

Godshill and Appuldurcombe

Description A hilly walk with excellent landscape views. The walk passes the historic Appuldurcombe House, home of the Worsley family in 18th century. It also passes Godshill Church, popularly known as *The Church of the Lily Cross*. **Distance** 5.1 miles
Start Car park opposite The Griffin pub in Godshill.
Access Information Some stiles and hilly sections. Many good tracks. Some lane and road walking.
Refreshments Pubs: The Griffin and The Taverners as well as cafés and tea rooms in Godshill **Toilets** At public car park **Internet** All walks in this series can be downloaded from this website www.iowramblers.com/page44.htm or www.islandbuses.info/things-do/rambles-bus/



Front cover Thatched cottages surround Godshill Church;
This page, inset top left Tomb of Sir James Worsley who died in 1538, and his wife
Inset bottom left Freemantle Gate
Inset right The Lily Cross Mural at Godshill Church

Countryside Code

Respect Protect Enjoy

Respect other people

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

Protect the natural environment

- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under effective control

Enjoy the outdoors

- Plan ahead and be prepared
- Follow advice and local signs



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Godshill and Appuldurcombe

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A circular walk taking in the grandeur of Appuldurcombe House and
the hushed interior of All Saints Church at Godshill

Godshill and Appuldurcombe

Appuldurcombe House

This was once the grandest house on the Island, standing in grounds designed by “Capability” Brown. It is now in the care of English Heritage.

In 1102, Lord of the Island Richard de Redvers gave the manor of Appuldurcombe to the Benedictine Abbey of Monteburg in Normandy, which he had founded in 1090. In 1340 the monks left this tranquil valley for the mainland to avoid possible invasion. The Priory was dissolved in 1414.

In 1423, Henry VI gave the manor to the Nuns Minoresses of St Clare-without-Aldgate, in London. They leased the estate to the Frys who remained there until the end of the century. Sir John Leigh took over the lease. One of his daughters, Anne, married James Worsley, and the house remained with his descendants for the next 300 years. Four of them became captains of the Island. Sir Robert married the daughter of Viscount Weymouth of Longleat, and decided to rebuild the crumbling house, creating an imposing mansion. It is reputed to have had 52 rooms and 365 windows. The house was completed by Sir Richard Worsley towards the end of the 18th century.

On Sir Richard's death, the estate went to his sister and through her daughter to the first Earl of Yarborough

who died on board his yacht off Vigo in 1846. Much of the art and treasures were sold or removed to London.

In 1867 the house became a preparatory school – Dr Pound's Academy for Young Gentlemen. In 1901 it housed a community of French monks, but they left in 1908 to build Quarr Abbey near Binstead. During World War I it was billeted to troops and was badly damaged. In World War II it was further damaged by a land mine which completed the work of destruction. The robust shell has been partially restored by English Heritage.

On the crest of the hill is the Worsley Obelisk, of Cornish granite, dedicated by Sir Richard Worsley in 1774 to his ancestor Sir Robert. The 70-foot structure was partially destroyed by lightning and is now considerably reduced in size.

Godshill Church: All Saints

Standing high in the pretty village of Godshill, this is one of the most famous churches in England with over 100,000 visitors each year. It is often referred to as “the Church of the Lily Cross”, due to a 15th century mural in the south transept depicting Christ crucified on a triple branched flowering lily. The mural was whitewashed over after the Reformation but this began to peel in the middle of the 19th century. It has now been restored, and is a work of great beauty, unique to Godshill.

Pictured Appuldurcombe House is now in the hands of English Heritage

After the Norman Conquest, Godshill was one of six churches given to the Abbey of Lyre in Normandy, and for several centuries enjoyed the receipts from a very prosperous church. It later came under the influence of the owners of the nearby Appuldurcombe House. Sir John Leigh and his wife are buried in Godshill Church and their magnificent tomb of Caen stone is regarded as the finest on the Island.

Sir James Worsley and his wife are also buried in the church – their monument shows them kneeling at prayer desks facing east. Richard Worsley died in 1565. His younger brother created his elaborate monument which also commemorated Richard's two sons, both of whom were killed in a gunpowder explosion.

Several other Worsleys are commemorated in the church. Sir Robert, who rebuilt Appuldurcombe in 1710, built himself a grandiose monument in the north transept. A huge and ostentatious sarcophagus weighing 30 tons is dedicated to a third Richard Worsley who died in 1805. This 8-feet high monument is now hidden by the organ.

Appuldurcombe House set in grounds laid out by Capability Brown

The best way to see the Island

Rambles by Bus

Godshill and Appuldurcombe

Information

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calls from landlines cost 10p per minute

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Key



Scan this code with your smart phone to access the Southern Vectis timetable applicable to this walk.

Route From the car park **1** cross the road to the right of the pub and go along Hollow Lane and soon go left onto footpath GL57 by the pub garden. Proceed through wooden gates along the field edge. Continue to a kissing gate at Sainham Wood **2**. Then veer left to the top of a slope to join the main path ahead. The path continues in the wood and then emerges along the edge of the woodland overlooking fields. It then goes left to reach a metal gate.

Keep to the left of an open field and the path winds past a large house, going through a metal gate and emerging at a track junction, part of The Stenbury

Trail, GL44 **3** Go right and follow this track to the top of the hill on the Worsley Trail at Freemantle Gate. Continue and keep on the track to reach an old metal gate and stile. Continue on the surfaced track to the side of Appuldurcombe House and the Owl and Falconry Centre.

Cross the lane going slightly left to find a stile by a stone wall **4**. Continue ahead by the edge of the house grounds where there are good views of the front of the house. Look out for a footpath post and go left on GL45 towards Redhill Lane. The path crosses the open field and goes half left to the bottom corner at the lane,

between two telegraph poles **5**. Cross the stile by two stone pillars and over the lane to go through a gate and follow GL44, Worsley Trail. This path crosses two open fields, gently rising to the track which returns to Freemantle Gate.

After the gate **6** go left on GL49 and continue to the top of the hill with Gat Cliff on your left. Go through a wooden gate and up a slope with steps and continue past a stone stile. At a path junction **7** continue over a stile downhill into a wood on GL58. Cross another stile to leave the wood and follow the field edge to a metal gate and along a grassy track. Go over a stile by a seven-bar metal gate and then go through a tall metal-latticed gate.

Keep to the right path fork to cross scrubland and reach Sheepwash Lane **8**. Go right on this quiet lane and then go left on footpath GL58 towards Merry Lane. Follow a field edge and go through trees to emerge onto the lane by houses. Go left to reach Whitwell Road. Turn right, be aware of traffic, keeping to the right or using the grass verge where possible. Just after Bridgecourt House **9**, turn right onto bridleway GL21. At a lane go left and at the church, turn right down Church Hollow. At the bottom of the lane, turn right along the High Street to return to the car park.



Pictured inset, top The grounds at Appuldurcombe House were laid out by Capability Brown
Inset, left The house was badly damaged during both world wars
Inset, right Views of the coast at Culver Down from Gat Cliff



The best way to see the Island

Ramblers by Bus