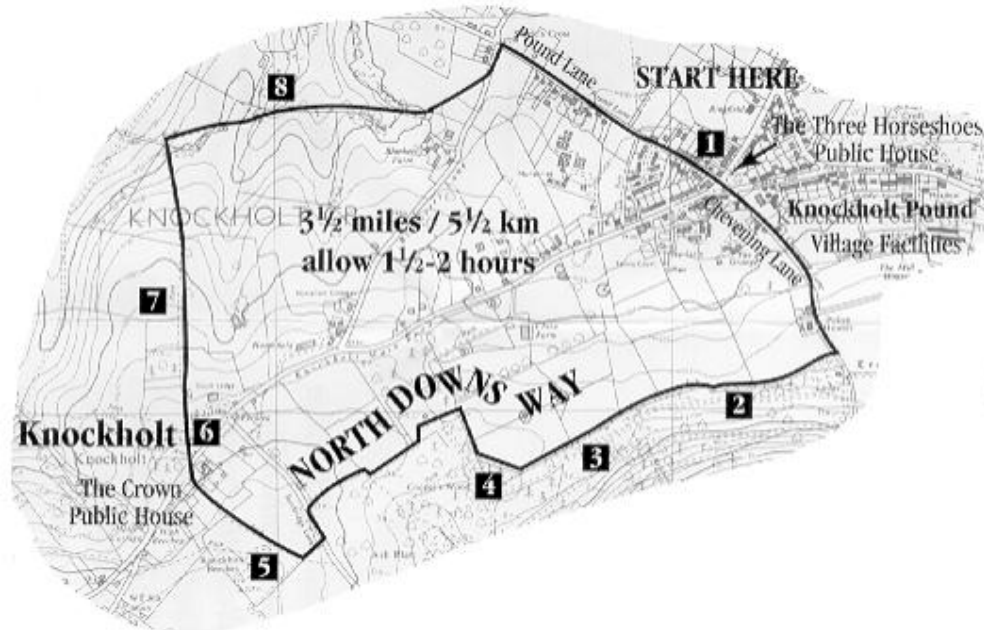


NORTH DOWNS WAY WALKS

Knockholt



This walk explores the North Downs around the villages of Knockholt and Knockholt Pound, close the boundary between Kent and Bromley. The quiet countryside belies the fact that London is only a short distance away.

Knockholt Pound may be reached by bus from Bromley and Orpington to the north and from Sevenoaks to the South (service numbers 402, R5 and R6). For Public Transport Information telephone 0800 696969 (Freephone). By kind agreement of the landlord, walkers may park cars at the Three Horseshoes in Knockholt Pound. There is very limited parking elsewhere in the village.

1. Although most of the buildings in Knockholt Pound are relatively modern, there have been settlements in the area for centuries. The name Knockholt derives from, Old English and means at the oak thicket. Village pound, used for sorting farm animals and containing strays was once a common feature of rural areas.

From The Three Horseshoes walk along Chevening Lane to the point where it is crossed by the North Downs Way. Turn right.

2. During the spring and summer an attractive range of flowers may be seen along Chevening Lane and the North Downs Way nearby. These include herb robert and herb bennet both old medicinal plants, and white archangel . In late summer scarlet pimpernel can be found with its small five petalled flowers open only during the early afternoon.

The woodland along the North Downs near Knockholt has been badly storm damaged, but there are still many mature trees on your left along this part of the North Downs

Way. Among those to be seen are Beech, Oak, Ash, Rowan, Sweet Chestnut and Sycamore, as well as the smaller Hawthorn and Elder.

3. This slot through the woodland gives a surprise view of Chevening House. There is some doubt about the precise date of Chevenings construction but it was probably built for the 13th Lord Dacre who died in 1630 and it is said to have designed by Inigo Jones. For many years it was owned by the Stanhope family and it is now the official country home of the Foreign Secretary.
4. On either side of an old gateway which used to give access to Knockholt House, there is a pair of large Copper Beech trees. These are an ornamental variety of the Common Beech seen elsewhere on the walk.

Continue to follow the North Downs Way, cross a small road and go left, then right, around a field edge. Then turn right off the National Trail past a beech copse.

5. This well-known landmark stands at 280 metres or 770 feet above sea level and can be seen for many miles around. Sadly storm damage has taken its toll of the trees in recent years.

Follow the waymarked path until you join the road near The Crown. Turn right, and cross the road to the church.

6. The flint-built church dates largely from the second half of the 13th century. It was renovated in 1834 and the south aisle was added in 1881. In the churchyard is one of the oldest yew trees in Kent, reputed to pre-date the church itself by a hundred years.

Take the footpath leading from the back of the churchyard and follow the waymarked route.

7. Despite the quiet rural surroundings, you are only about 25km or 16 miles from the centre of London. The view in front of you includes the Telecom Tower on the far left, and straight ahead the NatWest Tower in Docklands.

After passing through a copse turn right along a field edge.

8. During the spring and summer months you may hear the songs of the yellowhammer and the corn bunting in the farmland along the path. The yellowhammer's song is said to resemble the phrase 'little bit of bread and no cheese' whilst that of the corn bunting sounds rather like a bunch of keys being rattled. Both species have declined in numbers in recent years.

At the road (Blueberry Lanes turn left, then right into Pound Lane. Follow this into Knockholt Pound.