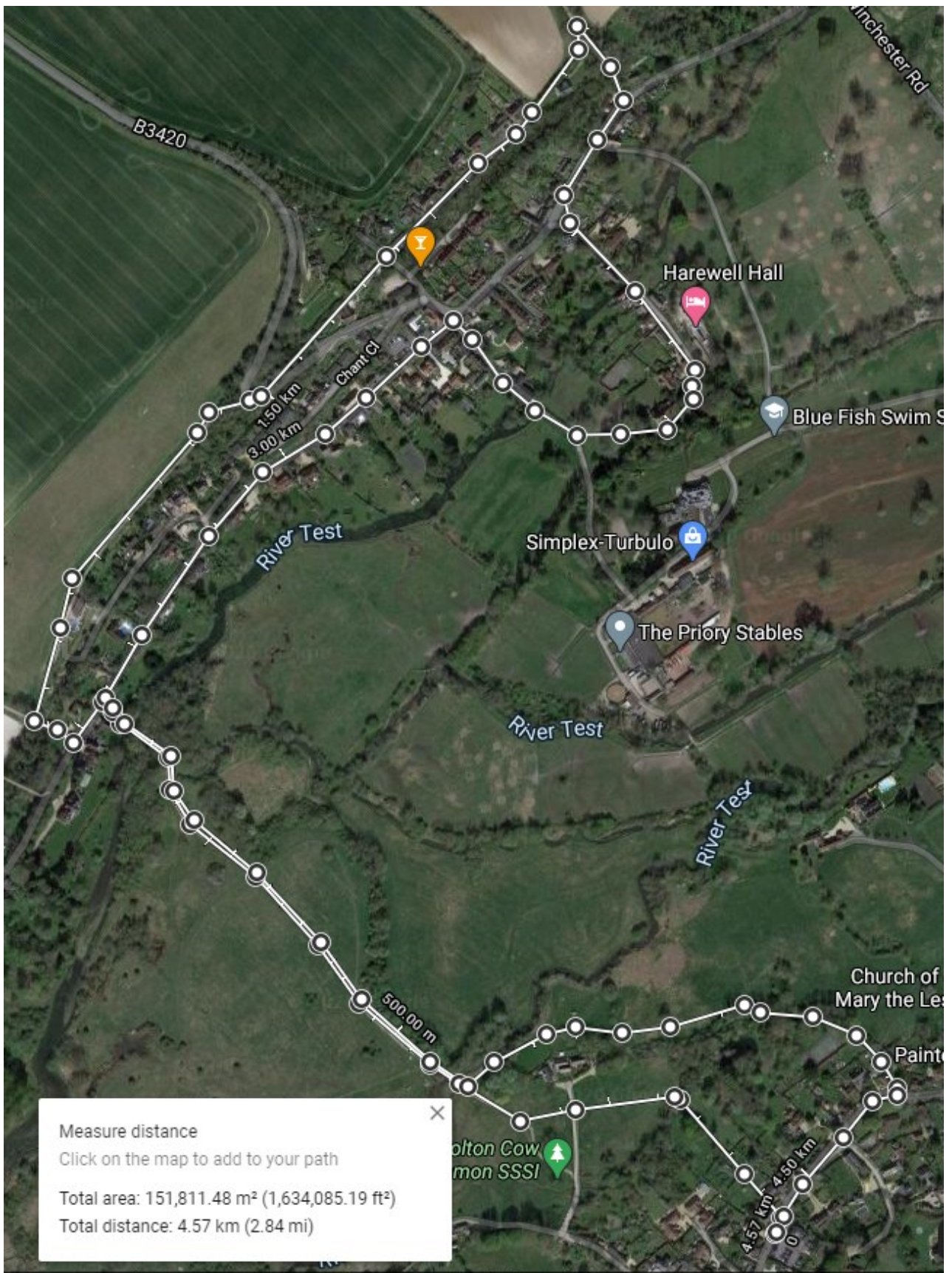


Image from google Maps