

Points of Interest on this route (see map overleaf for locations)

A The Saxon Church of St Mary's has been the heart of the village for over 1000 years and is well worth visiting. The plasterwork in the chancel is unique and was designed by Sir Christopher Wren's father, who was appointed rector in 1623.

B Wren's Shop, in the centre of the village, is run by the local community and is staffed mainly by volunteers. Opposite the shop and in front of the children's play area, a plinth bearing a memorial to Sir Christopher Wren stood until it was replaced in 2023 by a new sculpture, **The Wren Stone**, which was created by John Maine, a Royal Academician who has lived in East Knoyle for over 30 years.

Sir Christopher Wren, best known as the architect of London's St Paul's Cathedral was born in the village, in 1632. The family home was originally Knoyle Rectory, now Knoyle Place, but when a fire broke out they moved to Haslam's Shop (formerly a draper's shop) on the corner of Wise Lane, where Sir Christopher was born. He became a man of many talents; in addition to being an architect he was also an astronomer, mathematician and physicist.

C Clouds House was designed by Philip Webb for Percy Wyncham, a politician who was one of the original members of 'The Souls', an aristocratic social political debating group. One of Webb's grandest designs, Clouds House is now a rehabilitation centre for sufferers from a variety of additions.

D The Wren Stone



D The Thredwell Windmill (cover image) stands majestically on Windmill Hill, facing west from the top of the escarpment over the Blackmore Vale. The present tower dates back to the 1800's but it has much earlier origins. Two sailyards, the arms to which the sails were attached, were purchased for its predecessor in 1377. It ceased being a working windmill in about 1930.

E The Monarchs Way long-distance footpath echoes the route along which King Charles II escaped following the Civil War in the 17th century.

F The church of St. Mary the Virgin is late 12th or early 13th century. Spot the rude gargoyles adorning the tower on the corner of the church directly opposite the main entrance.

G The nature reserve of Puckwell Coppice and Mackintosh Davidson Wood is owned by the Woodland Trust. If you have time, divert from the public footpath to explore the network of permissive paths. Puck is old English for hobgoblin, and it is said that a pagan well, within the coppice, 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 from falling on their family and farm.



Church of St. Mary the Virgin, West Knoyle

Explore West Knoyle where Sir Christopher Wren, who designed St. Paul's Cathedral, was born and grew up, and neighbouring East Knoyle. Discover the rolling hills, lanes and fields of this of this pretty countryside, with some stunning long-distance views.

Start: The village hall in East Knoyle. Ordnance Survey Explorer Series Map 143. OS Grid Reference ST879304 | W3W [tribe.showcases.reduce](https://www.tribe.showcases.reduce)

Parking: The village hall car park in East Knoyle. NB: Please donate 50 pence for the upkeep of the Village Hall and car park, through the letter box

Terrain: Quiet lanes and grassy paths. Mostly easy gradients, some short steep climbs and one steep off-road descent. Several gates, no stiles.

Length: Approximately 5.75 miles / 9.2 km.

Approximate time: 3 hours.

Dogs: Please keep on short lead if livestock is present.

Good to know: Between Cleeve Hill and Manor Farm, the path is along a narrow partially sunken lane along the woodland edge. The growth of natural vegetation in the summer months can be rapid and becomes waist high, so the wearing of long trousers rather than shorts is recommended. The byway along Upton Lane is used by farm vehicles and horse-riders and may be rutted and muddy in periods of wet weather.

Refreshments: Wrens Community Shop in East Knoyle. The Fox and Hounds Public House, The Green, East Knoyle.

The information is only intended as a general guide. Please check local arrangements.



Respect everyone
Protect the environment
Enjoy the outdoors
Follow advice and local signs

Share your pictures with us at [#cranbornechase](https://www.cranbornechase.org.uk)



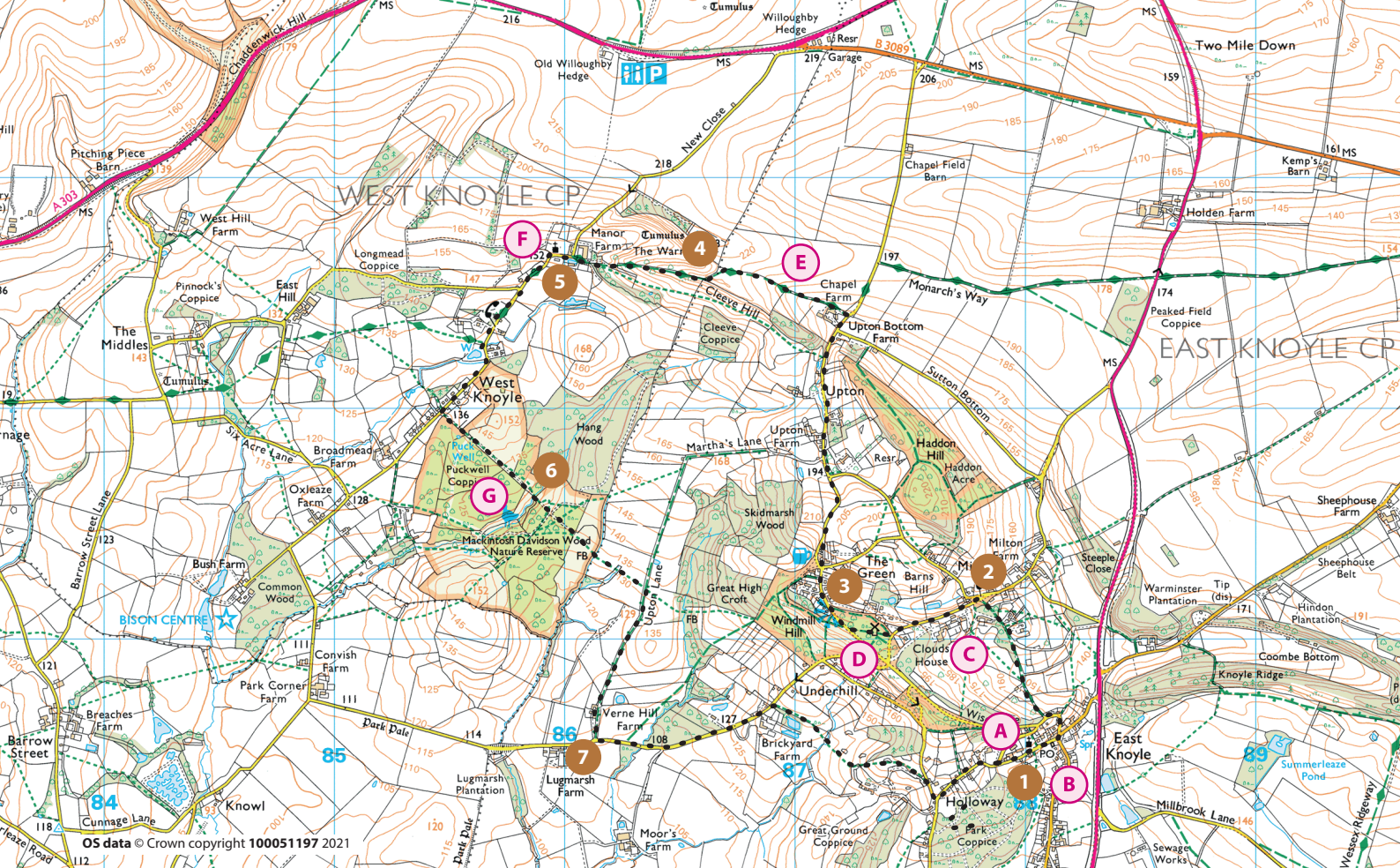
[cranbornechase.org.uk](https://www.cranbornechase.org.uk)



Walking the Knoyles Discovering the birthplace of Sir Christopher Wren

WALK #
W11





Directions

1 Turn left out of the village hall car park onto Church Road, past the Saxon church of St. Mary and then Wrens Community Shop in the centre of the village. Turn left, uphill into Wise Lane. Just past the cottage numbered 116 turn right onto the public bridleway. Go downhill past Wise House on the left then straight ahead up the hill on the bridleway. Just before the stone built Clouds Stables, fork right downhill to meet the road opposite the red telephone kiosk.

2 Turn left, uphill along the road, past Clouds Hill on the left. Just past the entrance to 'Throdmill Cottage', turn right onto a short path through the trees which leads to Windmill Hill and the restored tower of the former windmill and across the open grassland of Windmill Hill to meet the road, with extensive views to the west.

3 Turn right and stay on the road, passing the Fox and Hounds public house. Crest the hill and drop down past Upton Manor and Upton Farm. Pass the road to the right signposted to Milton, and just past Chapel Farm on the left follow the wall around onto a rough track to the left which climbs to a gate into a field. Keep straight ahead with the hedge on your right, up onto Cleeve Hill. Through a gap in the hedge at the top of the hill, there are superb views down over The Warren and over the church of St. Mary the Virgin to the Stourhead Estate where on the skyline is the distinctive shape of Alfred's Tower.

4 In the top corner of the field, a gate bears a waymark for 'The Monarch's Way' through which a narrow path leads steeply down to Manor Farm and through the farmyard to the road, which leads straight ahead to the church. Making a detour into the churchyard is well worthwhile, and if you are ready for a break there are several memorial benches on which to take a deserved rest.

5 When you are ready follow the road into the beautifully kept village. Pass the village hall and then take the left turn onto the public footpath that leads to a gate into The Woodland Trust's Puckwell Coppice and Mackintosh Davidson Nature Reserve. Follow the concrete track through another gate and continue straight ahead along path at the edge of the field. At the end of the field, continue straight ahead through two more gates. The concrete track climbs steeply to the top of the rise; if the surface is wet or icy it is likely to be slippery so you may wish to walk on the grass to the side.

6 From the top of the rise, follow the path straight ahead across the reserve, through two more gates then over a footbridge before going straight ahead across a field passing to the left of the end of a fenced-off belt of trees to a pedestrian gate onto Upton Lane, a grassy byway. Turn right along the byway, which is used by farm vehicles and can be rutted and muddy in periods of wet weather, all the way to meet the road at Verne Hill Farm.

7 Turn left along the road and climb steadily uphill to pass a modern housing development to the right of the road at the site of what was originally Brickfields Farm. Bricks were manufactured here upto and into the 1800's. Look for a wooden fingerpost bearing the letters 'FP' and turn right off the road through a gap in the hedge onto a footpath between fences, to a gate into a field. Turn left to reach two more gates, then go straight uphill beside the hedge of the next field to another gate into the top corner. Bear diagonally to the left uphill through another field and then around a gentle arc to the right to go though a gate onto the driveway to the house that can be seen below to the left, named Lower Lye. Bear left to reach the road. Turn right along the road then around a sharp bend to the left. The road passes through the hamlet of Holloway, then downhill to the right to pass the impressive former home of the Wren family, now known as Knoyle Place, on the left. Continue downhill to return to the village hall in East Knoyle.