

Walk 8.

FULLERTON LOOP via the Test Way, the Anton Way and West Down.

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

Distance: about 5 miles (8 km). Time: about 2 hours. Difficulty: easy/moderate.

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 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 bridge over the Purleygigg Stream. 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.
4. When you reach the road **TL** then after about 20 yards **TR**. There is a finger post and a Test Way way marker. Climb up the steps and when you reach the top **TL**. (Ignore path to right). The grass path goes along the edge of a field on your **R** and hedges on your **L**. After about 100 yards the path bends to the **R** and goes quite steeply up hill. Follow the grassy path which shortly bend sharply to the **L**. There is a way marker on a wooden post. At the top of the hill pause and look back. You will see the telescope of the **Chilbolton Observatory** in the distance.
5. Ahead there is a wide grassy track with a sign saying Private Property. You should **TR** and follow a track with a hedge on both sides. There is a way marker on wooden post. Soon the track narrows. Take care. It can be slippery in wet weather. The path soon opens out on the left and there are fine views across the **Anton Valley**.
6. You will reach a metal gate. Go through it. The path descends steeply downhill. Follow it taking care as it can be slippery in wet weather. You will come to a gap in the hedge in front of you and a metal gate. Go through it.
7. Cross the A3057 Andover-Stockbridge road. TAKE CARE. THE TRAFFIC MOVES FAST. Immediately in front of you you will see a metal field gate. You will see a way marker on the gate post. Go through the gate and follow the track which hugs the edge of a field on your **R** with a hedge on your **L**.
8. You will see trees in front of you. When you reach them you will come to a T junction of paths. Ignore the path **SO** and **TL**. There is a finger post way marked **River Anton Way**. Follow this path through trees.
9. Shortly you will reach a wooden bridge over the **River Anton**. Cross it and go through the metal gate on the far side. Then immediately **TR** and follow the path through a field with the river bank on your **R**. The path soon bends to the **L** and crosses a concrete bridge. Carry **SO**.
10. You will come to a metal kissing gate with the **River Anton Way** way marked. Go through the gate and **TL** along a wide, level, gravel farm track. Eventually you will find this track blocked by a metal field gate. At this point **TR**. Way marker on right hand gate post. Follow the wide, grassy track uphill with fields on both sides.
11. At the top of the hill you will come to a kissing gate. On the **R** gate post there is a way marker. Go through the gate and carry **SO**. The wide grassy path continues along the top edge of the field with a hedge on the **R**. Good views to the **L**. The path soon becomes gravel. You will come to a tarmac road crossing ahead of you. This is Fullerton Hill. **TL** and walk down the hill. You will see Fullerton Manor on the **R**.

12. You will come to a road junction with a grass island in the middle. Go **SO** signposted **Wherwell**. You will come to a bridge over the **River Anton** with white railings. There is a pretty cottage on the **L** and **Fullerton Mill** on the **R**. Well worth a look.
13. Just after the bridge you will see a fingerpost on the **L** saying **Stockbridge** 4 miles and NCR (National Cycle Route) 246. **TL** here and take the gravel track. It passes under a bridge and then you come to a fingerpost indicating a **TR** to **Stockbridge**. **TR** here. You are briefly on tarmac. You will pass the **Old Station House** on your **R**. This used to be **Fullerton Junction Station**. One branch line went via Wherwell to Hurstbourne. This was finally closed in 1956. The other branch was the line from Andover to Redbridge, Southampton. This was closed in 1967. On your **L** are the **Old Railway Cottages** (much enlarged).
14. Soon you will pass under a steel barrier and you are walking along the path of the old railway line. This is a very pretty stretch. Shortly, you come to a wooden bridge over the **River Test**. Carry **SO** until you see a big red brick bridge in front of you (the May Fly Bridge). **TL** just before it following a fingerpost pointing to **Chilbolton**. Walk along the narrow path with a high brick wall on your **L** until you come to a road (**Coley Lane**). Cross the road diagonally **L** and make for a sign saying **West Down Nature Reserve**. To the **R** of the notice you will see a kissing gate. Go through the gate (way marked **Test Way**). Follow an obvious path uphill and keep **SO**. Do not take the path to the **R**.
15. Keep going **SO** following a clear path. You will pass some Nature Trail signs on your **L**. You will come to a metal bench on your **R**. Keep **SO** and descend towards a cattle pen in front of you. To the left of this is a kissing gate. Go through the gate and immediately **TL** to the nearby **Test Way** sign.
16. At the **Test way** sign **TL along the road** the road. After about 25 yards **TR** (signposted **Test Way**). You will see the Coronation Tree with a bench underneath it commemorating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. There is a fine view of the **River Test**.
17. After a few yards **TR** along a narrow path. You are still on the **Test Way**. You will see some attractive water gardens on your left and the **Watch Cottage** estate on your right. Follow this path until you reach a pedestrian gate. Go through it. You have reached the **War Memorial Playing Field**, gifted to the Parish Council in memory of those from Chilbolton who gave their lives in the Second World War. If you have a dog, please put him/her on a lead.
18. You have a choice. You can either:
- carry **SO** in the direction of the pavilion and exit the playing field by a gate in the left hand corner of the field. Here there is a dog poo bag dispenser and a waste bin. Go through the gate and onto a wide gravel track with the Old Cottage on your right;
 - or
 - veer to the left. You will see a large metal roller. Head in that direction. Just beyond it to the left you will see a pedestrian gate. This is the route of the **Test Way**. Go through it and **TR** and follow the narrow path through trees. It emerges onto a wide gravel track with the Old Cottage in front of you. **TL** onto the track.
19. You have now reached **Chilbolton Cow Common**. You will see the Old Cottage on your right and the Purleygigg Stream on your left. Follow gravel track as it bends to the right in front of the cottage until you reach a footpath/bridleway sign and a dog poo bag dispenser. You will see a tarmac road in front of you (Joys lane) with a gate and a cattle grid.
20. At this point **TL** and walk along the wide gravel track and through a gateway (often open). You will see three houses in front of you. The centre one is the Old Inn. About half way to the Old Inn you will see a double manhole cover (BT) and immediately after a grass path heading off diagonally to your right. Take it. It leads towards a small bridge over the **Abbot's Stream**. Cross the bridge and go through the gate. Please make sure you close it. A narrow path goes between gardens to the left and the right. Follow this path. You will come to the **Village Street** and the **Abbot's Mitre** is in front of you.

That's the end of the walk. I hope you enjoyed it.

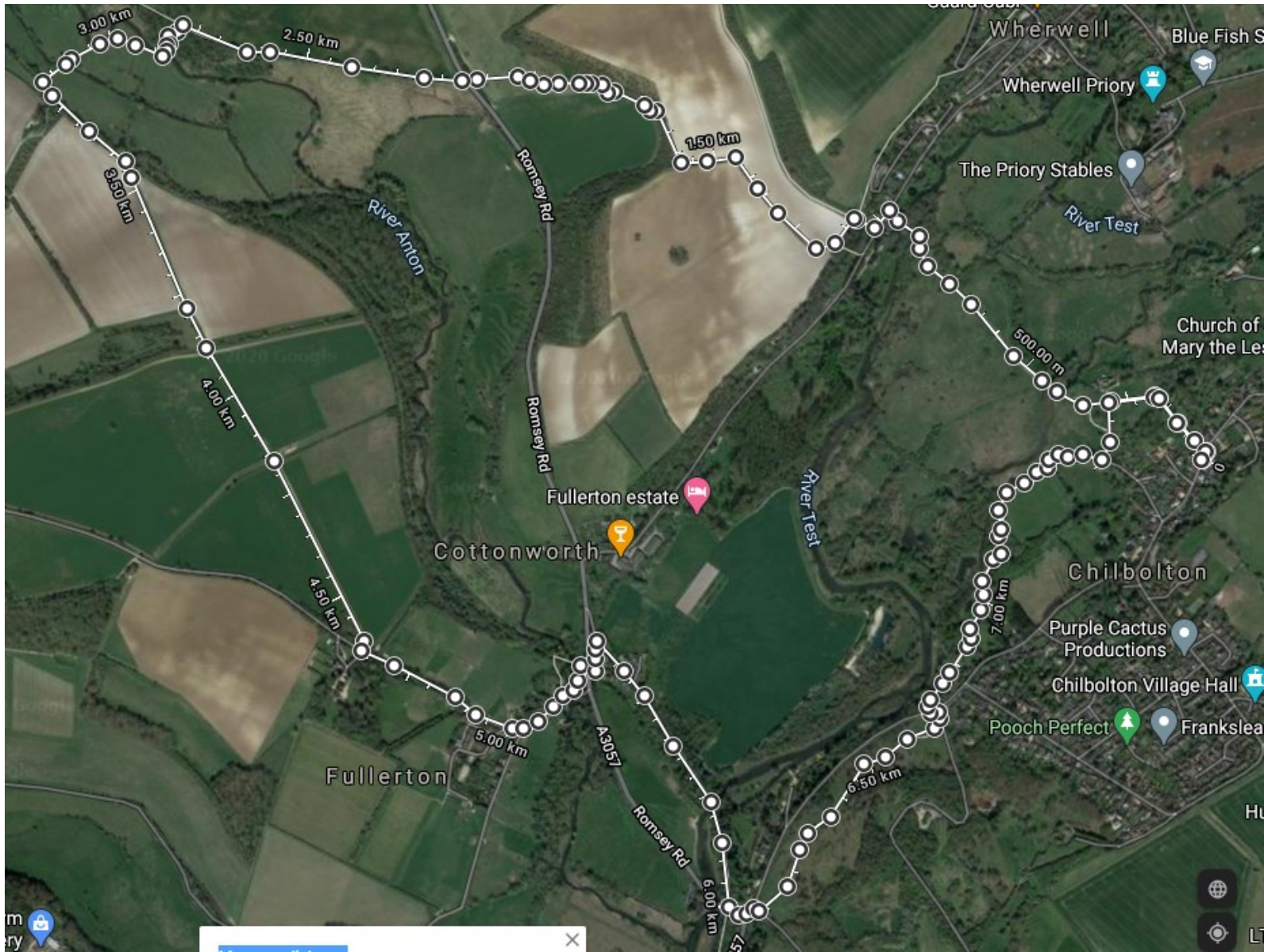


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