

IAIN's LOCKDOWN WALKS

Nº. 21 OFFCHURCH and GRAND UNION canal from LEAMINGTON SPA

Walk starts at Newbold Comyn Car Park, Leamington Spa, CV32 4EW.

1. From the end of the farthest car park take the footpath in the top right-hand corner. Follow this well-defined track and around a right-hand bend (deviation avoiding golf course), and after a short distance an open area is reached and turn left along track. Continue along this track when it turns left but at next left-hand corner take footpath thru gap in hedge on your right. The footpath heads diagonally across field to corner, go thru and follow left-hand field boundary to stile Nº. 1. Turn half right towards the River Leam and across a footbridge then turn half right towards bridge over the mill race and stile Nº. 2. After a short distance the path turns right thru a small wood then left with the wood on your left, cross over access track. Continue with the wood on your left until a tarmacked road is reached and turn right and follow this road until a slight left-hand bend and take footpath signposted left. Follow left-hand boundary fence to trees ahead and when these are reached turn right until a gap is reached with farm gate and stile Nº. 3 alongside (can be muddy here). Cross the next field on this heading until right-hand field boundary is reached and follow this to corner of field and stile Nº. 4.
2. Exit and turn right onto Welsh Road, **Offchurch**. After about 40m turn right into School Hill, opposite The Stag pub (excellent place for refreshments and it is also possible to start the walk here). At the top of the hill on your right is 12th century St Gregory's Church¹, which has some benches and a porch suitable for a break. Exit church by main gate and turn left along Village Street for 420m and cross over Long Itchington Road, with care, and take footpath thru field opposite to bridge over former Rugby to Leamington (via Southam) railway line, now a cycle and pedestrian Greenway. On far side of bridge follow footpath ahead across field (farmer usually makes a clear wide path) to corner of field and the path then continues on this heading across the next part of the field but at time of survey it was necessary to follow left-hand field boundary and turn right at corner then look for overgrown gap in left-hand hedge, go thru and follow right-hand field boundary to another overgrown gap. Remain on this heading with Fosseway Cottage on your right then follow waymarker across the field ahead to the Fosse Way.
3. Upon reaching the Fosse Way turn right along the verge, taking extreme care as the traffic is fast moving, for about 600m. Immediately before the canal bridge cross the Fosse Way, with care, and take path that slopes down to the Grand Union canal and turn right along the towpath. Continue along towpath for about 3.3km and where towpath comes virtually alongside the Radford Road descend some steps to the pavement. Cross over the road with care and left along pavement until a kissing gate on your right, which leads into a nature reserve. Head diagonally left across the field to kissing gate into car park and turn right to footbridge over the River Leam. Follow well defined path passing sports hall on your **left** (ignore path that goes left and

¹ Offa, the King of Mercia, an Anglo-Saxon kingdom, had a hunting lodge or fortified house nearby. He ruled from 757 until his death in July 796, and it is said he founded the church at Offchurch

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around the other side) and continue with playing fields to your right until you join the path as outward and turn left. This path will bring you back to the car park.

10.5 km (6.5 miles) 4 stiles

Iain Wells. Surveyed 18th August 2020

