

# The White Horse Trail

Parish of Broad Town section  
Condition report  
Broad Town PC Footpath Working Group



Issue 1 December 2018

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## 1. Introduction

The White Horse Trail is a c90 mile circular way-marked long distance walking trail. It was originally created in 2000 by Wiltshire Ramblers with assistance from Wiltshire Council. The route passes through Pewsey, Marlborough, Broad Town, Cherhill, Devizes, Steeple Ashton and Bratton providing views of eight white horses which are cut into the turf of the chalk hillsides of Wiltshire. The walk runs through some beautiful Wiltshire countryside and also visits fascinating historical sites such as Avebury Stones and Silbury Hill. Other highlights include the Landsdowne Monument near the Cherhill White Horse and there is a long waterside section along the Kennet and Avon Canal through Devizes.

The Trail nominally starts at the Westbury White Horse, although the route can be picked up at any point. Guides are available to walk the trail in either a clockwise or anti-clockwise direction. This survey was carried out on the Broad Town section as if walking the route in the clockwise direction.

## 2. The route through Broad Town

Travelling the route clockwise, the White Horse Trail enters the parish of Broad Town from Clyffe Pypard. Clyffe Pypard path number CPYP11, joins BTOW8, a bridleway, at grid ref. SU084773. This joins the public road at the top of Thornhill and uses Pye Lane, crosses the B4041 then Chapel Lane turning right at the end of Chapel Lane and continuing up Horns Lane. At the top of Horns Lane the route picks up footpath BTOW33. This crosses BTOW32 halfway up the hill (although the crossing point is not clearly distinguishable now). At the top end of BTOW33, near the sharp bend on the B4041, the route picks up Bridleway BTOW38.

The next section has had a degree of confusion over the route (Appendix A.) partly due the slippage of land under the white horse, which caused, in 2014, the path to be temporarily diverted along the lower BTOW32 for safety reasons. The original route is now deemed to be safe to be used again. However it is believed that the route way in this area has never been properly way marked and requires some attention to fully clarify it's correct route on the ground.

The original and currently correct route takes the path along the top of the escarpment. At the top of the gulley the route doubles back down the hill using BTOW35, (the bridleway continues into Broad Hinton parish as BHIN12) before passing under the White Horse and the interpretative boards. This section then reaches a 'major' path intersection at SU098786 where BTOW30 / 32 / 35 and 39 all meet at a metal pedestrian gate.

From here on the route follows BTOW30 to Bincknoll before joining up with bridleway BTOW41, to continue through the Bincknoll Castle area before crossing the parish boundary into Broad Hinton Parish on path BHIN10 Grid ref. SU108794.

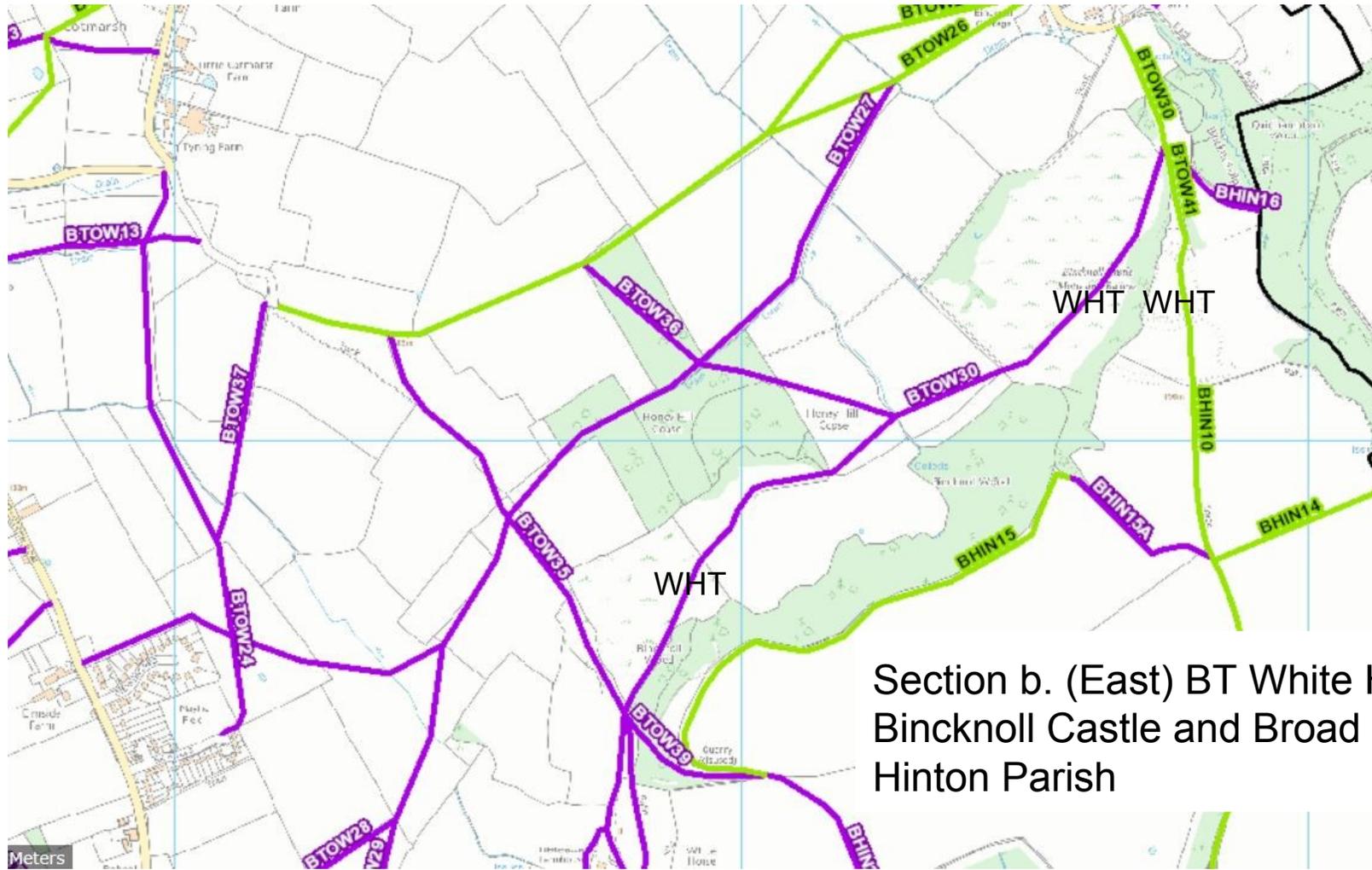
WHT route through  
Broad Town Parish  
Showing the correct  
Wiltshire Council  
Rights of Way numbers

BT White Horse



Section a. (West) Clyffe Pypard  
Parish to Broad Town White Horse

## Map of Bincknoll end of trail from Wiltshire Council website



Section b. (East) BT White Horse to Bincknoll Castle and Broad Hinton Parish

### 3. Condition Summary

The Broad Town Parish section of the White Horse Trail has some readily accessible stretches, but there are a number of difficult or blocked areas. Also there is a degree of confusion over the exact route due to misleading way marking.

For the purpose of this condition report, the Broad Town parish section can be broken into three different parts . The first is the section from the Clyffe Pypard / Broad Town Parish border to the top of Horns Lane. The second is from the gate at the top of Horns Lane to the gate at the junction of parish footpaths at grid Ref. SU098786. The third part is from this gate (SU098786) to the Broad Town / Broad Hinton parish border at Bincknoll Castle. The worst part is the second (that is between the top of Horns Lane SU094776 and the path junction beyond the White Horse SU098786). Due to the landslide in 2014, the route has become confused and there remains a significant amount of clearance and tidying to improve this situation. However there are still stretches of this part that are easy walking, it is just necessary to make the whole part easier to traverse as well as clearly identifying the correct route on the ground. The major work on the third part is on its first section just beyond the gate at SU098786, in the rough ground. The undergrowth and brambles ideally need clearing to create a wider path to enable horses (if allowed by the land owner) and walkers easier passage. The list of major tasks is collated in section 5.

It would be useful at some point to remind users that the White Horse Trail is a walking trail and not a horse riding trail, except on portions that are bridleway. Sections of footpath have become very damaged by horse traffic, this is possibly due to the confusion over the route marking, but it is going to make continuing maintenance more difficult if 'horse' damage has to be repaired when it shouldn't happen in the first instance.

It would be useful to add a map of all BT rights of way at the village hall to further clarify and differentiate the footpaths and bridleways and identify with their unique alpha/numeric title as per the Wiltshire Council master, to try to reduce future confusion.

#### 4. Route status in detail



2. Looking towards BT. This stile is now standing in isolation it's only current use is to provide a post for way marking – could be removed



last 'necessary' stile on the Clyffe Pypard side of the boundary. Good condition - requires way marking for anti-clockwise' walkers



3. Looking toward BT. Path in generally good order.



Provide  
new stile  
here?



5. Looking toward BT. It can't be seen in the picture but a single electric wire stretches across from gate on the right.



4. Looking toward CP. This is the theoretical CP/BT parish boundary SU084773. The path is clear here but a single electric fence wire is stretched across the path. It might be better to provide a new stile close to the fence line.



6. Looking east toward BT. This stile Requires new posts. Requires way marking



8. Looking east. This gate is generally open, but there is no provision for access if gate shut or locked. Does it need a stile?



7. Looking east, path in good order



9. Looking east, the point where BTOW8 Joins Pye Lane at Thornhill.



11. Pye Lane looking east toward junction with B4041



10. Way marking intact on telegraph pole  
At Pye Lane / Thornhill (Springfield House)



12. Way marking intact on telegraph pole on the  
Corner of Pye Lane and B4041



14. Looking east along Chapel Lane. Some way marking may improve things here



13. Looking west across junction with Chapel Lane and B4041 towards Pye Lane. Some improved way marking may assist on this side.



15. Looking up Horns Lane from the corner of Chapel Lane. Way marking correct on footpath sign post. 11



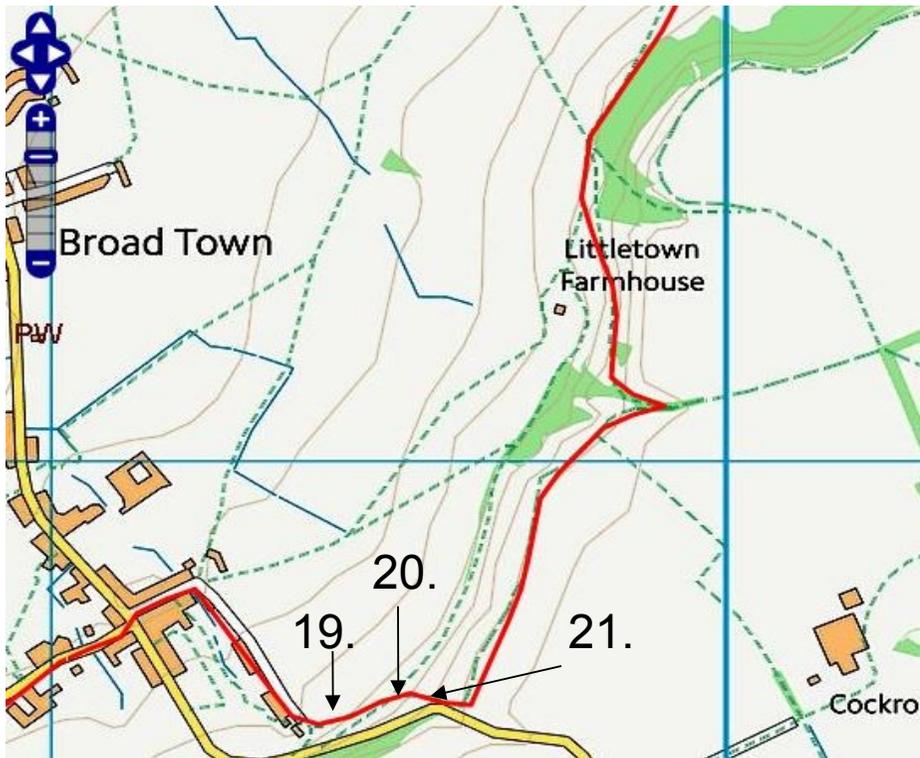
17. Looking east uphill. RH gatepost requires replacing or straightening.



16. Top of Horns Lane where BTOW33 leads off to the left



18. Looking back west downhill. way marking is correct and intact.



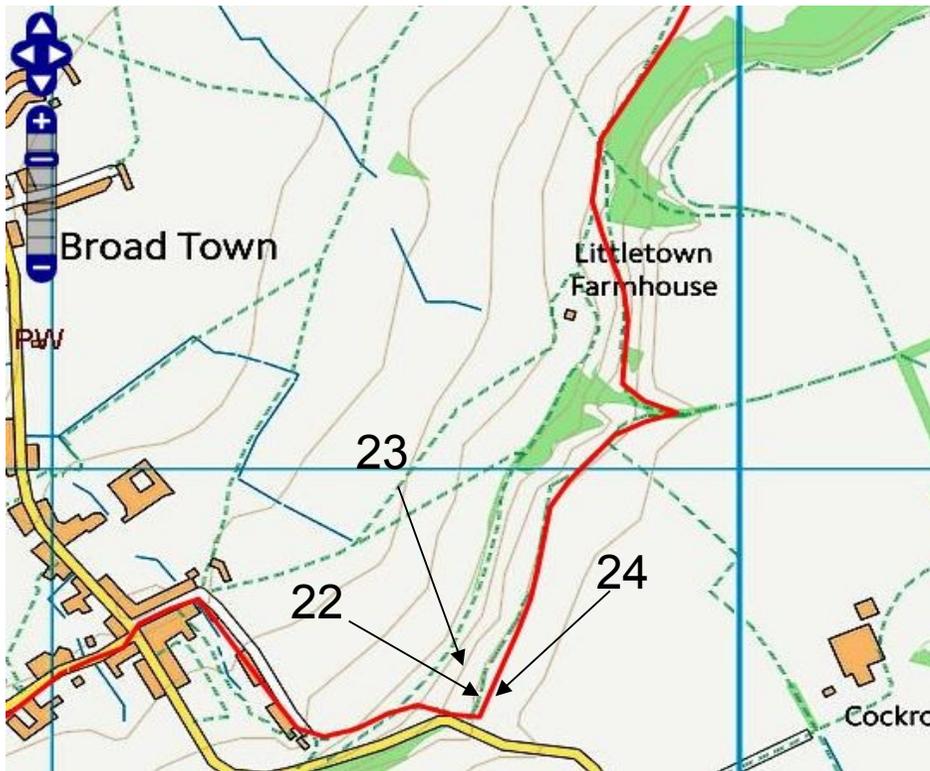
19. Path looking east uphill. It starts off very clear.



20. Looking east uphill just beyond the point where BTOW32 crosses over. From here to the top of the path, light clearance is required.



21. Looking west down path  
13



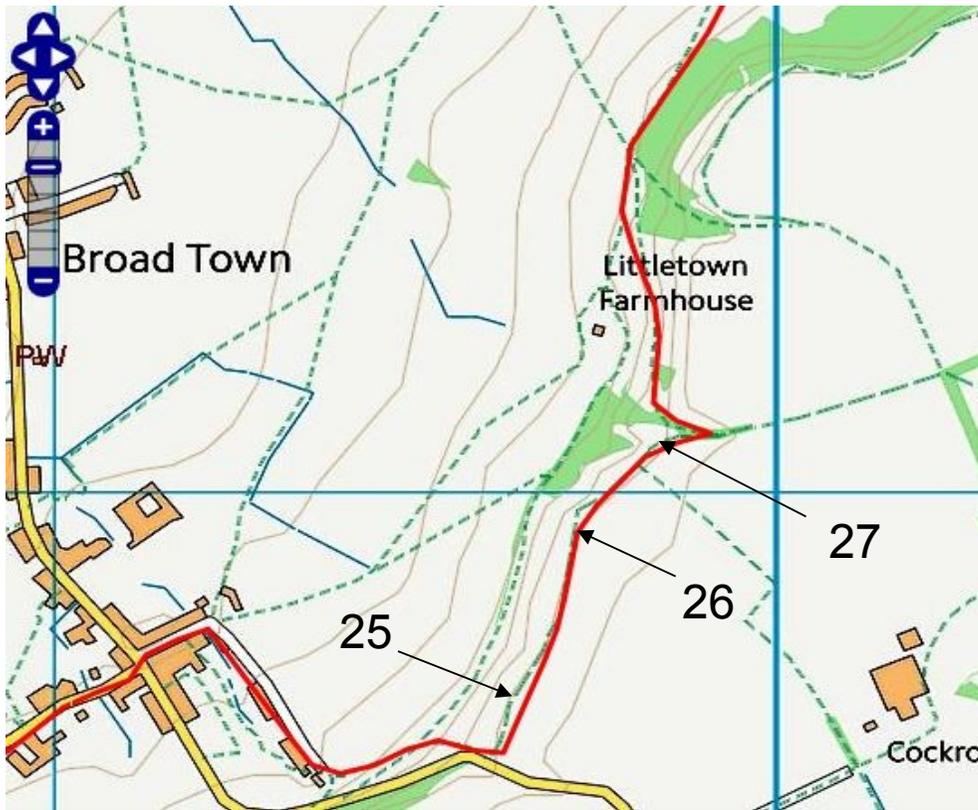
23. The non public path running downhill on the left past the pole with way markers. The correct path is The one running up hill to the right



22. This is where the route becomes confusing. The telegraph pole has way marking but is not exactly clear and therefore easy to take the non public path downhill at this point. Improved marking is required.



24. Looking back down (west) the correct path that runs along the top of the ridge. Some path improvement could be of use at this location.



26. WHT way marking required on this post

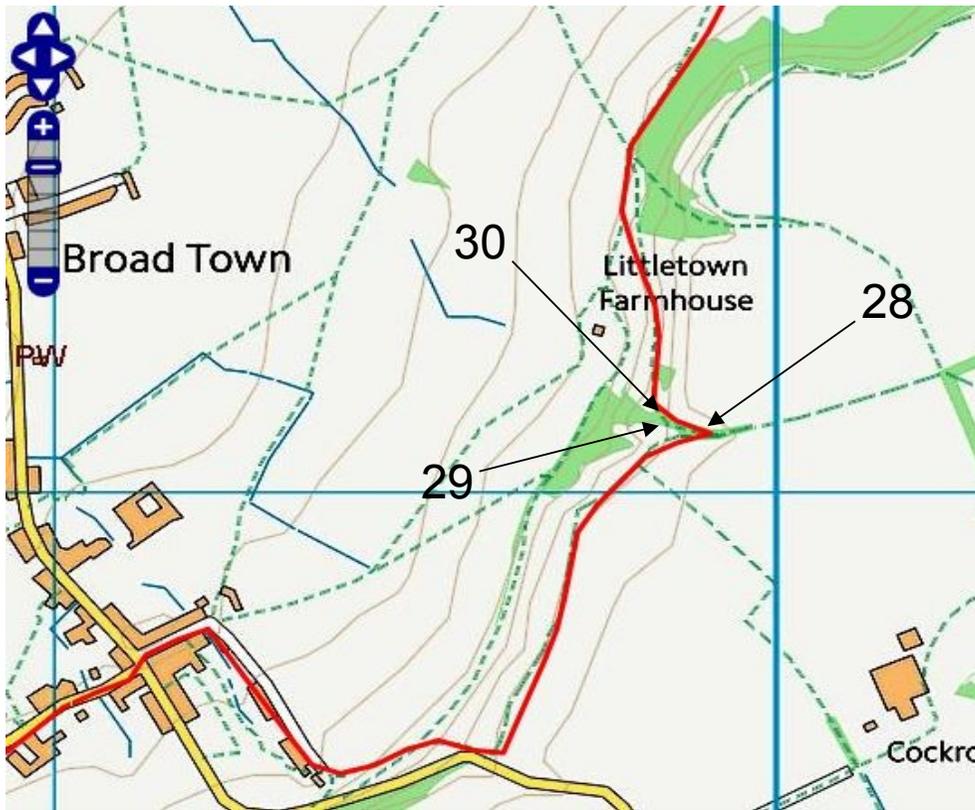


27. Bridleway gate padlocked shut – why?  
WHT way marking requires updating and clarifying



25. Clear path along ridge top looking east





29

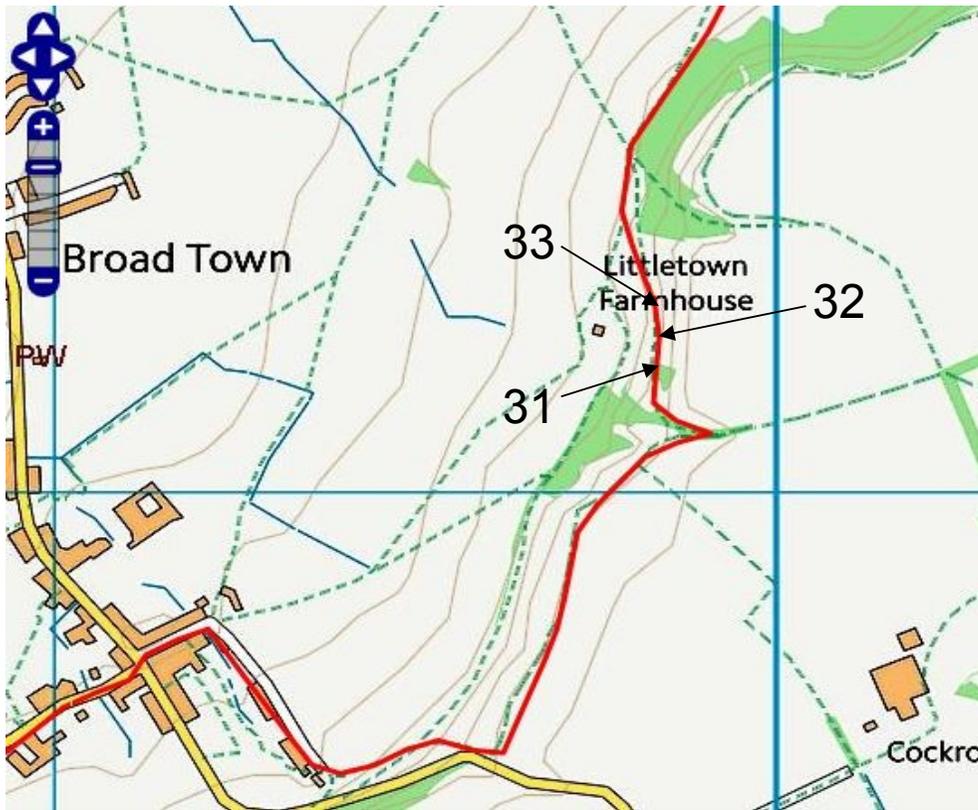


29. & 30. The view up and down the gully path some light clearance and path tidying required

30



28. The gate at the top of the gully and the beginning of BTOW35. No way marking for the WHT.



32. Path requires general light clearance and tidying.



31. Stile in solid condition but requires WHT way markers.



33. Path tidying/clearance required over landslip site





38



38. & 39. Gate requires adjusting –won't shut – and way marking clarifying.

39



37. This tree has fallen in the last 8 months and requires clearing as although it is not directly affecting the WHT it is blocking BTOW35.

37.

38.





41. & 42. Stile is combined with a horse jump suggesting horses have land owner permission. Stile is ok but maybe improve way marking.



40. Path requires undergrowth clearance and tidying or modifying ground conditions. Path has been used by horses and badly poached, even though it isn't a bridle way – maybe with land owner permission.

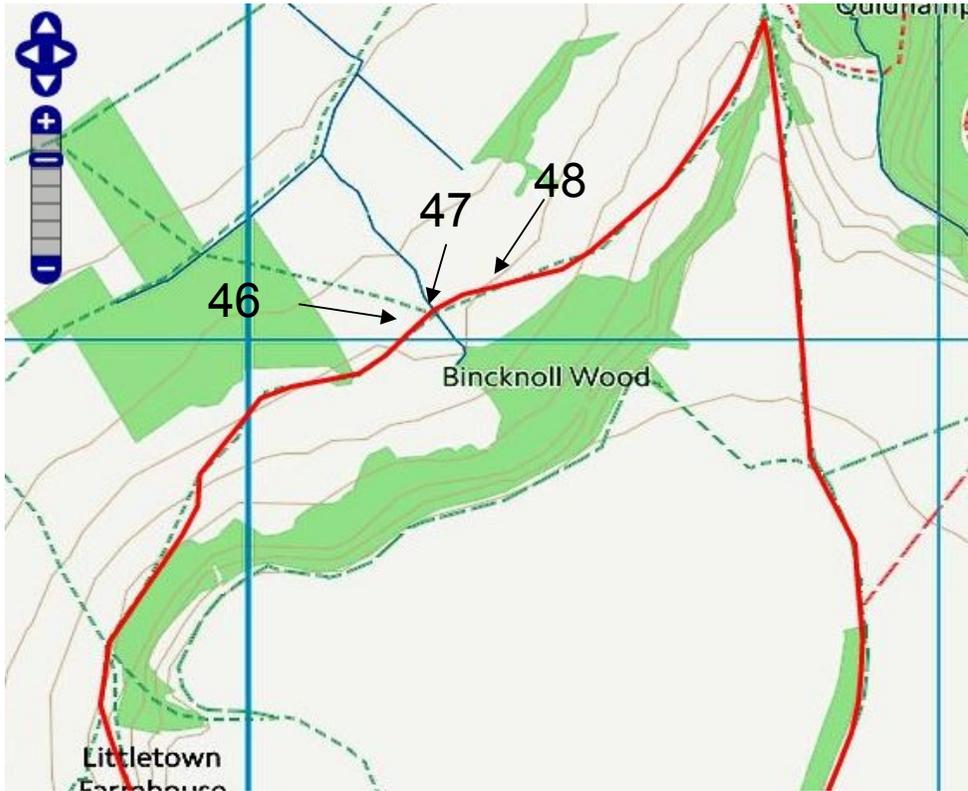
42





43. 44. & 45. This section is open field country aside from some rutted areas at the eastern end going is very easy.





47



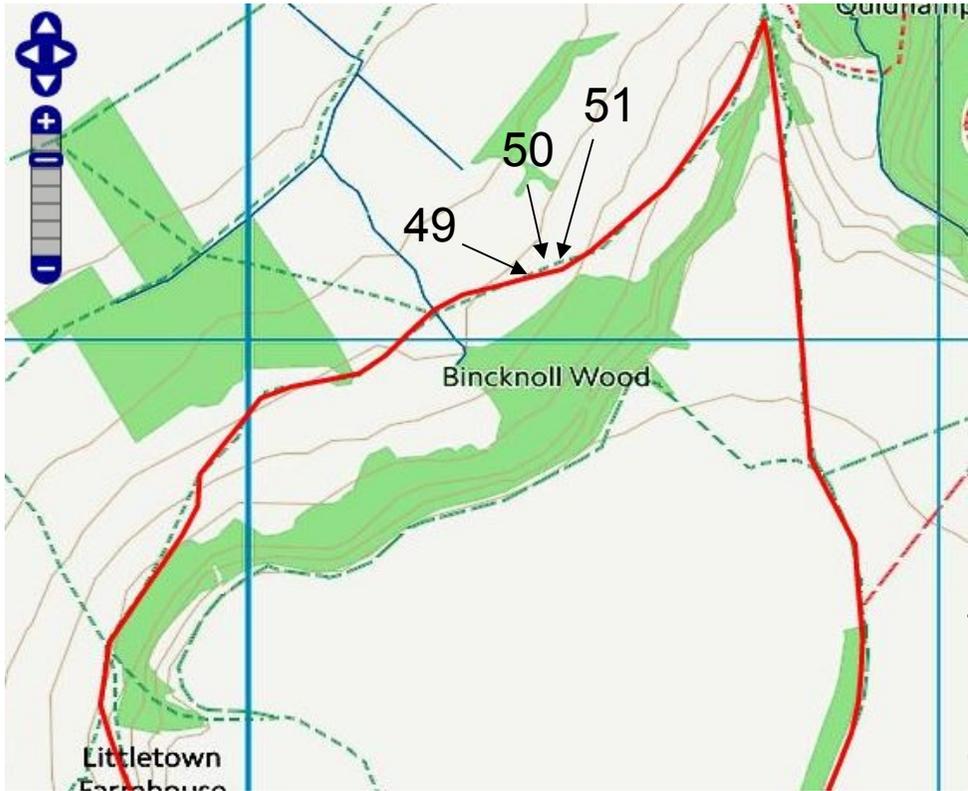
47. & 48. Heavily rutted track – gates stiles and fences missing – maybe a stile will be required



46. This area has seen a lot of woodland clearance of late and the path/track is heavily rutted, will probably improve in time. Requires way marking and maybe a stile adding when fences and gates are replaced. Way marking to BTOW36 is missing

48





50



This whole area has been changed in the last 8 months and although the path hasn't been blocked, it's not immediately clear where the route is. It now passes through the maze plantation belt that has been grown for cover as this area is now a shoot. A new private track has been put in from the top of the escarpment and all stiles, gates and fences removed. It now needs some proper way marking

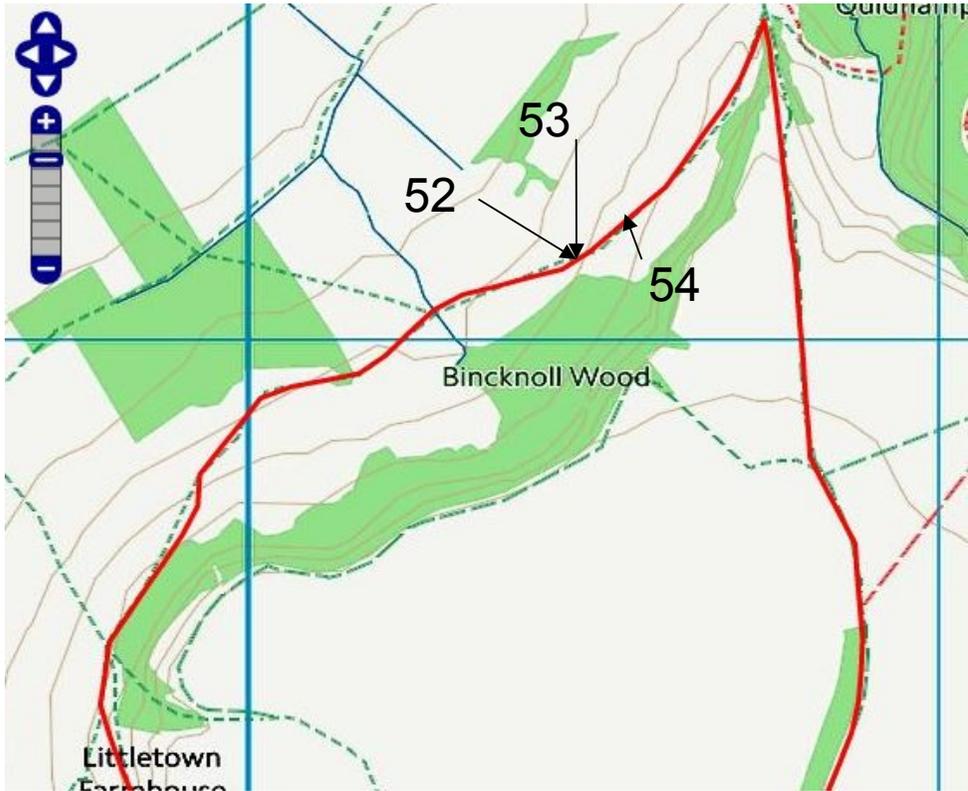
49



51



3



53



52. & 53. On the other side of the maze belt, this stile and gate have been installed but the stile is not complete – needs a step. Also needs way marking.

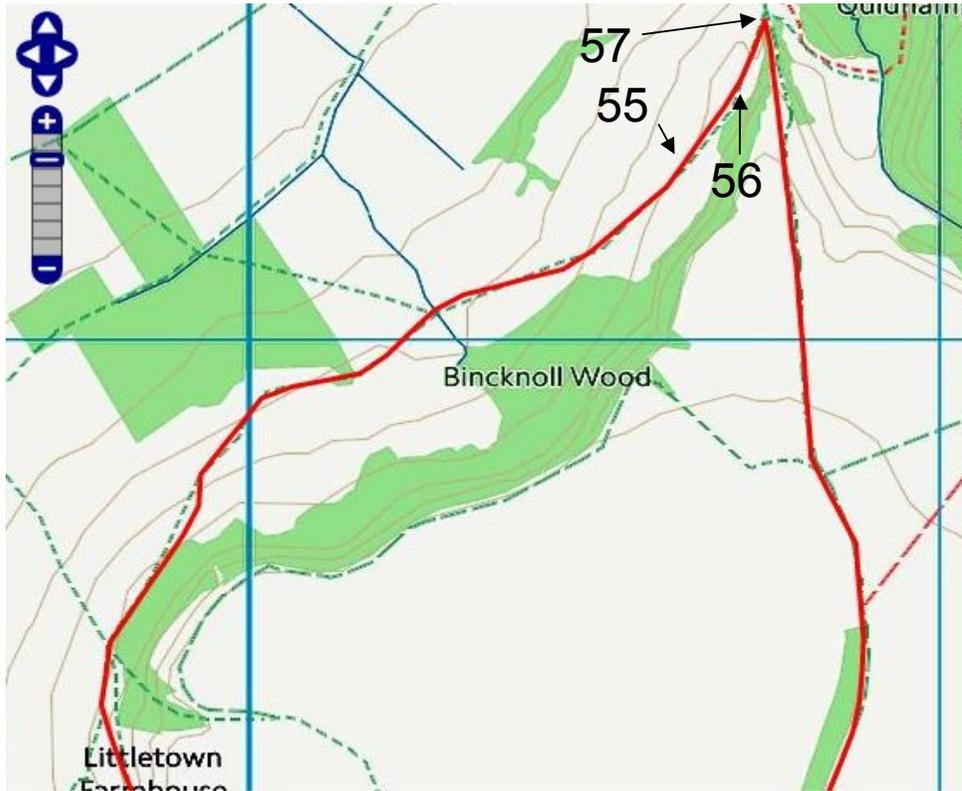
54.



52



54. After this it's an open field and it's just a case of finding the opposite corner for the next stile.



56. Looking east, back towards Bincknoll, clear open country once the route near the fence line is picked up



55. Looking west, back towards Broad Town



57. The point where BTOW30 meets BTOW40 & 41 at the track leading Bincknoll Castle. Stile requires replacing and tidying way marking.



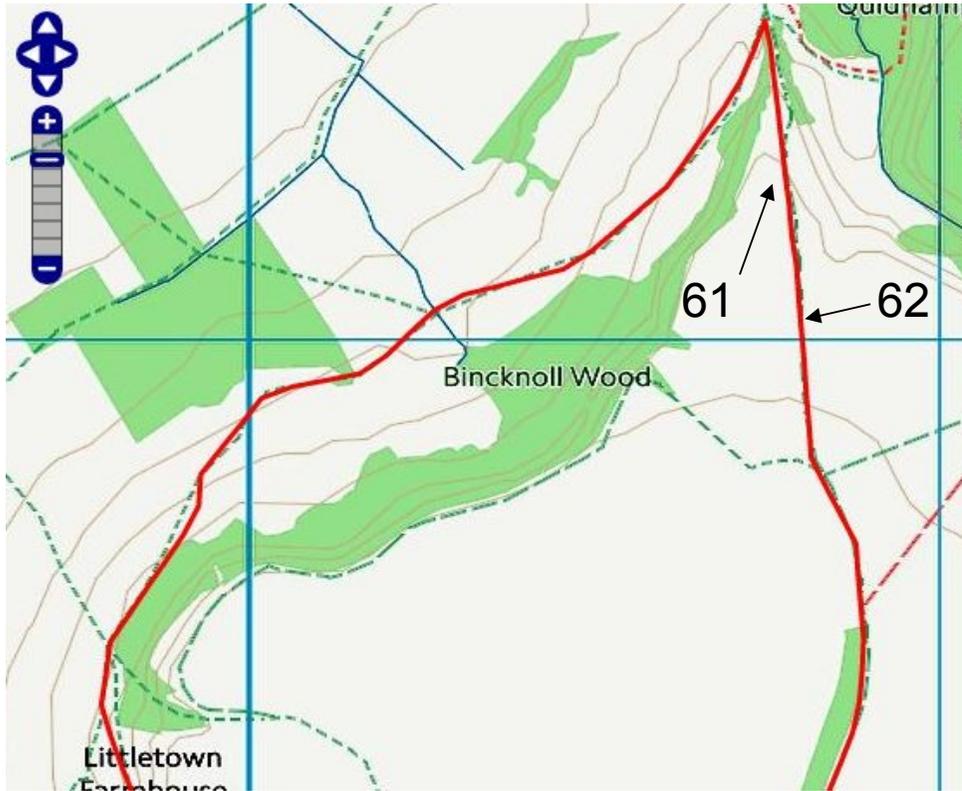
59. Looking south, up hill along BTOW41 track is steep but in reasonable condition.



58. Looking south on bridle way BTOW41 at the start of the climb up the escarpment at Bincknoll Castle



59. Looking north, down hill along BTOW41



59. The first Broad Hinton Stile on BHIN10 requires repair and the gate is padlocked shut



61. The approximate point, SU108794 at the top of the escarpment, of the Broad Town/ Broad Hinton parish boundary. At this point BTOW41 becomes BHIN10.

## 5. List of tasks required

1. Establish who the various land owners are and engage with them
2. At 4. New stile
3. At 6. New stile
4. At 8. Possible stile required?
5. At 17. Gate post repair
6. At 20. Path clearance
7. At 24. Path improvement – steps?
8. At 27 Gate padlocked at SU098781
9. At 29/30 Path tidying
10. At 32 Path tidying
11. At 33 Path clearance and tidying at landslip
12. At 36/36 Major clearance, path reconstruction or path realignment
13. At 37 Fallen tree clearance
14. At 38 Gate readjustment
15. At 40 Path repair and clearance
16. At 47 New stile?
17. At 52 Stile repair
18. At 57 Stile repair
19. Way marking will need revising and replacement in places through out the BT section of the WHT.

## Appendix A.

Excerpt from Long Distance Walkers website, the Broad Town section –

[https://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show\\_path.php?path\\_name=White+Horse+Trail](https://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_name=White+Horse+Trail)

The route begins at the southern end of Broad Town, where the main road intersects with Pye Lane and Chapel Lane. Go down Chapel Lane; when the tarmac appears to run out after 60m or so, turn right up Horns Lane (which is also a tarmac road). As you approach the last house in the lane, fork left up a grassy track for 10m to reach a gate. Follow the path steadily uphill, forking right away from the fence after approx. 100m, passing between numerous brambles and hawthorn thickets en route. Eventually climb up a steep bank for a few feet to arrive at a grassy cross track, with a telegraph pole rising up above a thick tangle of brambles in front of you, and the (tarmac) Broad Hinton to Broad Town road just visible to the right behind a metal farm gate.

The official route now continues up the steep bank past the telegraph post, and later passes directly under the White Horse, however **this section was the subject of a temporary path closure order due to a landslide in 2014. The order has expired but it has not been possible to carry out the work needed to stabilise the slope. Accordingly it is not recommended that you use this route as there is the possibility of further landslips, especially in wet weather.**

As an alternative to the official route, turn left along this grassy cross track and follow it gradually downhill. Not far after it levels out, cross a stile, then pass a holiday cottage on the right, and soon after, cross a stile by a wooden farm gate. Continue in the same direction, with the fence at the rear of Little Town Farmhouse on your left. Pass a collection of metal gates on the left and continue across the top of the field when the fence on your left disappears, to arrive at a small metal gate; ignore an identical gate to the right of this. Go through this gate and traverse a field with a profusion of thick growths of brambles, thistles and nettles; there is a clear path through it all along the contour line, although you may be snagged by the odd bramble.

Go over a stile into a very large field, with Bincknoll Wood to the right. Go to the left of the hillock immediately in front of you, with the wood receding to the right, and aim for the point in the distance where the wood surges back to the left. Go through the gap to the left of the wood into a thin field, and over another stile at its end, this time over a wooden fence, into the field beyond. Follow the farm track to the right uphill and along the top of the field, with the wood always to the right. Near the end of the field, go slightly downhill to a metal gate.