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## Knockholt Circular

**Start and finish:** Knockholt station

**Length:** 18.5km (11.5 miles).

**Time:** 5 hours 30 minutes. For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 8 hours 30 minutes.

**Transport:** Trains go from London Charing Cross to Knockholt, journey time 40 minutes. Knockholt is within London Transport Zone 6, so a one-day travelcard and Oyster Pay-as-you-go are options. For those driving, free parking (currently under review by Kent Council) is available on the road outside the station.

**OS Landranger Map:** 187 and 188

**OS Explorer Map:** 147

Knockholt, map reference TQ 485629, is in **Kent**, 9km north west of Sevenoaks.

**Toughness:** 5 out of 10.

**Walk Notes:** Despite its starting point being within London Travelcard Zone 6, this is a completely rural walk, passing through a succession of lovely open fields full of wildflowers in spring, and through a number of bluebell woods. After lunch there is the opportunity to visit Down House, the home of Charles Darwin, the naturalist.

**Saturday Walkers' Club:** Take the train nearest to 10 am from Charing Cross Station to Knockholt.

## WALK DIRECTIONS

Cross over the footbridge to platform 1 to exit the station and turn left up the station driveway. After 80 metres, *at the T-junction with the Sevenoaks Road, cross over and turn left. In 50 metres turn right through a wooden kissing gate into a field* to go up a grassy path. After 120 metres the footpath starts to level and curve to the left, following a yellow arrow on the right, your direction 120 degrees. In 150 metres, having passed by a large green corrugated metal building off to your right-hand side, the footpath curves to the right (to the left of this building).

After 40 metres, *at a footpath junction* (with a double mini pylon pole on your left-hand side), *veer right with a signpost on the right ('Church Road 2/3 mile'), along a car wide footpath, along the left side of a golf course*, with a hedgerow on your left, your initial direction 220 degrees. After 230 metres, where the hedgerow gives out, continue in roughly the same direction (now 205 degrees) through the golf course on a car wide grass path, following the yellow arrows. In 400 metres you cross a red sand shingle golf track and continue in the same direction with a raised green on your left, and in 40 metres curve to the left with a marker post towards a gap in a high hedgerow. In 40 metres, *immediately before the gap, turn right to go along the edge of the golf course* with the high hedgerow on your left, your direction west (the footpath joining through the gap is the afternoon return route).

In 200 metres go through a wooden kissing gate at the corner of the golf course and turn right along a lane. After 15 metres turn left through a gap to the left of a metal fieldgate along a footpath across a field (initially with high evergreens on your left-hand side, then along a wide grassy path), your direction 290 degrees. In 500 metres, on the far side of the field, continue on the footpath down through a wood ignoring paths off to left and right. After 75 metres the footpath swings to the left and then levels out after a further 50 metres. In 30m the path then begins to curve to the right and ascend, your direction 280 degrees. After 20 metres ignore an unmarked footpath to the left to continue ahead, your direction 290 degrees. In 90 metres you emerge from the wood into a field to continue in the same direction with a wooden fence on your right hand side. After 75 metres continue in the same direction where the fence veers right and in 110 metres, at the end of the field, *turn left over a stile in a wooden fence and turn right along a path to in 15 metres go over a stile to the left*

*of a metal fieldgate and turn left down a wide stepped earth footpath between garden fences.*

In 90 metres the path levels out and in 40 metres you *go through a metal horse blocking barrier to reach a main road* (with the **Bulls Head** pub on your right-hand side). You are now in Pratt's Bottom. Cross the road to *veer right across a green*, your direction west. After 60 metres (by Forge Cottages) turn left up a lane and after a further 25 metres fork left up a poorly maintained (initially) tarmac car wide track (a bridleway, signed 'Knockholt 2 m'), your direction 190 degrees.

*After 100 metres the track veers right by a signpost and in another 200m it turns to an earthen track (by a last house on the right). In 450 metres* the bridleway comes out to a road at a three-way junction. *Turn right down the road and after 160 metres*, where the road descends more steeply, ignore a metal gate to your left and *fork left down a slip road for 40 metres to then turn left up a lane* and across a cattle grid. Once the lane levels out you can see the skyline of Canary Wharf and The City on the right. After 450 metres (having passed through Norsted Manor Farm buildings), you turn left with the lane towards 'Sumachs', by the metal gate entrance to Norsted Manor on your right,. In 120 metres, *just before the entrance to 'Sumachs' ahead, turn right* with a signpost along a grassy strip and in 50 metres turn left with a signpost to go over a stile after 25 metres, to then veer slightly left down a field, your direction 250 degrees.

In 180 metres at the bottom of this scenic U-shaped valley go through a derelict wooden kissing gate as the footpath starts to ascend. After 120 metres go through a wooden kissing gate and up into a wood. In 80 metres at a path T-junction *turn half-right up a bridleway*. After 45 metres ignore a footpath to the left and continue through what is now a wooded field border. *In 350 metres* at a path junction by a three way path signpost, *turn right up a fenced in bridleway* across fields, your initial direction 300 degrees. The path goes through a few turns and after 700 metres you *come out to a lane junction. Continue straight down* a lane, your direction still 300 degrees. *In 200 metres at a T-junction, turn right with a yellow marker on the left and after 10 metres turn left* through a metal kissing gate to go along the left hand side of a field.

In 350 metres you go under some HV cables with a pylon tower immediately on your left. After a further 40 metres *go through wooden posts into a wood (part*

of High Elm Country Park) and follow the footpath uphill past an info panel. You cross a couple of tracks on the ascent through the wood and after 220 metres at a footpath junction by the edge of the wood, go through a gap to the left of a horse blocking barrier, and up the right-hand side of a field bordered by the wood, your direction west. In 100 metres at the corner of the wood, continue up across the field aiming to the right of an HV pylon tower, in the same direction (west). In 160 metres go under some HV cables and after a further 120 metres cross into the next field through a metal fieldgate to go diagonally across this field aiming for the far corner.

After 160 metres cross a stile to the right of a metal fieldgate and turn left up a road. In 100 metres where the road swings to the left, turn right into Mill Lane. Then in 10 metres turn left onto a shingle path, a signposted bridleway. In 10 metres you go through a metal kissing gate and continue along the bridleway parallel to the road. In 200 metres go through a metal kissing gate onto a tarmac path along the left-hand side of Downe recreation ground. After 120 metres veer left (to the right of a car blocking barrier) to leave the recreation ground and continue along the pavement. After 90 metres pass the lych-gate entrance to a churchyard on your right-hand side.

*In 100 metres*

(i) If stopping at the Queens Head turn right down a concrete alleyway leading to the **Queens Head**. Coming out of the entrance to the Queens Head cross over and go up Luxted Road in the direction of Down House, your direction 230 degrees.

(ii) Otherwise continue ahead past the church to reach a t-junction. Turn right and the **George and Dragon** is immediately on your left. Coming out of the entrance of the George and Dragon turn left for 30 metres to turn left up Luxted Road in the direction of Down House, your direction 230 degrees.

After 100 metres turn left along a footpath between gardens. After 80 metres continue along the left-hand edge of a field, following it round to the right after 90 metres, then after a further 30 metres turn left into the next field. Turn right along the right-hand side of this field, your direction 190 degrees. In 120 metres at the right-hand corner of the field, continue ahead into the next field and take the right-hand fork of two paths, due south, near the right-hand side of the field. In 100 metres if you wish to visit Down House turn right through a metal kissing gate; otherwise continue along the footpath, which now veers left away from the edge of the field towards a metal kissing gate in

the far left-hand corner of the field (signed 'Cudham 1 ¼ m').

In 100 metres go through the kissing gate and in 20 metres, turn right along a footpath with a large black metal corrugated barn on your left. After 80 metres, having crossed diagonally over a farm track turn left along the left-hand side of a field, your direction east. In 80 metres follow the field corner round to right. After 120 metres at a footpath crosspaths, turn left along an initially fenced in footpath along the right-hand side of a field, your direction 110 degrees. In 250 metres go through a fence gap to go down into a wood. After 250 metres go down some steps and turn right down Cudham Road. In 50 metres just after a white coal post on your right-hand side, follow a footpath signpost over a stile on the right into a field and veer left down across it, your direction 120 degrees. (Ignore a bridleway on the left on the edge of the field.) After 230 metres cross a stile and turn right up a fenced in bridleway, your direction 150 degrees.

In 600 metres go up some steps to turn left onto a road. In 20 metres at a road T-junction turn right uphill along Church Hill to reach a crossroads after 40 metres. Cross the road and continue up Church Approach and in 60 metres go into the churchyard of St Peter and St Paul Church, Cudham. Follow the tarmac footpath round to the right-hand side of the church, passing by the main entrance to the church, to leave the churchyard after 100 metres, next to a four-way footpath signpost. Veer right across a sports field aiming just to the right of two large trees on the far side, your direction 120 degrees. After 160 metres, at the far side of the field, go along an enclosed footpath. After 90 metres go through a metal kissing gate into a field to go diagonally across it, your direction 130 degrees. After 150 metres cross a stile into the next field and continue in the same direction, aiming for a set of metal gates either side of a farm track which after 100 metres you go through the gates into the next field to continue in the same direction towards its far corner.

In 120 metres go through a metal kissing gate and turn left along a lane. After 200 metres you pass Cacket's Farm on your left-hand side as the lane starts to descend. In a further 60 metres, where the lane swings to the right, continue straight ahead over a stile and across a field. After 90 metres cross over a stile to go up into a wood. In 15 metres ignore a turn to the left (parallel to the field) to continue up an indistinct path with a yellow marker on a tree, your direction 100 degrees. Follow more yellow markers on trees and in 40 metres the path veers ever so slightly to the left and after a further 35 metres turn

right up an enclosed footpath along the edge of the wood (on your right-hand side).

After 300 metres the path reaches a lane. *Turn left* and in 160 metres continue ahead at a crossroads, (initially) down the lane. There is a slight dip in the road. In 500 metres *at the next and larger dip of the lane, turn left* over a stile (to the left of a metal fieldgate) and turn half right up across a field (immediately passing under some mini pylon cables), your direction 80 degrees. In 180 metres on the far side of the field, veer right to go up the left-hand side of the field with a fence on your left (and a large field beyond it) and some trees on your right, your direction 115 degrees. In 200 metres at the top left-hand corner of the field, go over a stile to come out onto a sand shingle driveway.

Veer right past a redundant stile and across a field, your direction 100 degrees, towards [St. Katherine's church](#), Knockholt. In 120 metres go over a stile to enter the churchyard. Having visited the church, cross back over the stile to go directly ahead, north for 100 metres to cross a stile in the right-hand corner (with utility buildings on the right-hand side).

Continue along a shingle track with a 2-metre high brick wall on your right-hand side. After 180 metres at the right-hand field corner exit over a stile, and go down the right-hand side of the next field, your direction 10 degrees.

In 200 metres cross a stile at the right-hand field corner, and veer left down across the middle of the next field, your direction 350 degrees, aiming for a set of trees a little taller than the others at the bottom of the field. In 50 metres you can spot part of a fallen tree on the ground in front of those trees (struck by lightning at some point).

After 200 metres, just to the left of that tree part, *leave this field on a path that goes down through a wooded boundary. In 25 metres go over a stile* into the next field *and turn left* down its left-hand edge, your direction 300 degrees (i.e. ignore the signed right turning footpath to Knockholt Pound). In 100 metres at the bottom left-hand corner of the field, go over a stile to cross a car wide track under mini pylon cables and go over a stile to go up a footpath through a wooded area, your direction 320 degrees. After 40 metres the path joins a field on your left (footpath fenced in). In 60 metres ignore a stile to your left and turn right along the left-hand side of a field, your direction north.

In 400 metres, at the corner of the field, cross over a stile to the left of a metal fieldgate and after a further 25 metres cross another stile to follow a path through a wood. After 250 metres cross over a stile to leave the wood to emerge into a field to go along its right-hand side, your direction 10 degrees. After 180 metres go through a metal gate and after 25 metres turn right along a lane.

In 200 metres ignore a footpath on your left-hand side as the lane swings to the right. After a further 140 metres *turn right along Perrys Lane*, your direction 120 degrees, (ignoring Fairthrough Road half left). *After 200 metres where the lane starts to curve to the right* and descend more steeply, *turn left over a stile* to go along a fenced in footpath, your direction 10 degrees (signed 'Pratts Bottom 1½ m'). *After 170 metres turn right over a stile down through a wood.* After 140 metres exit the wood over a stile to go up the right-hand side of a field, your direction east. In 200 metres *at the right-hand field corner*, go over a stile and turn left down a fenced in footpath, your direction 30 degrees (a mini pylon cable run to your left-hand side).

After 300 metres go through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a metal fieldgate and *turn right up a lane*. In 70 metres the lane joins a main road, which you cross.

If you want to visit [Arthurs Coffee Shop at Coolings Nurseries](#) (a possible tea stop), turn right along the grass verge on the left-hand side of the main road for 40 metres to reach the main entrance to Coolings. (Arthurs is reached through the main sales building and then a further 100 metres through the outdoor nursery.)

Otherwise follow an unmarked footpath along a bricked driveway past Finstock House, your direction 70 degrees. After 50 metres cross over a stile to continue along a fenced in footpath. In 350 metres cross over a stile and after 10 metres veer left with the footpath, your direction 60 degrees, with a wood on your right and a field beyond a fence on your left.

In 40 metres where the path forks, *fork right down through the wood* with a marker post. On emerging from the wood in 90 metres turn left to continue down a narrow grassy field between wooded strips, veering to the right, to diagonally cross the sloping field. In 125 metres pass a yellow marker post on the right at the wooded fringe to then cross the valley bottom and to re-ascend along a narrow footpath up through shrubland with another marker post, your direction 30 degrees. You cross a grassy track in the

shrubland and in 130 metres at the top, emerge into a grassy area by a footpath fork. [Note: the yellow markers on a post are NOT giving the correct directions of the two footpaths, ignore them.]

If you want to visit The Rose & Crown or The Cock Inn follow the directions at (i) below, otherwise pick up the directions at the asterisk [\*] below.

(i) Turn right through the grassy area between some young trees on the left and a wooded strip on the right (130 degrees). In 75 metres by the last of the low trees on the left, turn left to cross the grassy area towards a gap in a row of low trees on the other side (due E). In 40 metres walk through the gap to cross a path and go over a stile by a signpost and a marker post. Walk along a narrow path with a hedge on the left and a barbed wire fence on the right, your direction 60 degrees. In 130 metres emerge by a concrete footpath marker stone on Church Road in Halstead village and turn right along its pavement. In 230 metres you reach a four-way road junction. **The Rose & Crown** is 90 metres along the road opposite (Otford Lane). **The Cock Inn** is 80 metres on the left along Station Road.

[Allow at least 30 minutes to walk to Knockholt station from either pub.

Retrace your steps to the four-way junction and down Church Road, but continue along the road in 230 metres where you emerged from a narrow footpath to in another 200 metres meet the main walk route, which joins from the left through a wooden fieldgate. Continue along the pavement and follow the walk directions below from the double asterisk [\*\*] below.]

[\*]Take the left fork, your direction 60 degrees. In 80 metres turn left over a stile, now with green creosote garden fencing on your right-hand side, to cross a small field, your direction north. In 120 metres go through a wooden gate to the left of a wooden fieldgate onto Church Road. *Turn left along a pavement.*

[\*\*]After 20 metres a footpath on the left leads to the graveyard and remains of St. Margarets Church. In another 180 metres turn right along a footpath marked with a footpath sign ('Knockholt Station 1 mile') on the left-hand side of a field. In 120 metres by the corner of a cemetery on your left-hand side, cross over into the next field on the left to continue in the same direction along the right-hand side of this field. After 170 metres go through a hedge gap back into the golf course you walked through at the start of the walk. Continue ahead across the golf course. The path veers to the left in 20 metres, along the left-hand

side of a (raised) green in front of you. You now retrace your steps back to Knockholt station from the start of the walk.

In more detail: Continue ahead crossing a red sand shingle golf track after 50 metres. In 450 metres you veer left to continue in the same direction now with a high hedgerow on your right-hand side. In 200 metres at the end of the golf course, after a further 40 metres you reach a footpath junction (with a double mini pylon pole on your right-hand side). Continue in the same direction and in 25 metres continue ahead past a marker post where the track turns left. Follow the footpath, which curves to the left through a grassy area, around a large green corrugated metal building off to your left.

Continue along this footpath, which curves to the right in 150 metres, downhill aiming towards a kissing gate leading onto the Sevenoaks Road. In 140 metres go through the kissing gate and turn left along the Sevenoaks Road. After 50 metres turn right down the station driveway to reach **Knockholt station**.

#### **Lunch and Tea places:**

**The George & Dragon** *High Street, Downe, BR6 7UT (01689 889030)*. Food served noon – 2.30pm Mon–Tue, noon – 8.30pm Wed–Sat and noon – 6.00pm Sun. Located 7.7 km from the start of the walk, this is the suggested lunch stop if dining outside.

**The Queens Head** *High Street, Downe, BR6 7US (01689 852145)*. Food served all day every day. Located 7.7 km from the start of the walk, this is the suggested lunch stop if dining inside.

**Arthur's Coffee Shop & Restaurant** *Coolings Nurseries, Rushmore Hill, TN14 7NN (01959 532269)*. Food served 9.00am – 4.30pm daily. Located 2.6km from the end of the walk. Possible tea stop.

**The Rose and Crown** *Otford Lane, Halstead, TN14 7EA (01959 533120)*. Food served – check times. Located 2km from the end of the walk. Possible tea stop, 600 metres off route.

**The Cock Inn** *Shoreham Lane, Halstead, TN14 7DD (01959 533171)*. Food served Wed - Sat 6.00 – 9.00pm. Located 2km from the end of the walk. Possible tea stop, 600 metres off route.