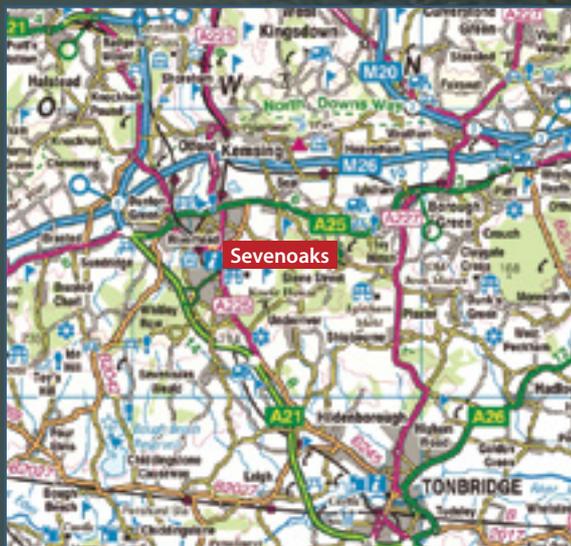


Parkland and parakeets

Knole historic deer park, at Sevenoaks, straddles the Greensand Way and is the perfect place for walkers of all ages to enjoy long views across to the North Downs. From here, you can also appreciate the changes of the seasons and wildlife amid historic trees and grasslands.



Location: Sevenoaks

Distance: 4 miles (6.3km)

Time: allow 2 hours

Explorer Map: 147

Terrain: Mainly surfaced paths with some grassed, gentle slopes with one steep slope with handrail

Stiles: 0

Public transport: for information about local bus and train services in Kent, contact Traveline tel: to 0871 200 22 33, www.traveline.org.uk

Step count: approx 8,000

From the Leisure Centre follow the steep path and pass through the metal gate into Knole Park. This is your first chance to glimpse some of the many deer to be seen along the way. It is the only medieval deer park in Kent and one of the very few deer parks to have survived the past 500 years in England. Deer parks for hunting were most popular in the 16th century when the country boasted more than 700.



A former stone ice house serving the big house is clearly visible on your right as you head up the slope and bear off to the right to walk in front of Knole's impressive façade. The path takes you along the old garden walls which are built out of Kentish ragstone.

Wrought-iron gates set in the walls give views in and out of the 24-acre gardens, which include formal and more naturalised plantings. Knole has always been known for its gardens. Archbishop Bourchier established a lavender garden and a small orchard near the house more than 500 years ago.

Leave the stone walls behind to cross the closely-cropped grass and into the open woodland. Elements of the medieval landscape survive here including hawthorn, oak, yew, hornbeam, silver birch, maple and ash – trees that once dominated the Weald.

The flocks of parakeets that make their noisy way overhead are more recent inhabitants of the park which has, in essence, changed little from the early 17th century.

After a short distance, take the path on your right to follow the long, straight Broad Walk. While many landowners set about designing and 'landscaping' their

parks, Knole was left virtually untouched except for the new planting of beech and broad tree-lined avenues replacing some of the older coppiced woodlands.

Towards the end of the Broad Walk, turn left down the Chestnut Walk with its ancient avenue of trees where sweet chestnuts and rich golden leaves scatter the path in Autumn. Newer plantings are closely fenced as protection from the deer.

While the Greensand Way turns off to the left, continue straight and follow the path to head gently downhill through the open woodland. Pass the pond by Keepers Cottage on your left and across the golf course. From the higher points there are long views across the valley to the chalk Downs beyond.

The National Trust tea rooms, set in a stone courtyard at the back of the main house, offer a warm welcome and the opportunity for a short break before rejoining the path across the grasslands to return to the car park.

Numerous paths, including a bridleway, cross Knole Park, and there are many opportunities to take diversions to extend or shorten a circular walk through this popular and peaceful landscape.

did you know?

Henry VIII liked Knole so much that he persuaded Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, to give it to him in 1538. Not everyone has been so impressed by the house. The 17th century diarist John Evelyn was depressed by the greyness of this “greate old fashion’d house” and went outside to escape into the sunshine.

Knole deer park, which covers 1,000 acres, is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Thomas Sackville converted the late medieval Archbishop’s Palace into a Renaissance mansion in the early 17th century.

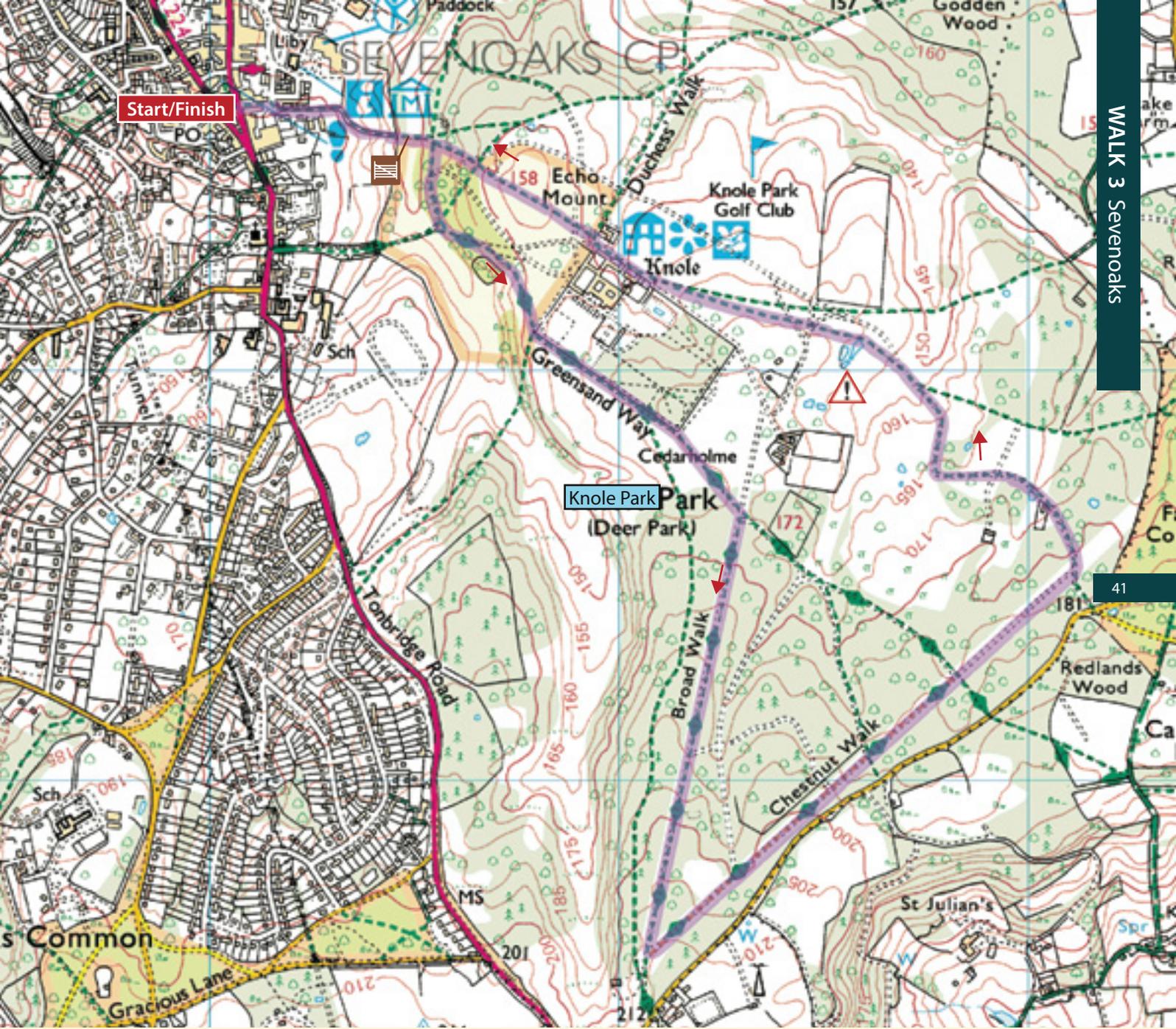
Knole is the birthplace of the novelist and poet Vita Sackville-West. She wrote of the great house: “It has the tone of England; it melts into the green of the garden turf, into the tawnier green of the park beyond, into the blue of the pale English sky.”

The Sackville family gave Knole to the National Trust in 1946 with an endowment for its maintenance.

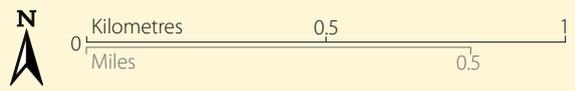


look out for...

- Deer
- Birds including parakeets
- Ice house
- Kentish ragstone
- Sweet chestnuts
- Views of the North Downs



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- ◆— Greensand Way
- G Golf Course
- i Information
- Museum
- P Picnic Site
- Stile
- Gate
- National Trust
- English Heritage
- Public House
- Stately Home
- Garden
- Hazard