



Walk No. 10 – Chudleigh to Target wood and Ridge Road

This is walk number ten in a series of historical walks around Chudleigh and the surrounding countryside compiled by Alan Brunton for the Chudleigh History Group. Most walks commence from the Town Hall. The historical content of the walks is mainly brief, but further information can be found on our website and in The Chudleigh Book, available in the library.

Walk 10: Distance approx. 2 miles. Time 1–1.5 hours. Roads, footpaths, one steep climb

This is a walk best taken in the drier months as Garden Spot Lane can be very wet and muddy in places. However, alternative directions are included to avoid this section which do not change the length and time of the walk overall.

From the Town Hall cross into Clifford Street, formerly Mill Lane. Number four used to be the King Arms Hotel from soon after the First World War until 1941. The landlord was Mr Johnson who, having served in the war, suffered gassing and shell shock. He died in 1931 and his widow, Rosina Ann, took over the license. However, her application for renewal in 1940 was refused on the grounds of lack of business. She continued to live there until her death in 1971. The premises next door used to be the ambulance hall but was sold several years ago and is now a private dwelling. The Old Chapel has quite a history. The original building was constructed in 1837 as a Methodist Chapel but was demolished in 1889, rebuilt and services continued until 1914. Soon after the conclusion of the First World War the Plymouth Brethren took occupancy. It was sold and converted to a private dwelling during the 1990s. Opposite Clifford Close is the Well House, so named because of a well in the back garden. Just after Parkway is a wall plaque where a dipping point of the pot water supply used to be. Note the C–stone low in the wall opposite Kits Close. In 1531 a law was passed declaring that the road surface either side and over a watercourse was to be maintained by the Shire whereas the condition of other roads and tracks was the towns/villages own responsibility. In 1831 Devon magistrates further declared that this extent be marked by a C–stone, standing for county. The second stone is in the wall between two utility points on the corner of Lears Lane, opposite the driveways to two bungalows.

This paragraph now details the walk if not going along Garden Spot Lane. From the crossroads at the bottom of Clifford Street turn right into Lawn Drive and walk along the far pavement for about 300 yards. When reaching number 18 turn left into a little close of seven houses and exit it alongside number 14. Cross the lane which leads to what was once Parkway Mill and follow the narrow footpath ahead. Cross the little footbridge over the Kate Brook into a field. Follow the right-hand hedgerow and enter another field through a little gate. Walk alongside this hedge until reaching a large gate and path coming from your left which, if you had walked along Garden Spot Lane and through **Target Wood**, you would have come to. Now turn right and begin the steep climb across the field to the hedgerow and up to the exit gate and onto the **Ridge** road.

The walk now continues from the first C stone. When you reach the crossroads at the bottom of Clifford Street turn left into Millstream Meadow and just after the bus shelter look over your shoulder to see the water wheel at the back of the old Town Mill building



and then take the footbridge over the Kate Brook to avoid the road bridge traffic. Then turn right into Lears Lane and left onto the Mount Pleasant/Tower Hill Road and walk alongside the terraced houses until reaching Garden Spot Lane on the right. Follow the lane past the bungalows and pastures until reaching a gateway at the end with a much smaller gate to its left. Go through this gate and follow the hedgerow on the right to another small gate into a copse we call **Target Wood**. Hundreds of years ago it was expected of every fit and able man to be capable of firing a longbow and protecting the parish. They would assemble at the rear of the church, which is now the play park, and fire their arrows at targets set up in the woods a quarter of a mile away, hence the name. In the 1920s, the Chudleigh Rifle Club also had their range here. There is also evidence of quarrying here and the little stone hut was a shelter for those working the land hereabouts and as a small store.

Follow the path through the wood into a field and on to a gateway. Walk uphill to the hedgerow opposite then bear left up to the gate in the **Ridge** road. Ugbrooke Park, seat of the Cliffords, lies behind the wall opposite. Turn left. After several yards you will notice an embankment on your right which encloses the Castle Dyke hill fort from the Iron Age and certainly the Bronze Age before that. It is very probable that was the first settlement hereabouts following the period of hunter gatherers. Being so close to the Roman route from Exeter to Newton Abbot and Totnes it is possible it may have been a Roman site also, although there is no firm evidence of this. This road gives you a fine view of Chudleigh and Dartmoor beyond.

After a good half a mile a footpath comes up on your left. Walk down with care as it is fairly steep and can be wet underfoot. It emerges by Hillside Barn just above the allotments and cemetery opposite. Again, care is needed as there is no pavement until reaching the terraced houses. Now retrace your steps to the town centre but if time allows pop into the cemetery and immediately to your left is the Remembrance Garden. The little plaques display the names of many former Chudleigh residents.

Over the years the Clifford family of Ugbrooke have played a prominent role in Chudleigh. The 1st Lord Clifford of Ugbrooke (1630–1673) worked tirelessly to maintain the woollen industry, vital to the town's economy. Charles, the 6th Lord Clifford (1759–1831) is remembered for his part in the restoration of the town after the great fire in 1807. Their names appear over the centuries at the head of various town committees. The family is undoubtedly one of the country's oldest and most interesting. Originally, they came to this country as conquerors. Their ancestors, the Pons, were of Viking extraction and came over with William the Conqueror in 1066.



Route of Walk No.10 (map source: OpenStreetMap)