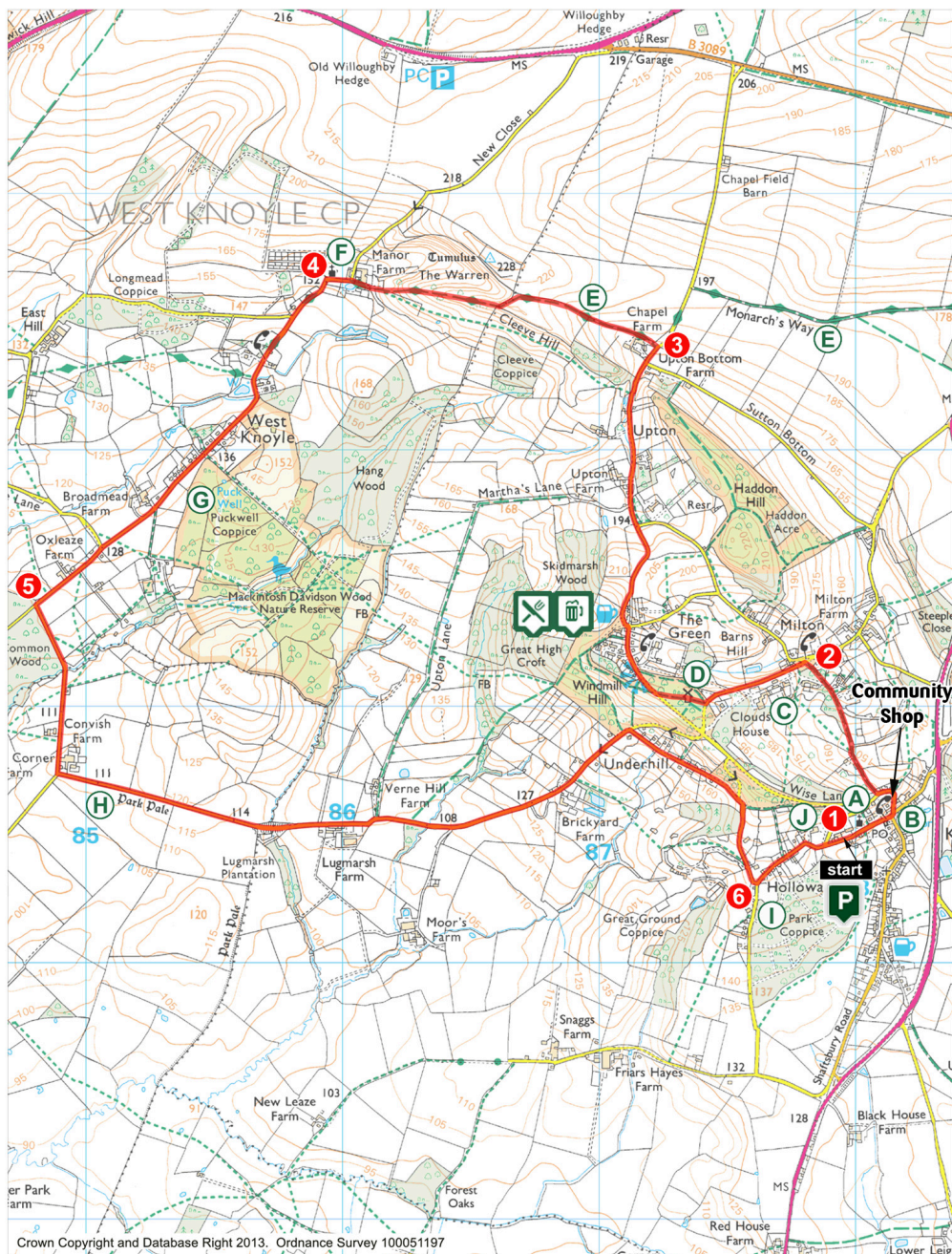


# Walk 11: Walking the Knoyles in the footsteps of Sir Christopher Wren

**Length of Walk**  
5.5 miles (8.8km)

**Ordnance Survey map:** Explorer 118  
**Walk Start:** ST 87964 30487



## Key

- Walk route with waypoint
- Parking
- Pub
- Place to eat
- Historic Site
- Nature Reserve
- Point of Interest

**Distance:** 5.5 miles (8.8km)  
**Time:** Allow 3 hrs  
**Terrain:** Mostly country lanes with easy gradients, some field paths and tracks, muddy in places. 1 steep off road descent. No stiles.

**Start:** East Knoyle Village Hall Car-park, Church Lane, East Knoyle SP3 6AE.  
For groups; please check availability of car-park in advance by tel. 01747 830143. A small donation per person is welcome. Please post donations through the letterbox in the white door on the side of the building bordering the car-park  
**Start Grid Reference:**  
**X :** 387964  
**Y :** 130487  
**Latitude :** 51.073584  
**Longitude :** -2.1731666  
ST 87964 30487

**OS Explorer Map (1:25 000)**  
Shaftesbury & Cranborne Chase No. 118

**Notes & Refreshments:**  
The Fox and Hounds pub, East Knoyle

Discover picturesque East Knoyle, a village steeped in history. It was the birthplace of famous architect Sir Christopher Wren, born in 1632, and who continued living in the village until 1647. Wren designed St Paul's Cathedral and other famous buildings in London. The village was also visited by Henry VIII during his courtship with his third wife Jane Seymour. Explore the undulating narrow lanes of East and West Knoyle, Saxon churches, a former windmill and enjoy breath-taking views on this outstanding circular walk.

1. Turn L out of East Knoyle Village Hall car-park onto Church Road heading towards the centre of the village passing the Saxon Church of St Mary's on the R. Continue straight on past Wrens Community Shop on your R. Turn L up Wise Lane and follow the lane as it bears L. Just past the cottage numbered 116, take the first R along bridleway. Continue along the bridleway keeping between fields and carry straight on towards New Road. Go through a metal gate and bear R. Do not go L past the Estate Office buildings. Go straight ahead down towards the phone box.

2. Turn L along New Road going uphill passing Clouds House on the L. At the top of the hill, bear R along track to a beautifully preserved windmill without its sails called The Throdmill. Continue along the track in front of the windmill bearing R across the open-space along Wise Lane. Continue straight ahead following the lane past the 17th Century thatched Fox and Hounds pub on the R where you can stop for refreshments. Continue through the tiny hamlet of Upton and past the lane called Sutton Bottom on the R.

3. Just past Chapel Farmhouse which dates back to the 1600s, turn L and take the track forking R along the Monarchs Way (This section is off road and can be muddy). Bear L at the far edge of Cleeve Hill. Follow the edge of the field with The Warren to your R. This was an area once used by the Normans to farm rabbits. Go through the gate in the corner of the field and begin the steep descent to Manor Farm (take care as this can be slippery). Enjoy the attractive views of open countryside. Turn R through gate through farmyard.

4. From Manor Farm, bear L into The Street which you will follow through the village of West Knoyle. St Mary the Virgin Church on R is well worth a short detour. After visiting the church, continue straight ahead through West Knoyle village for half a mile passing the opening on the L to the Woodland Trust Nature Reserve Puckwell Coppice and Mackintosh Davidson Wood (a large area of ancient semi natural woodland).

5. Continue past Oxleaze Farm on the R and at the entrance to Bush Farm Bison Centre Visitor Attraction take a L turn skirting the boundary of Common Wood along the lane. At Park Corner Farm, take a L turn immediately after the farm passing Park Pale. Continue straight along past Lugmarsh Farm/Diary and Brickyard Farm on the R towards the hamlet of Underhill. Brickyard Farm is now called Windmill Farm but bricks were manufactured here up to and including the 1800s. Continue through the hamlet of Underhill following the road. Ignore first turning along lane on L. After this turning, the road bears R, carry

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straight on to end of the lane where it joins Holloway Lane.

6. Take a sharp turning L onto Holloway Lane and through the hamlet of Holloway past Park Coppice on the R heading back to the village of East Knoyle. Continue along Church Road past the impressive former home of the Wren family, Knoyle Rectory, now called Knoyle Place on your L. Further along on the L is the former village school, and opposite a 1300 thatched deer keeper's hut. Admire the beautiful oriental style windows of the former school reminiscent of houses in the Middle East. Return to East Knoyle Village Hall and car-park next to the former school.

### Countryside Code

- **Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs**
- **Leave gates and property as you find them.**
- **Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home.**
- **Keep dogs under close control**
- **Consider other people**



### Points of Interest

**A The Saxon Church of St Mary's.** This has been the heart of the village for over 1,000 years and well worth a visit. The plasterwork in the chancel is unique and designed by Sir Christopher Wren's father who was appointed rector in 1623.

**B Haslam's Shop.** Opposite the Community Shop in front of the children's play-area, you will find a plinth marking the spot where Sir Christopher Wren was born. The Wren family home was Knoyle Rectory (now Knoyle Place) along Church Road, but when a fire broke out, the Rector and his wife moved to Haslam's Shop (formerly a draper's shop) on the corner of Wise Lane where their famous son was born. It was demolished in 1878 due to road widening.

**C Clouds House.** Home of the influential Wyndham family during the 19th Century and early 20th Century. It was designed by Philip Webb for Percy Wyndham, a politician and one of the original members of 'The Souls' (an aristocratic social political debating group) and is one of Webb's grandest designs. Now the building is a famous drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre.

**D The Throdmill.** The name of The Windmill which stands majestically on Windmill Hill. It dates back to the 1800s but its origins are much earlier. Two sail-yards (the arms of the windmill to which the sails were attached) were bought for its predecessor in 1377. It ceased being a working windmill in about 1930 and is now a private residence. Also, rest a while to admire the heart stopping views across the Blackmore Vale in Dorset or enjoy a picnic. It has always been a popular place for picnics; in the 1800s, evangelists would travel from miles to preach here at church picnics.

**E The Monarch's Way.** A long distance footpath along which King Charles II escaped following the Civil War in the 17th Century.

**F St Mary the Virgin Church.** Late 12th Century/early 13th Century. Spot the rude gargyle adorning the tower on the corner of the church directly opposite the main entrance!

**G Puckwell Coppice and Mackintosh Davidson Wood.** A nature reserve owned by the Woodland Trust. If you have time, it is worth exploring the network of permissive routes. Puckwell Coppice has a pagan well. 'Puca' is old English for hobgoblin, in folklore, a well dwelling mischievous creature and the saying goes that the well here remains a goblin's well as it was never blessed by the church. Farmers would leave bread and milk out for Puck in order to prevent bad luck falling on their family and farm.

**H Park Pale.** This marks the boundary of a Medieval deer park, an enclosed area for deer bounded by a ditch and bank with wooden fence of stakes on top to stop them escaping.

**I Park Coppice Woods.** These woods hold a tragic secret. About one-third of the population of the village were lost to the Black Death in 1663 and many were buried in a plague pit in these woods.

**J Knoyle Rectory.** Now called Knoyle Place, former home of the Wren family. The elegant Georgian portion was built in 1799.