

Solihull Countryside Walks

Solihull Countryside Walks

A guide to walks in the local area



Three churches walk -
Berkswell, Eastern Green and Meriden

An introduction to the three churches walk



The villages of Berkswell, Meriden and Eastern Green are found within and border an area known as the Meriden Gap, which is an area of green belt that separates the urban centres of Coventry and Birmingham. This area offers many hidden treasures, including an extensive network of public footpaths as well as visitors to the area to explore the rich countryside and history that the three villages have to offer.

The walk set out in this leaflet has been created in partnership with the three churches that form the spine of the walk, and we would invite you when completing this walk to take time to visit and enjoy the three churches, all of which are open regularly to the public.

Set out below is a brief introduction to the three villages covered in this leaflet:

Meriden: The village claims to be at the very centre of England, and a 200+ year old sandstone pillar-shaped monument to that effect stands in the centre of the village on the green. This medieval village cross is a grade II listed artefact.

Berkswell: It is believed that the village of Berkswell takes its name from a 16ft wide, stone-walled well located just outside the 12th century parish church. The stocks on the village green can still be seen today. Used for punishing petty offenders, it is claimed that these were especially built for a one-legged ex-soldier and his two drinking companions as there are only five leg holes!

Eastern Green: The origin of the name Eastern Green is unknown, but possibly the first community formed in a clearing or green amid the wooded countryside. Part of the parish of Allesley, Eastern Green had an interesting network of highways, the majority of which have disappeared as roads, many having been preserved as public footpaths. One of these was mentioned by John Ogilby in his road map of 1675, this being Sherles or Sherley's Lane from Pickford Grange Farm to Back Lane and it is interesting to note that the name has been preserved at the Berkswell end.

Points of interest

- 1 St. Andrew's, Eastern Green** This late Victorian church, now on the very edge of the City of Coventry, was built as part of a suite of buildings including the School, Vicarage and stable block. They provided a focal point for what was a small, but growing, hamlet. The church is still an important building in its community and local history is celebrated and explored here. The churchyard is a haven for wildlife.
 - 2 St. John Baptist, Berkswell** St. John's is one of the finest Grade I churches in the country in a rural setting, with fine examples of wood carving by the 'mousterman' Robert Thompson. The ancient Norman crypt is a peaceful haven for visitors especially on a warm summer's day - pilgrims have been coming here for centuries - and the churchyard leads onto excellent footpaths across farmland.
 - 3 St. Laurence, Meriden** Its hill top setting means that fantastic views can be enjoyed from the Churchyard at St. Laurence church. It is thought that the original church was founded by Lady Godiva who owned the manor here. Inside is a magnificent alms chest dating from 1627 and the Arts and Crafts stained glass, much of it made by studios in Smethwick in Birmingham, is particularly fine. Ancient monuments dating from the 1400s remind us that this is a place steeped in history.
- Countryside code**
- When using these walks, please respect, protect and enjoy the countryside you pass through. You can do this by:
- Being 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

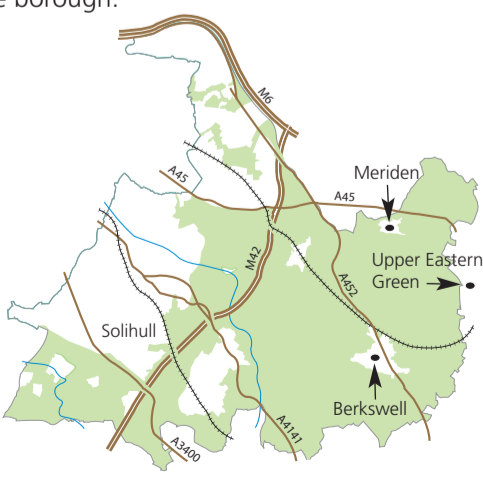
Three churches walk

How to get there

The walk described in this leaflet will take you around the three parish churches of Eastern Green, Berkswell and Meriden as well as giving you an opportunity to explore the villages and their surrounding countryside.

The route is clearly waymarked and look out for the traditional Oak fingerposts which mark the start of the footpaths and bridleways within the borough, including the routes that you will follow as part of this leaflet.

The walk is broken into three sections, with each varying in distance and terrain. There are stiles on each section of the route, but we have attempted to describe the walks as accurately as possible so that you can decide whether they are suitable for you. Please look out for a number of other walks leaflets which are available covering neighbouring areas which you may like to enjoy. There are also leaflets available setting out walks within the borough's parks available from tourist information centres and libraries across the borough.



Produced in conjunction with the Clergy and Church Wardens at the three churches and the Divine Inspiration Project at the Diocese of Coventry.

Three churches walk - Berkswell, Eastern Green and Meriden

You can start this walk at any of the three churches described in this leaflet. All three villages are conveniently located off the A45 and are approximately 5 miles from junction 6 of the M42.

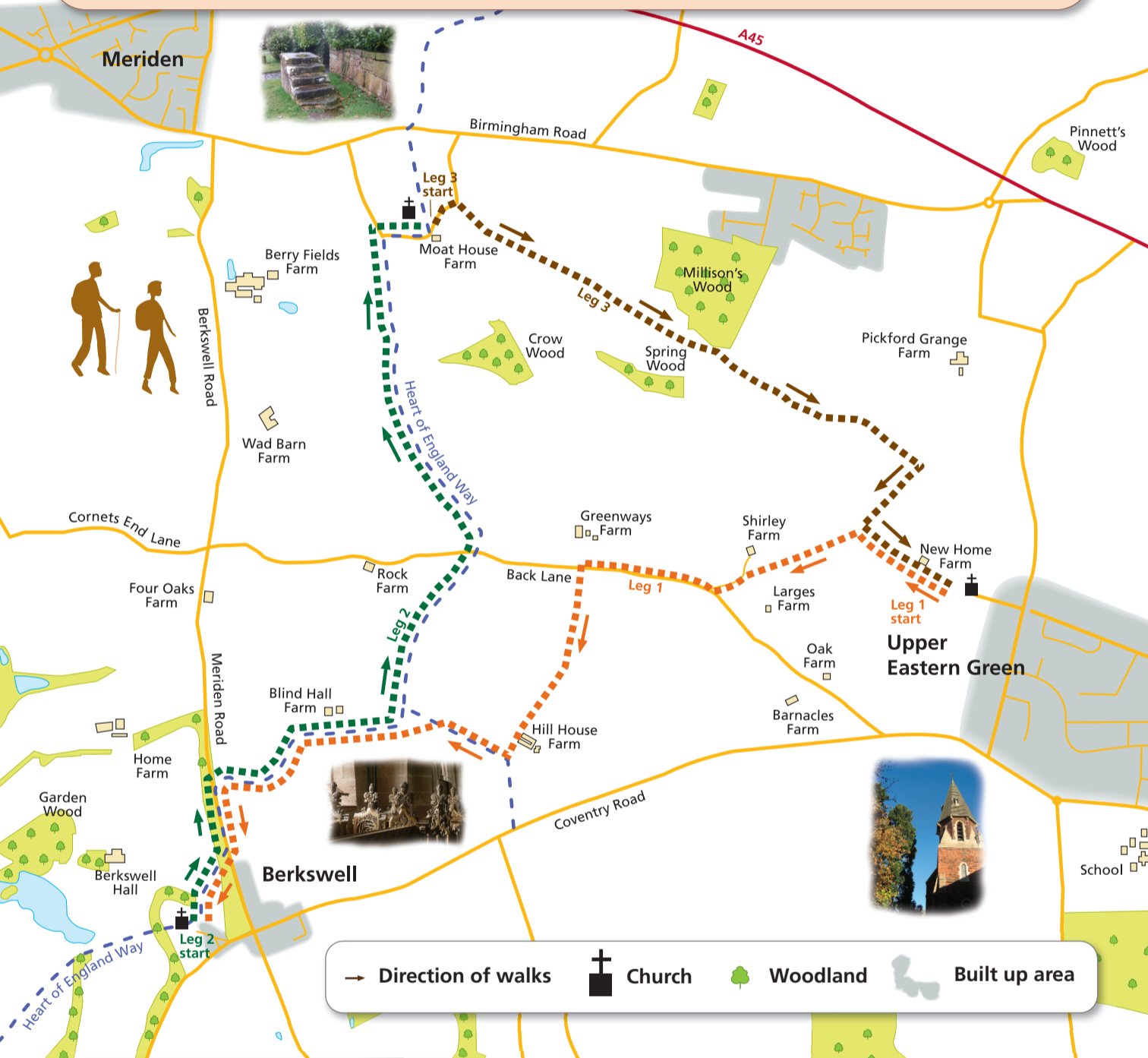
For further information on public transport links with these locations, please contact Traveline West Midlands on 0871 200 22 33 or at <http://www.travelinewestmidlands.co.uk>. If you are travelling by car, remember that parking may be limited within the villages and so please park considerately.

Leg 1 Eastern Green to Berkswell

Approximate distance: 2.5 miles **Approximate time: 1 - 1.5 hours**

From Eastern Green Church continue along Church Lane to Home Farm. Proceed through the farmyard and continue on through two fields. On entering the third field, turn left and head for a gate sited 30m from the corner of the field. Proceed through the next field and onto Shirley Lane. At the end of the lane, turn right on to Back Lane.

Taking care, follow Back Lane for half a mile. 60m after passing Greenways Farm Shop on your right, leave the road and take the footpath to your left. Cross the stile and proceed along the track past two fields until you reach a field gate. On entering the third field leave the track and head right diagonally across the field towards the yellow topped waymark post. Leave this field via a stile and then continue away from the farm along the track for 100m. Turning right off the track follow the footpath crossing two fields before heading down a track past Blind Hall Farm on to Meriden Road. Turn left and follow the road for 150m before crossing the road and taking the footpath which will lead you into Berkswell Churchyard. The entrance to the church is via the main door on the far side.



Leg 2 Berkswell to Meriden

Approximate distance: 2.3 miles

Approximate time: 1 - 1.5 hours

Retrace your steps from Leg 1, back past Blind Hall Farm. At the end of this track, enter the field through the same gate, but now bear left diagonally across the field towards the yellow topped post at the side of a pond. Exiting this field in the corner, follow this footpath along field edges to emerge on Back Lane. Crossing Back Lane take the footpath opposite which will take you along a track and then through a wooden kissing gate. Cross this field diagonally to the opposite corner and leave via another wooden kissing gate. Continue following this footpath heading north across open countryside through three fields. On exiting the third field 50m from the right hand corner you will join Church Lane. From here, turn right and head up the road to enter the churchyard to Meriden Church through a gate 120m on left.

Leg 3 Meriden to Eastern Green

Approximate distance: 1.75 miles

Approximate time: 0.75 - 1 hour

Exit the churchyard via the side gate opposite Moat House Farm. Turning left follow Church Lane around a bend. From here, look for a wooden arrow on the tree ahead; this indicates a right turn. At this point, turn right and crossing the stile head across the field to the field edge track to the far field gate. Continue following the footpath along this track through the gate and then leave the field at the kissing gate on the left.

Heading East, follow the footpath across the field to the far corner of Millisons Wood. From here continue following this footpath along the bottom of the next three fields before turning right onto a connecting footpath. Crossing the bridge, continue on up the hill. Two-thirds of the way up the next field, where power cables cross the hedge, pass through the kissing gate on your left. Proceed through the next two fields before entering the farm yard. Continue through the yard retracing your steps from Leg 1 to reach Church Lane and then Eastern Green churchyard. You can enter the church through the main door on the left.