

A SHORT AND PLEASANT RAMBLE AROUND CHERITON

(Where we find a very watery place and also visit a famous battlefield)

Fact File.....

Starting Point: This walk starts from the Flower Pots pub in Cheriton.

Alternative Parking and Start Point: There are no car parks around the route, so if you are not parking at the Flower Pots, then we suggest that you park your car somewhere in Cheriton village. There are several places where the roads are suitable.

Distance: Allow 2 hours 15 minutes for this walk, the distance is 4.5 miles (7.2km).

Classification: 'Moderate' - One easy climb to gain access to the downs.

Safety and Comfort: No problems.

Maps: Ordnance Survey Landranger 1: 50 000 Series - Sheet 185.

Ordnance Survey Explorer 1: 25 000 Series - Sheet 132.

Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 1: 25 000 Series - Sheets 1264 (SU 42/52) and 1265 (SU 62/72).

Map reference of start and finish - SU 581283.

Other Refreshment Possibilities: There are no other opportunities on this walk for refreshment.

Travel by Car: Cheriton is situated on the B3046 just north of the A272 Petersfield to Winchester road.

Public Transport: Cheriton is served hourly on weekdays from Winchester and Petersfield by Stagecoach Hampshire Bus Service No. 67 (Tel: 01256 464501 for more information).

Background

Cheriton is a pretty and fairly quiet village once you have walked away from the main road. The source of the River Itchen is barely a mile away and it is a very watery place with streams everywhere, and large signs warning you of the likelihood of ducks crossing the road. The pretty river cannot seem to decide which course to take, as it divides up into several channels twisting this way and that, under bridges and around garden walls. There are not many villages in England where

there are probably more ducks and geese than people, but we would guess this is the situation in Cheriton.

Aside from its ducks and geese,

The Flower Pots



Give-me-Five Treasure Hunt

This is a simple quiz - just keep alert and you will find the answers in order as you go round:

1. How many robins will you find on a flowerpot?
2. At which cottage could you become a little drunk?
3. Who was worried about the bridges?
4. What was built in 1919?
5. What was built in 1911?

Cheriton is also famous for an epic civil war battle. There is nothing to mark this fact anywhere as far as we can tell - except on Ordnance Survey maps. The battle took place east of the B3046 in the valley between Cheriton Wood and the village on 29th March 1644. If you walk these byways on a

Geese at Cheriton



summer's day, nothing could be more peaceful than this gentle countryside. The land slopes gently down to the infant river and nothing noisier than a sheep or a skylark can be heard. But things were much different in the spring of 1644 when such a fierce battle took place that 2000 men were killed and buried in communal graves. Such was the intensity of the battle that the lanes on which the walk takes place were said to have run with blood. You can still see the burial mounds around the village. These lanes were a fundamental factor in the battle which ended with a Parliamentary victory and the Royalist forces retreating to Basing House.

On a more cheerful note, the name of the Flower Pots - the excellent pub that is our starting point - is worthy of some explanation. It all becomes clear when you discover the origins of the pub. It was built in 1840 by the retired head gardener of nearby Avington Park who is said to have built it with his "golden handshake". It is a bustling well-kept village local surrounded by rolling Hampshire downland where you are sure of a friendly welcome. The two little rooms have an atmosphere all of their own. Hops adorn the walls, the tables are of scrubbed pine and pews form much of the seating. For the last six years, all of the ales sold here have been brewed in the micro-brewery across the car park and very good they are too. We walked the route on a Thursday and the brewery was belching out that delicious smell of the hot wort. The traditional games of cribbage, shove halfpenny and dominoes are played in the public bar. At one time, the Flower Pots was not the only pub in Cheriton. The former HH Inn - passed on the walk, is now a private house but was once a place where "rings" was played. The game enjoyed a revival in 1959 but ceased when the pub closed some time back.



Scale: 1: 25 000 or 2.5 inches
to 1 mile (4cm to 1km)

The Flower Pots

The Walk

Turn right from the pub and after only 100 yards (91 metres), turn left down



a narrow footpath, and walk between a buttressed brick and flint wall and a cupressus hedge. Pass through the

kissing gate and you will be faced with a choice of three possible ways.

Take the middle of the three possible routes towards the greenish shed in the distance, which diverges slightly from the corner of the graveyard.

Climb this stile, cross the little lane, climb the stile on the other side and you will notice you are on the Wayfarers Walk. This is a wide path between sheep fence and hedging. Climb a further stile and walk along the right hand side of the field following the hedge line.

You will soon hear the waters of the infant River Itchen, cross another pair of stiles, and pass under the power

lines, walking parallel to the river.

Climb a further stile and the footpath then becomes enclosed on either side. Walk the grassy path that looks down upon the river, pass Cheriton Mill and then turn right onto the lane and pass over the white-railing bridges. At the T-junction with the B3046, take the byway opposite which also forms the Wayfarers Walk. At the end of the byway turn right onto a further byway, and continue onward - ignoring the possible right fork at around 440 yards (400 metres), until you come to the end of the byway where you turn left onto the lane (Badshear Lane).

Just after you pass under the power lines, where Badshear Lane swings to the left, turn sharp right down another track (marked as Right of Way). After you achieve the high point of this route (by one of the mobile phone transmitters), turn right on the public footpath through the rather dilapidated wicket gate and walk along the edge of this large open field. Emerge from the field by a further wicket gate, cross straight over the track and



Resting by the Itchen

continue on a track for 500 yards (457 metres). Cross a further track and climb the stile to take the footpath on the left side of the field.

Walk along the left-hand edge of the field, you will swing right as you follow the perimeter field. About 140 yards (128 metres) after this, take the

stile to the left, and take the field path along the edge of the paddock. In time, the footpath becomes sunken between hedges, and then becomes enclosed by wooden fencing. Climb over the small wooden barrier and join a short lane by Freemans Yard. Cross the river by the restricted-weight bridge, and then turn left to pass the post office. At the end of the road turn left and then immediately right to take the road signed "Bishops Waltham 7". Walk this road and you will soon find yourself back at the Flower Pots.

Weak Bridges at Cheriton



Pub File.....

The Flower Pots: Walkers are welcome and you can get your book 'pubberstamped' here. Opening times for The Flower Pots are midday to 2.30pm and 6pm to 11pm on Mondays to Saturdays; midday to 3pm and 7pm to 10.30pm on Sundays. There is a daily 'Specials' board and a limited range of bar food available. Food times are midday to 2pm and 7pm to 9pm from Mondays to Saturdays; midday to 2pm on Sundays. Wednesday night is curry night. The pub has its own brewery 'The Cheriton Brew House'. Although children are not allowed in the pub they are welcome in the garden. Dogs are permitted if kept on a lead. Some overnight accommodation is available. Walkers are requested not to park their cars in the pub car park during winter months, however, in the summer, if the weather is fine, they may use the 3 acre (1.2 hectare) field adjoining the premises. (Tel: 01962 771318).