

## Knowle to Eastcote

This walk covers about 5 miles of surprisingly isolated countryside so close to civilisation. It starts from the Warwick Road just north of the large roundabout at the bottom of the hill from Knowle High Street towards the motorway. If you are driving, leave your car somewhere safe along Langfield Road or Wychwood Avenue. If you are walking from Knowle or Dorridge, there are a number of cut throughs, and there is a footpath that runs along the back of houses on Longdon Road alongside Copt Heath Golf Club that eventually runs between buildings onto a driveway that crosses the golf course and pops out on the Warwick Road.

The walk has a few stiles and crosses a couple of busy roads, so children will need to be properly supervised.



1. Start from the Warwick Road, a few yards to the north of Birchmere Retirement Home (was Sunset Senior Living). Walking up the pavement towards Copt Heath Golf Club, look for the footpath sign that points to a narrow drive on the opposite side of the road, next to a post box. Cross over and walk down the lane to near the end.
2. On the left hand side is a unusually long white painted building. At the end of this there appears to be a driveway, but it is also a footpath that links through to Queen Eleanors Drive. Go along here and turn right, following the road into the left hand turning circle.

3. Bear slightly left down a wide driveway (waymarked on lamppost), ignoring a footpath off to the left. Near the end of the drive there is a wooden gate leading to an enclosed path. Take this, cross a stile, walk across pasture with hedge on your right to another stile. Cross the stile and turn right. Just before a converted farm building and dovecote there is a wooden kissing gate on the right, go through this and turn left to follow the side of the building and then a hedge on your left, crossing a stile.
4. At the canal bridge, carry on forwards. Go through a metal kissing gate and then through a gap that has a kissing gate on the left and a missing gate on the right! With a pond just visible behind bushes on your left, carry on keeping to the hedge on the left. At the end of this wooded area, bear slightly left, aiming for the left end of a hedge across the other side of the field. Cross the stile and walk with the hedge on your left. Eventually this stops, but carry on in the same direction and you come to a rough farm track which you follow for a few yards to a gate with a stile on the left.
5. Cross the stile and turn right, following the fencing down the field past the farm houses and barns. Carry on roughly the same line and then you arrive at a bridge which you cross. Bear half left and cross the next field to a kissing gate in the hedge opposite. Walk straight up the right hand field edge after crossing a strip of unhedged land. You may notice an old sewage plant on your right (depending on the wind direction!). At the top of the field, aim for a kissing gate just to the left of a farm gate.
6. Through the kissing gate, turn right, aiming for another kissing gate a few yards away from the right hand field corner. Through this walk to the left of a pond across a private lawn, aiming for a stile a few yards to the right of a shed. Note that the top of this high stile lifts up for those with little (or average sized) legs. Cross the stile and walk a few yards forward looking for another stile through the hedge on the left. Walk up the enclosed path in between houses.
7. At the junction of the driveway turn right in front of a large, elegant black and white house. Follow the driveway to the main road – Hampton Road. Cross with care to a stile. Follow the field edge with the hedge on your left to another stile to the left of a gate. Go straight on down the track until it swings to the left. Just in front up a bank to the left there is another stile which you cross, keeping the hedge on your right. At the end of the field, the footpath then jinks right through a gap in the hedge and after a few more yards, returns through another gateway on the left. Follow the hedge on your right to the road.
8. Cross the road carefully to the narrow pavement and follow this for a few hundred yards to where it goes behind a grassy patch. To the right of a house with a distinctive natural porch on the opposite side of the road there is a lane which you follow to just before a ford over the river Blythe. Find a gate on the left and follow the bank of the

Blythe, keeping it to your right. Mind your head on low branches and eventually emerge onto a lane through a gate. Turn right and immediately you will find another kissing gate entering an enclosed path across a field. (In the wet this can be nearly impassable, so make use of a gateway to the right to walk parallel with it, clambering back over onto the bridge). You arrive at a bridge, do not cross but turn left onto a permissive way and continue along the banks of the river until you arrive at Elvers Green Lane. Turn right, cross the ford and follow the lane, being careful of cars that may drive at a pace along the single track road. Follow this until you pass a barn then farm house (Elvers Green Farm) on your left. Immediately after the farm there is a kissing gate and farm gate on the right. Go through this and follow the field edge, keeping the hedge on your left until you arrive at another kissing gate. Go ahead in the same direction and eventually you will join a made up path over walkways and stream which emerges at the end of Kixley Lane.

You now have two alternatives: you can go towards Knowle or continue a country walk along the canal for a bit longer – jump to paragraph 11 for the slightly longer walk.

9. (route a) Follow the lane, perhaps seeing Knowle Parish Church to your left, (and certainly the brightly coloured house on your right!), until you arrive at a gate in the hedge on the right, beyond the turning circle in the road.
10. Go through and follow gravel path through to houses. Follow the close to Hampton Road, along side Knowle Cricket Club. Cross Hampton Road and carry on down Arden Vale Road. At the end of this you emerge onto the Warwick Road, turn right (crossing at the roundabout as there is no pavement on the east side beyond the roundabout) and you return to the start of the walk.
11. (route b) Just before the canal bridge, take the path left to drop down onto the towpath and turn right along it under the bridge. Walk under the footbridge and then at the next road bridge take the track up to the right onto Hampton Road. Turn left across the bridge and then at the end of the barrier, cross the road near the entrance to the car park.
12. Continue along the verge following a rough, barely visible path for a few hundred yards. You then reach a track on the right (which used to be the entrance to nurseries) and turn down this track. Continue through a gateway and follow the track in a similar direction and then it twists through onto a boardwalk through a swampy area (aka a nature reserve). At the other end of this, carry on between houses and emerge onto Wychwood Avenue. Turn left and at the end you will arrive at the Warwick Road roundabout. Cross and turn right to return to the start of the walk.