

Walk description:

A real gem of a walk in the most wonderful surrounds imaginable, starting from the South Down National Trust car park high above Ringstead Bay to visit Scratchy Bottom. Taking a fine old bridleway through downland, much of it farmed, some on which animals graze freely and some designated as nature reserve and Sites of Scientific Interest. Scratchy Bottom is a grassy strip in a deep valley with hills rising all around, where there is a network of paths, some permitted in addition to the official ones. Truly spectacular views are encountered from the coast path on the return journey, with great sweeps of glorious landscape and a dramatic coastline including the astonishing Durdle Door. The steep rises and falls are strenuous for the walker, but the sheer beauty is exhilarating and unbeatable.

Access information:

Off the A353 between Poxwell and Preston on unclassified road to Upton and Ringstead. Follow signs to South Down National Trust car park.

Additional info:








The nearby car park of Ringstead Bay has a well-stocked shop and a cafe.

Start grid ref: SY757825**OS map:** Explorer O.L.15**Walk length:** 8 miles**Duration:** 300 minutes**Height gain:** 155 metres**Contributor:** Ron and Jenny Glynn**Weathercall:** Get a local forecast for this walk.

Call 09068 020 504 from your phone or mobile. Or dial 09065 22 45 02 from your fax machine to receive a fax.
09068 calls 60p/min, 09065 calls £1.50p/min.

Features:

- Sea
- National Trust/NTS
- Wildlife
- Birds
- Flowers
- Great Views
- Butterflies
- Woodland

- 1**  Start from the information board and walk on past the NT car park, with fabulous sweeping views high above Ringstead Bay. Continue through gate and walk on along track, thick gorse either side, for a short distance before opening out to reveal splendid scenes all around. Walk on towards Sea Barn Farm. (Grid ref: 757825)
- 2**  Take walkers' gate, leaving National Trust land to pass house and barn, to carry on through another gate on a steady ascent. Continue through two more gates between farmland, the undulating landscape a superb picture. (Grid ref: 764819)
- 3**  Take the gate into Chaldon Down, a tumulus over on the right and the sea down below, with a range of hills appearing ahead. Sheep and cows graze on the downs and salt stones set in stone enclosures are placed along the way for the use of the cattle. Pass a conservation area information board where there is a permitted path leading off to the Warren and go on towards Daggars Gate, the land contours beautiful and dramatic. (Grid ref: 780810)
- 4**  Through a gate, head diagonally right towards Scratchy Bottom, aiming for a stile at the bottom corner of field. Take a stile on the right and head downhill beside gorse bushes, following fenceline to a stile. Walk on over the smooth strip of Scratchy Bottom. (Grid ref: 799811)
- 5**  Take a stile and turn right, heading towards the sea, the way encompassed by steep hills on all sides. (Grid ref: 804808)
- 6**  Take a stile to turn right on the coast path, following fenceline on a steep climb. Look back on the spectacular view above Durdle Door. From the gate at the top there is the relief of a downward trek above a pretty little bay, then it is an uphill climb again, with huge rewards on reaching the top. A gentler incline follows before a long descent, the rich variety of flora and fauna an absolute delight. The path rises again and veers away from the cliff edge for a while. (Grid ref: 803804)
- 7**  Pass the stone waymark to Ringstead and the tumulus on the right, high above the sea below. Follow the path to pass White Nothe Cottages. (Grid ref: 777808)
- 8**  Enter the National Trust area of White Nothe and walk on with lovely views over Ringstead Bay, a huge area of National Trust nature reserve below. Take a stile and go downhill towards Ringstead, Holworth House down below on the left. (Grid ref: 773809)
- 9**  Over a stile, cross a bridleway track and continue in spinney, climbing another stile to pass the tiny Holworth Church, where you are welcome to step inside its holy interior to rest and reflect. Downhill, pass a little cottage before taking a secluded path where ferns and plantlife flourish. (Grid ref: 764817)

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Turn right over stile signed to National Trust South Down and follow the track to pass South Down Farm, on a very steep climb back to the car park of the start of walk.

(Grid ref: 758817)