

Walks In And Around Loxley

Walk 2: Circular walk from Loxley via Ettington

Distance: 7 miles approximately

Minimum time: 3/4 hours at an easy pace (excluding food and coffee stops and time to admire the views)

Gradient: mostly gently undulating with some uphill sections

Level of difficulty: moderate but with one broken stile to climb over

Parking: There is very limited parking in Loxley but there is plenty of parking available at the lay-by at the top of Goldicote Road

Refreshments and Toilets: There are pubs in both Loxley and Ettington. There is also a general store in Ettington

Dog friendliness: as the walk crosses fields and goes through farms, dogs will need to be kept under control at all times

General Description

Without having to gain too much height this walk provides some surprisingly wide and far-reaching views over the rolling Warwickshire countryside and beyond including, on a clear day, the Malvern Hills. The walking is mainly along well signposted footpaths and over countryside terrain although there is one section along the road back into Loxley. The description of the walk starts at the Fox Inn but because it is a circular walk it can be started at any point on the circuit.

Directions

1. From the Fox walk along Goldicote Road, past the school on your right, around the bend in the road and steadily up hill until the houses on the left come to an end. A little further on, take a left turn along the public bridleway towards Ettingley Farm. You will pass a few houses on your left and have views across open fields. Eventually you will see on your left Ettingley Farm and then on your right a wood yard. Here the route becomes a grassy farm track and leads slightly downhill towards a gate at the end of the field.
2. Ignoring the track leading off to the right go through the gate and, once again going slightly downhill head for the remains of a gate which has three footpath arrows on one of its posts. Bear left and go through the gateway keeping the hedge on your left hand side.
3. Carry on along the path at the edge of the field heading for the farm buildings. You will eventually reach riding stables on your left. Go through the pedestrian gate attached to the farm gate and you will see a house on your right. Wriggle left and then right and back

on to the farm track past Whitfield Farm. Ignoring the footpath through the metal gate on your left follow the winding farm drive towards the A429.

4. When you reach the road, cross over and take the farm road to the right. You will pass a house on your left and see a brook along the side of the track. Wind your way down the track passing farm outbuildings on your right. Keep your eyes peeled for a footpath sign pointing left and leading you along the narrow gap between the brook and the back of a stable building. Another footpath sign will then take you around the back of more farm buildings and eventually back on to the farm track.

5. You will soon reach a fork in the track. Go right towards another footpath sign and over the brook. Walk along the perimeter on the field with the brook on your left.

6. Towards the end of the field the official path continues straight on through a gap in the hedge and across a gallop for horses. It then continues in a straight line across a sloping field eventually to another gap in the hedge opposite.

(Note - on the day this walk was planned the field was freshly ploughed and impassable because of the wet conditions so an alternative route is to go left at the end of the field and then right onto a track. The gallop for horses is on your right. Go along the path passing a small lake on your left. Walk along the perimeter of the field, turning a corner, until, on your left you will see a footpath sign by the gap in the hedge mentioned above. Please note that this alternative route is not a right of way).

7. The path now takes you over a rather rickety stile. Follow the path across the field and slightly up hill towards another "stile". The top of this hill makes for a good viewing point. Keep the woodland on your right and walk along the fence towards a farm gate. Just before you reach the farm gate, there is a smaller, metal gate on your right and that's the one you need to pass through.

8. Once through the gate, follow the path with the wood on your right. Where the wood ends the path looks as if it continues straight on along the line of the hedge but you need to look for a gap in the hedge on your right, go through it and follow the route veering slightly downhill to the right. Follow this path until eventually you reach a gap in a hedge. Continue through the gap and follow the path until eventually you reach a metal gate in the corner of a field. Pass through the gap on the right-hand side of the gate and proceed on to the main road.

9. When you arrive on the Ettington Road, turn right and walk along the pavement past the shop on your right and the church on your left. Cross the road just before you reach the road island and then cross the main A429 towards a footpath sign which takes you up a steep bank and away from the road. At the top of the bank and through a gap in the trees you will see a well defined farm road. Go left towards the farm.

10. Passing through the farm buildings and yard you have to look carefully for a footpath sign to the right. The sign has seen better days and is attached to a metal farm building. Walk along the farm track keeping straight on and ignoring the footpath sign on the left. Follow the farm track when it makes a sharp turn to the left and continue over the brow of the hill with a wood on your right. At the corner of the wood look for a metal kissing gate on the right. Go through the gate and walk along the pathway keeping the woodland on your right. At a T junction turn right again keeping the woodland on your right. On a clear

day you can see the familiar outline of the Malvern Hills to your left. Now it's a straight path downhill along the side of fields towards the road.

11. When you reach the road turn right and head for the main, Banbury Road. Cross over the main road and then turn left and walk along the wide green verge. You will pass Goldicote Business Park on your right before eventually reaching a signpost for Loxley. Turn right towards Loxley as indicated and take care walking back along the road into the village and back to the Fox Inn. Be careful, this road is a favourite with cyclists who enjoy the challenge of the hill one way and speeding down it the other!