

MWW website directions – stage 10, Knap Hill to Oare

Maps: OS Landranger 173, OS Explorer 157

Distance: 3 1/2 miles (5.6 km)

West to east

Walk through the car park and beyond the two large boulders at the end. After 100m, turn L through a clearly waymarked gate with a sign on it forbidding the flying of model aircraft; ignore the path that follows the fence on your L, and follow the path uphill to a gate in the middle of the fence on the far side of the field, with Knap Hill rearing up to your R. The path climbs more steeply on the other side of the gate but you are soon on top of a ridge of hills with arguably the best views of the whole MWW spread out beneath you to your R. The path goes through several fields and is clearly waymarked. In the last of these, with Gopher Wood in front of you, turn half L in the direction indicated by a signpost and go over a stile, and then ahead and L along the edge of a field beside the wood. Turn R over another stile to descend to a crossroad of tracks.

Go through another gate a few yards beyond the crossroads and go to the R of the avenue of trees in front of you. Aim half right for two solitary bushes on the skyline; the route to them takes you gradually uphill and R across a low earthworks, then L again. At this point the MWW and White Horse Trail run parallel to each other, separated only by the fence. Once there, continue with the fence on your L through gorse bushes to a metal farm gate into the next field. Follow the fence R and L and then along the top of the slope for the length of this long field. Shortly after a small, unmarked stile on L, veer away somewhat from the fence on your L through yet more gorse bushes to a gate in the fence opposite. From here the village of Oare is clearly visible below, with the brooding mass of the Giant's Grave, the next stage of the MWW, beyond. Continue in roughly the same direction to arrive at a bench by the fence on the far side. From here it is a steep descent R to the field below, where the incline slowly levels out to reach the lane into Oare. Turn L along this to arrive at the A345, then R along this to arrive at the White Hart, where sustenance awaits the weary walker.

East to west

With your back to the White Hart, turn L up the A345 and take the first L turn after 30 metres, signposted Huish. Follow this until the houses on your R are replaced by a field, which you turn R into on a signposted footpath, walking up its R hand side. The incline increases as you approach the fence on the far side, but this is as nothing compared with the steepness of the slope on the other side of the fence! Climb the well-trodden path as far as a bench, then strike out diagonally L to a gate in the fence beyond. Go through this and continue in roughly the same direction, passing through gorse bushes, to converge with the fence to your R. The superb views of the Pewsey Downs enjoyed on the last section of the MWW are repeated here. At this point, the MWW and White Horse Trail run parallel to each other, separated only by the fence. Pass a small, unmarked stile to R, go through more gorse bushes, and continue along the top of the slope for the length of this long field, with fence R. Follow the fence to R and L, and go through a metal farm gate into the next field. Plunge through a final set of gorse bushes and continue beyond with fence R. When the fence goes off to the R at right angles, continue in the same direction downhill. Soon veer R to cross over low earthworks, then resume direction to join an avenue of trees on R down to a metal gate in the corner of the field. Here there is a crossroads of tracks.

Pass through a wooden gate beyond the crossroads and continue slightly uphill to a stile. Here go L then R round two sides of the field next to Gopher Wood to cross the stile at the top. Go half L here, aiming for the signpost in the distance, then R on reaching it to go along a ridge of hills through several more fields, with the route being clearly waymarked. As you start to go downhill, arrive at a gate into the last field before the Knap Hill car park, with Knap Hill itself prominent to your L. Follow the path through the centre of the field to a gate in the far fence, and turn R after this into the car park.