PUBS WORTH THE WALK

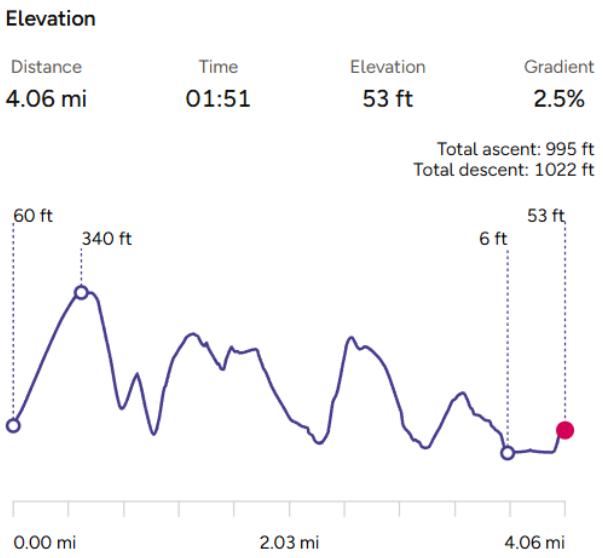
The Pilchard Inn, Burgh Island

From Bigbury-on-Sea to Ringmore & Ayrmer Cove, returning via the South West Coast Path, 4 miles

OVERVIEW

Leave the car above Bigbury beach with your back to the island — you'll see plenty more of it later — and climb through the village into open fields, heading for the village of Ringmore.

Ringmore is the older, quieter half of this walk, and arguably the more historically important — a proper farming village long before anyone built a hotel on a tidal island nearby. All Hallows Church, dating from around 1240, holds a rare medieval wall painting and a stained-glass war memorial window called one of the most moving in the country — worth ten minutes, whatever your faith.

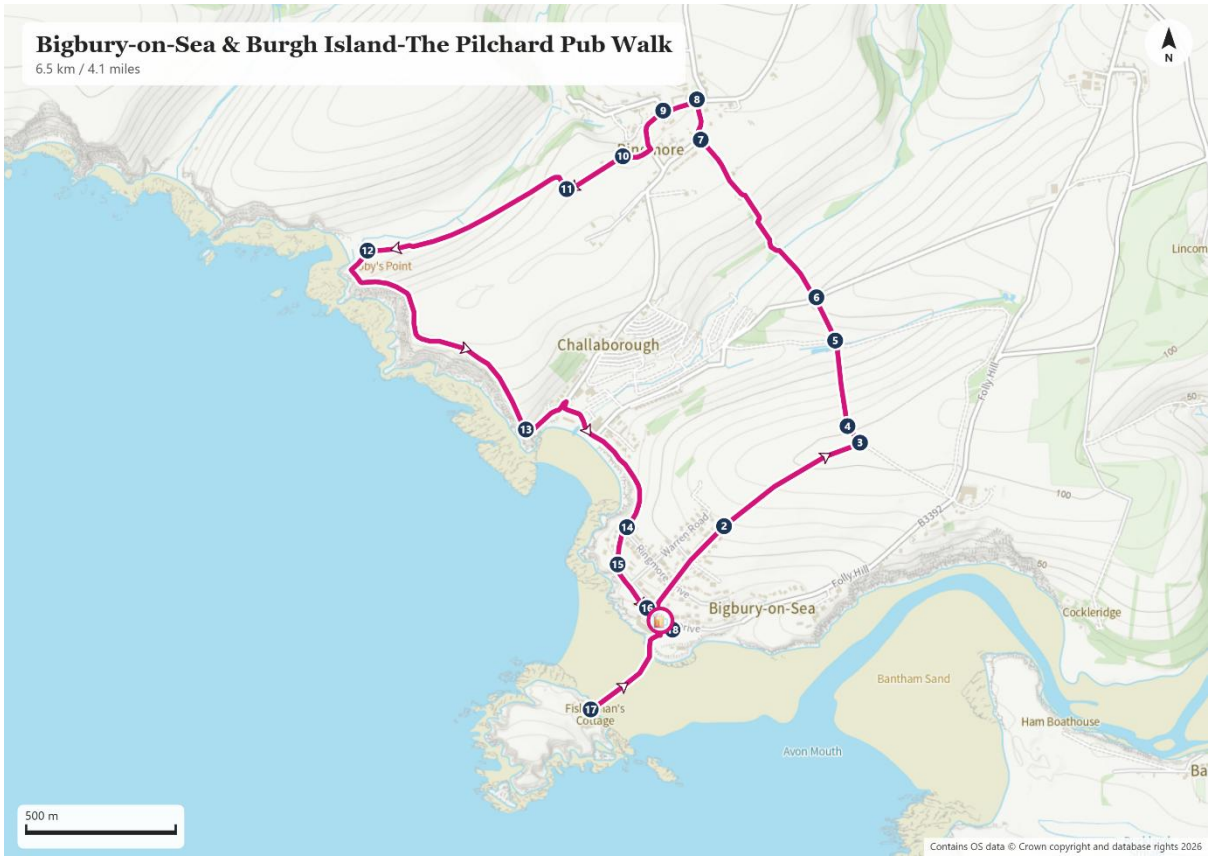


The Journey's End, the village pub, deserves its own visit another day; if it's shut, as it may be on a Monday, don't read anything into it. From Ringmore, a gentle National Trust gravel track drops you down to Ayrmer Cove — an accessible way to reach the coast and sea. Pick up the South West Coast Path here and turn east (left): fine views back to Bolt Tail near Hope Cove, and, ahead, your first proper look at Bigbury beach, Burgh Island and The Pilchard, together on a clear day. The path runs on above Challaborough before dropping to the beach and back to Bigbury-on-Sea.

Start/Finish	Public Car Park. Marine Drive, Bigbury-on-Sea, Devon TQ7 4AS. The payment machines are card or contactless only.				
Parking	As above. Ample parking spaces available.				
Grid Reference	SX 651 443				
What3Words	///gymnasium.flux.admires				
Distance	4 miles / 6.5 km	**Time**	2 hrs	**Ascent**	995 ft / 310 m
Paths/Terrain	Tarmac paths and lanes, fields, gravel tracks, coastal footpaths.				
Difficulty	Moderate. This is an undulating and rewarding route that squeezes nearly 1000 feet of elevation into 4 enjoyable miles.				
Public Transport	Limited options. There isn't a service from Kingsbridge to Bigbury-on-Sea, but there is a multi-step route from Plymouth.				

Toilets	At the car park in Bigbury-on-Sea, and at The Pilchard, which is open every day. The Journey's End in Ringmore is currently closed on Monday and Tuesdays.
Other Pubs Nearby	**The Journey's End** in Ringmore is recommended. In Kingston, Punch Taverns' **The Dolphin** is stumbling a little and would welcome support. Away from the beach in Bigbury, try **The Pickwick Inn**. Across the River Avon in Bantham is **The Sloop**, a cracking pub.

DIRECTIONS



1. From the upper section of the public car park at Bigbury-on-Sea, look for the footpath finger marker post named ‘Bigbury on Sea’ at the opposite side of the to the beach. With your back to the beach, set off in the direction of Challaborough, up a sloped concrete path to your left.
2. After c.100m, reach the road and cross carefully to pass the bus shelter-turned defibrillator location on your left, heading uphill on Parker Road.
3. The road leads uphill through the houses of Bigbury-on-Sea, and eventually passes into fields over a stile as you make your way to Ringmore.

4. This is an undulating route and this first uphill section takes you to the brow of the first climb on 'Mount Folly'. Beyond the houses, follow the way marker into the first of three fields, following the right-hand field boundary. Continue ahead.
5. At the end of the 3rd field, turn left in the direction of Ringmore. Then through a gate into the next field and continue steeply downhill following the clear route now with the field boundary on your left. It drops down steeply.
6. At a track at the bottom, look for a waymark direction post to the left, to climb up the next field. Follow the marked path that crosses this field towards a telegraph pole as your guide, just before a hedge. A metal gate takes you to steps down to a lane – it's one of the two routes in and out of Challaborough so take care as you step onto the lane.
7. The footpath continues on the other side of the lane, with a waymarked Public Footpath sign pointing into a field through a gate. Take this field path downhill with the hedge on your right.
8. Cross a brook at the bottom to start the climb into Ringmore. The route is clear as you ascend vi kissing gates and field edges. A track along a hedge takes you onto a lane.
9. Continue to a junction in the village, with Cross Manor in front of you. Bear right, past thatched cottages and the WI Hall, then turning left in front of All Hallows Church. It's worth a look inside – there's a superb commemorative stained-glass window to recognise those lost from the village in the two great wars.
10. Again, take care here. It's another of the routes into Challaborough and there's a blind bend in front of the church entrance.
11. Continue downhill, bearing left to pass The Journey's End. Like all pubs in this area, it's operating reduced hours, closed Monday and Tuesday when I visit.
12. Almost opposite the front door, bear left uphill, and head uphill to a junction, with an obscured sign for Ayrmer Cove pointing left, past Smugglers Cottage, a wonderfully thatched building on the corner.
13. As this lane ends, you'll see the route to Ayrmer Cove starts on a gravelled path to the left. It runs from here down to the beach, level at first before a gentle descent, the easiest section of this walk.
14. The ups and downs haven't ended yet, however! At the beach, join the South West Coast Path to the left for the return to Bigbury, via Challaborough. The steep path up to Toby's Point from Ayrmer Cove is the hardest uphill, but the views across to Burgh Island at the top make up for it.
15. Continue downhill to arrive at the road that runs along the front of Challaborough. Pick up the coast path signs once again and make your way for the final ½ mile to Bigbury.