

A Circular Walk from The Fountainhead Pub, in Street, Branscombe



This is a 3 mile walk with 2 steep climbs. It can be muddy and therefore a bit slippery in places, but is well worth the effort for its views over the village of Branscombe and the sea, not to mention for the great Fountainhead Pub.

1 The pub car park is very small and can be found by turning off the main road towards Berry Barton campsite (left if coming from Beer), just before you reach the pub itself. Walk down to the pub, passing between its outside tables and cross the road. Pass through the metal gate to join a bridleway leading up the hill. This is the first of the two steep uphill sections of this walk. Follow the path as it curves round to the right.

2 When the path opens out into a field, aim diagonally up and across to your left through the field. Aim for the marker post beside a fenced off wooded section so that these trees stay to your right and this will lead to a gate in the corner. Go through this and follow the path down to a clearing. Keeping left through this clearing will lead you to a path through trees and eventually to a road.

3 At the road, turn right which will begin a long downhill section. The road is narrow so beware of cars, but there won't be many, if any at all!

4 When you reach a junction of roads, continue over the cattle grid. Pass Branscombe primary school and keep going till you reach a T junction.

5 Turn right here. Pass Branscombe post office, then cross the road and enter St Winifred's Church via the black gate. From pre 1000AD, this is one of the oldest churches in Britain, being part Norman and part medieval. Pass to the left of the church and head down to a footbridge over the stream. Crossing this will lead you to the second climb on the walk. Initially this takes you up the edge of a field, then via a stile, to steps and a steep path into the woods. The path turns sharp left at another stile and continues up through the woods.

6 Eventually the footpath reaches a wider track where you need to turn right. Follow this track, still mainly upwards though not now as steep, until you reach a finger post.

7 Turn left here signposted Coast Path to Weston Mouth. The track passes a corrugated tin shed before reaching another finger post.

8 Ignore the path straight on. Turn right, directed Coast Path to Weston, which takes you up a short steep curving path to a kissing gate. Enter the field and head to the cliff edge for a great view, but be very careful, the cliff edge is unprotected and the drop is significant! . To the east you can see Portland Bill and Chesil Beach. To the west you can see right down beyond Exmouth towards Torbay. When you have finished with the view, head in a westerly direction along the cliff path to another kissing gate. Pass through this and stay on the track being ever careful of the cliff edge, which can be deceptive if the grass is long. You can get glimpses of the beach below and the town of Sidmouth can be seen a few miles along the coast. After another kissing gate you enter a wide grassy area, which is the remains of Berry Camp, an Iron age cliff top hill fort.

9 Part way through the fort, turn right and head away from the cliff edge. Soon you will see a white chalky farm track leading down the field to a farm gate. Head to this gate which opens onto a farm lane.

10 Turn right onto this lane (not directed by the finger post) and head along this high hedged track to a gate. The stile is not in good repair, but you can open the gate. Go down this track a short distance past the first stone pile, but before the second, turn left, onto a grassy path. This path gives good views down towards Branscombe village as it curves round to the left. Pass through a gap in the hedge and keep to the lower edge of the field until you reach a kissing gate on the right.

11 Go through this gate and enter Pit Coppice and follow the path down. If you are walking in late spring you may be lucky enough to enjoy the sight and smell of masses of wild garlic. Continue down this path, leaving the coppice and arriving on the road right opposite The Fountainhead car park. The food and beer in the pub is highly recommended.