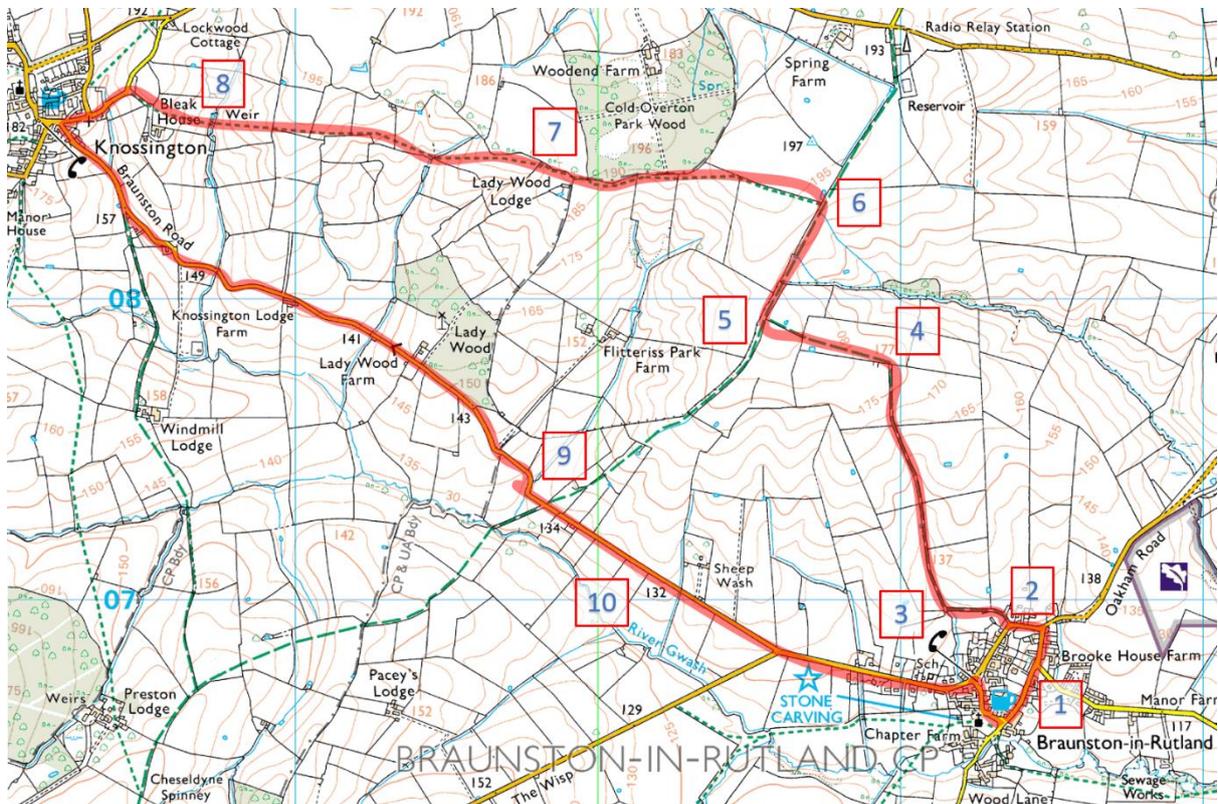


# Blue Ball Walking Route #1

***Walking route from the Blue Ball at Braunston to the Fox & Hounds at Knossington, and back.***

***3.5 miles out/3miles back.***

This route takes you up onto a ridge to the north of Braunston where, on a clear day, you can get glorious views of the surrounding countryside. The route is a mixture of tarmac, bridleways, pasture and fields. Mostly gated, there are a few stiles that you'll need to climb over. When you get to Knossington, the hard work is mostly over. The walk back to Braunston is predominantly downhill, with only a last short section on the main Tilton to Oakham road.



## **Outbound: Off-Road to Knossington**

Park near the Blue Ball (1) then if you're standing at the pub door looking towards the church, head off left and keep left, up Church Street. At the top of Church Street near the Old Plough, turn left onto High Street and about 200 yards further on, at the crest of the road on the next bend, you should see a Public Bridleway sign (2) pointing up a track to the right. Follow the track, bearing left, for about 300 yards until you arrive at a set of gates (3). Go through the right-hand gate then follow the hedge-lined bridleway, for about half a mile, up to the top of the hill. The first part of the bridleway is reasonably surfaced, but as you go further up, the route can sometimes be muddy.

At the end of the track (4), go through the gate and into the field. Turn 90 degrees left and continue through the field following the line of the hedge to your left. You are now going across a ridge with views down to Braunston to your left. Once you have gone past a pond and through another gate, you will come up to a tree-lined bridleway running at right-angles to you. Take a moment to enjoy the view to the other side of the bridleway (5). At this point, if you want a short route back to Braunston, head left down the bridleway and when you get to the road, turn left and you'll soon be back in the village. To continue on the main route, head right, up bridleway. Again, this can be muddy at times, but not impassable. After about 300 yards, the tree-lining ends and through a gate, you will be in field. Stay near to the left-hand hedge and proceed up the gentle incline. At you proceed, you will cross a couple of small streams that have had the track built over them. You need to be keeping an eye on the left-hand hedge for a small wooden footbridge (6) that goes through the hedge and into the adjacent field. If you get to a fence running across your path, you have gone too far.

When you have found the footbridge, cross it and then follow the hedge on your right to the wood, Cold Overton Park Wood that you will shortly see in front of you. There are a couple of gates to go through, but when you get to the end of the wood, you will come across a property, Lady Wood Lodge (7). Here the footpath diverts to the around the back of the house and you need to go through a gate on the right, stick to the line of the hedge and then find the path just behind the house. This is a short path and you'll quickly be in a farmyard where there can be quite an array of vehicles and farm machinery. Go straight past all that paraphernalia and you will find yourself at the top of a bank on the edge of a field. The designated path here is diagonally across the field, heading to the far-left corner, which you can't quite see yet due to the rise in the land. If the way is not clear, I'd suggest that you go down the bank and then follow the left-hand hedge around the field until you find the stile in the far corner.



### *Views back to Braunston*

You're now on the home-straight of the outbound part of the route. Keeping to the left-hand hedges, continue across the next set of fields. When you cross a stile, and find a small pond in front of you, keep heading straight across that field and down the hill until you see a gate next to a lake (8). One last hill-climb, with a glasshouse and house to your left, then you will be on Bleak House's

drive. At the end of the drive, go over the cattle grid and then turn left on into the village. Follow the road down the hill and around the corner. Then, just after a short steep section of road, as you enter into the main part of the village, check out the road sign on the right and make a note that the route back to Braunston is the turn to your left. If you're heading up to the Fox and Hounds, carry straight on and bear right where the church and pub will then be in front of you.

### **Inbound: Back to Braunston**

The road back to Braunston is a downhill blast. As mentioned before, pick-up the Braunston Road out of the village and you will find yourself heading downhill on a lovely couple of miles of twists and turns. The route is pretty straightforward so does not need any particular directions. One point of interest is that on the last set of roller coaster hills you may spot a farm on the right. Often there is an egg-shack outside selling fresh eggs (10). Get some if you like, but don't drop them carrying them back to the Pub!

Back at the Blue Ball you'll deserve a drink or two by the log fires or, if the weather's kind, why not sit and have some food at one of the tables outside and enjoy a well-earned rest?!

***To Knossington: Elevation Gain: 376 ft, Distance 3.5 miles. Back to Braunston: Distance 3 miles.***