



Godshill Inclosure and Woodgreen

Trail Summary

Trail : HAMPTR0075
Activity : Walk
Type : Nature
Author : Anne-Marie Edwards
Distance : 5.4 miles / 8.7 kms
Ascent : 581 feet / 177 metres
Location : SU192165 / SP6 2QY

The western boundary of the Forest runs above the valley of the river Avon. To the north-east the Forest trees edge a steep cliff, Castle Hill, offering marvellous views over the river to the Elizabethan manor near Breamore and the farmland and downs beyond. The embankments of an Iron Age fort crown the cliff's southern corner. This walk climbs to the fort then follows the top of the cliff to enjoy the view before visiting the attractive village of Woodgreen nestling at its foot. To begin and end the walk we follow woodland ways through Godshill Inclosure.

The trail has been taken from the book *The New Forest Companion* by Anne-Marie Edwards. It has been reproduced with the kind permission of the publisher, Countryside Books.

Trail Description

1. Deadman Hill car park overlooks the wide valley of the Millersford Brook. Across the valley, crowning the skyline to the left, is Godshill Inclosure through which our way lies. There are many paths leading downhill to the brook from the car park and it is important you find the right one. It is, unfortunately, the least obvious! As you drive into the car park look for a post indicating the Forest byelaws on your right just before you come to the circular embanked parking area. With your back to the car park, leave the post on your right and step up the embankment. You will see four possible paths.
2. Take the one furthest left (not the path parallel with the road). Follow the path for only about 30 yards to the top of the hillside.
3. Leave this obvious path as it descends the hillside and turn left to follow a very narrow earth path which curves left to run along the hillside. Keep to this path heading west.
4. Shortly the path descends to bring you to a bridge with wooden handrails over the Millersford Brook. (If you have mistaken the path from the car park and find there is no bridge when you reach the stream, turn left with the stream on your right and follow the streamside path to the bridge).

Cross the bridge and climb the path ahead. As you reach the top of the hill, the path curves a little right to lead past a house and a Forestry Commission barrier to Densome Corner beside a minor road running from Hale to Woodgreen. To the left of the road is the boundary fence of Godshill Inclosure.

5. Cross the fence and turn left to walk along the green lawns cresting the hill with the south-east edge of Godshill Inclosure on your right.
6. Continue for about 0.5 mile to a gate leading into the inclosure. Turn right through the gate and keep ahead for about 100 yards to a gravelled crossing track.
7. Turn left to follow this track through mixed woods of oak, beech, pine and sweet chestnut. When you come to a crosstrack keep straight on. If you have started the walk at Woodgreen this is your half-way point. Turn left at the crosstrack and now follow the route of the longer walk. I will describe your route to the crosstrack at the end of the chapter.

The track dips downhill to a gate opening to the road which crosses Godshill Inclosure from Woodgreen to Godshill.

8. Go through the gate, cross straight over the road, and enter the inclosure again through another gate. Follow the gravel track ahead. Just after a joining path on the left our track curves right and drops downhill, bearing left to a gate. Leave the inclosure through the gate to another minor road running between Godshill and Woodgreen along the top of Castle Hill.
9. Turn right beside the road for a few yards and look for a very narrow path leading steeply uphill on your left to the right of four small posts. You are scaling the side of Castle Hill Iron Age fort. Go straight over a gravel crosstrack and continue uphill to a house on the left. In front of the house bear right for a few yards, then turn left to climb the embankment and reach the smooth green lawn that forms the central area of the fort.

You are encircled by earth walls and ditches still clearly visible. This is an exciting place, full of atmosphere. It is easy to imagine the Celtic tribesmen standing here over 2,000 years ago and deciding that this sheer cliff, high above a great silver loop of the Avon, would be an ideal defensive position. They built many such forts, crowning the embankments with timber ramparts enclosing stockades with strong gates. They were an artistic as well as warlike people as their pottery and intricately-patterned jewellery prove.

Cross the central area and walk through the trees to rejoin the minor road and continue towards Woodgreen. The trees give way in front of a parking area with benches where you can sit and enjoy the view.

10. Follow the road to a junction, left for Woodgreen and right for Godshill. Turn left to see the village.

*As you walk down the hill you can still see the village's famous 'Merry Trees' in the surrounding orchards. Merries are a special kind of black cherry, sweet and juicy. Once, when the fruit was ripe, people came from far and wide to pick them and enjoy what were known as 'Merry Sundays'. I read in the WI publication *It Happened in Hampshire* that, in order to keep the birds from getting the fruit first, the residents used to hang tins from the branches with chains suspended inside to rattle. Ropes were attached and led through windows so they could be pulled from bed early in the morning. But the Merry Sundays evidently became a little too merry. Finally a clergyman was so shocked by the proceedings he stopped the custom.*

Join the route in Woodgreen if you have arrived by bus. From Woodgreen walk back up the Godshill Road. Pass the Castle Hill road on the right.

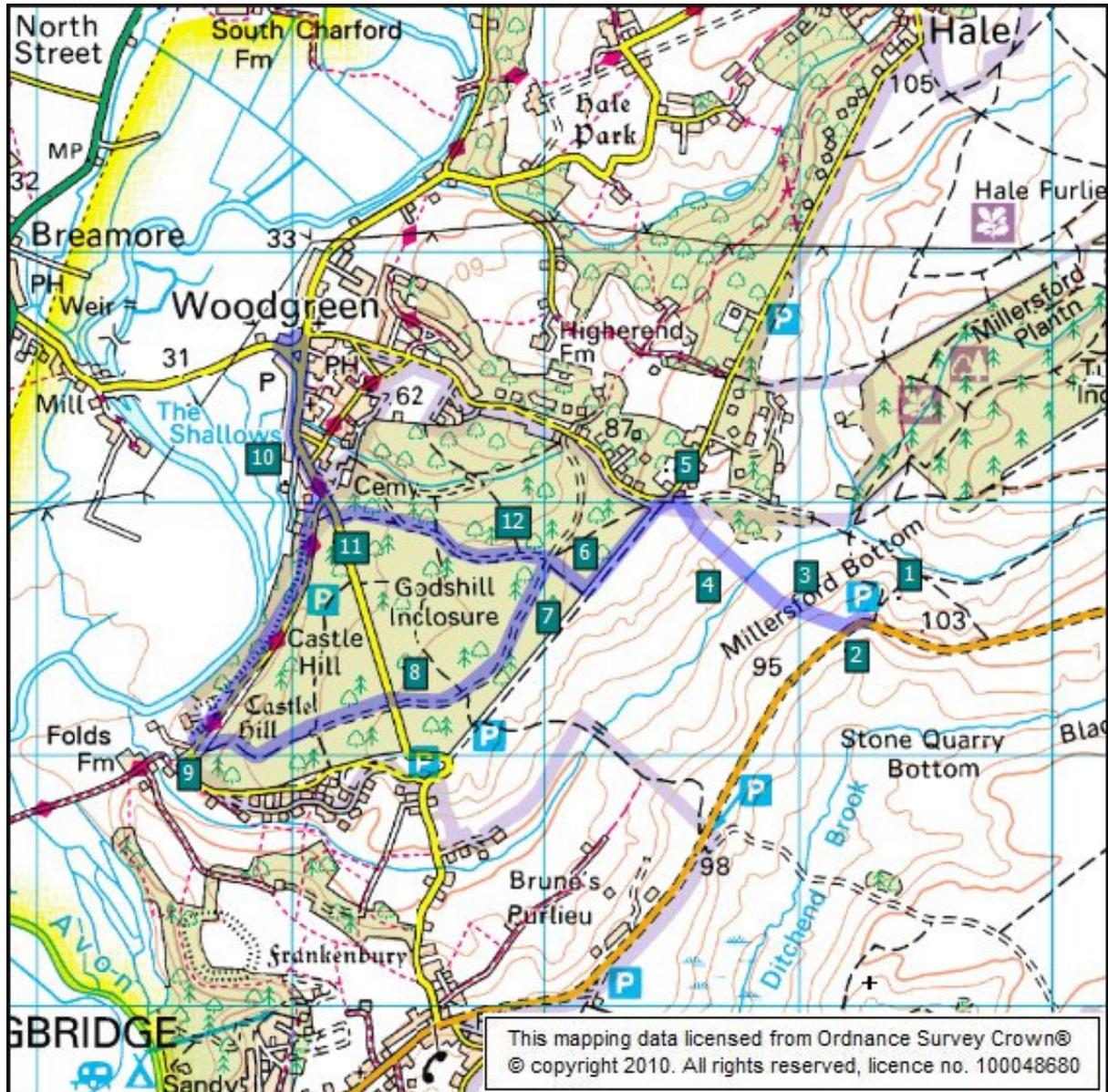
11. A few yards past the turning you will see a gate leading into Godshill Inclosure on your left. Turn left through the gate and follow the path ahead to meet a wider track. Keep on along this good track as it bears right. Continue over a crosstrack to a gravelled crossing path.



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12. Disregard the very narrow earth path leading straight ahead from the junction and turn right along the gravel for just a few yards. Look for a green track leading left. Turn left along this track. You are now back on your earlier route leading to the gate on the south-east edge of Godshill Inclosure. Go through the gate to retrace your steps along the edge of Godshill Inclosure then, bearing right in front of the house to pick up the path down the hill, cross the bridge and bear left uphill to the car park. To complete the circle if you began the walk at Woodgreen, turn right from the gate leading out of Godshill Inclosure and follow the inclosure boundary along the hilltop to another gate into the inclosure. Turn left through the gate and follow the track ahead to the crosstrack I mentioned as your half-way point. Turn left as directed to follow the route of the longer walk back to Woodgreen.

Trail Map



Location

The starting point for the trail is Deadman Hill car park, off the B3078. From the Cadnam roundabout take the B3079. At the fork in Brook keep ahead along the B3078 and at the next fork continue along the B3078, signposted Godshill, for about three miles. Deadman Hill car park is on your right. If you are arriving by bus, you can join the route in Woodgreen. Refreshments are available at The Horse and Groom pub in Woodgreen.