

# Heritage trails & more

The **Heritage Trail** is a circular walk which can be started at any point and takes about an hour to complete (or longer if you take advantage of the wealth of shops, cafes and attractions along the way!) The fascinating route takes in the Castle, Church, Abbey, High Street, Castle Hill and can be extended to a figure of eight walk by incorporating the Millennium Walk.

[www.discoveringbritain.org](http://www.discoveringbritain.org)



## Literary Trail

The historic town boasts a number of literary associations.

It is thought that Sir Walter Scott 1771-1852 was inspired to write his novel 'Kenilworth' while staying at the Kings Arms and Castle Hotel. Historians believe that Charles Dickens was also a guest of the hotel while touring the area. He is known to have visited Kenilworth Castle his novel "Dombey and Son" published in 1848 features in the line 'a stroll among the haunted ruins of Kenilworth'.

Kenilworth is also associated with historical author Anya Seton, historian Alison Weir and prolific screenwriter and novelist Andrew Davies.

Nearby Stoneleigh Abbey, has links to Jane Austen and it is believed the beautiful country house and its grounds were the inspiration for the family intrigues she wove into her novels including Mansfield Park. Stoneleigh Abbey was the country seat of Jane's maternal relatives and in 1806 she visited the Abbey with her mother, sister Cassandra and cousin the Reverend Thomas Leigh.

Slightly further afield you can celebrate the lives of Victorian novelist George Elliot in Nuneaton, JRR Tolkien in Birmingham and of course William Shakespeare in nearby Stratford-upon-Avon.

[www.kenilworthweb.co.uk](http://www.kenilworthweb.co.uk)

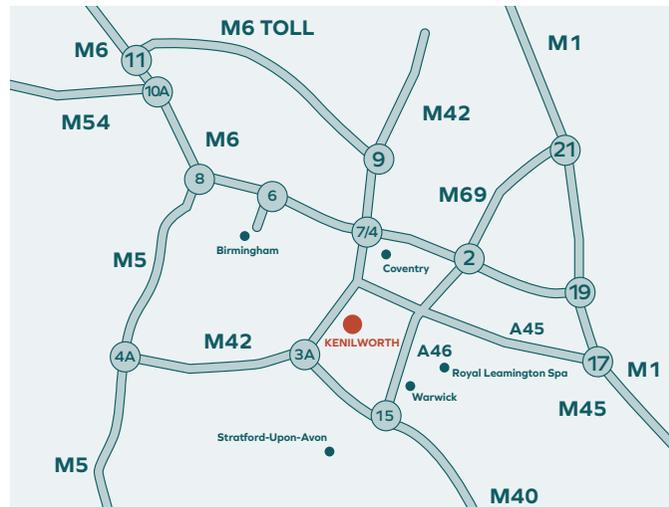
# The wider area

**Kenilworth is a wonderful base from which to explore the surrounding area.** In 2021 nearby Coventry will be the UK City of Culture with a packed programme of celebrations, events and exhibitions planned throughout the year. The following year Royal Leamington Spa will host the Lawn Bowls and Para Lawn Bowls for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. There will be a wider cultural programme across the area to celebrate both these events.

[www.coventry2021.co.uk](http://www.coventry2021.co.uk)

[www.birmingham2022.com](http://www.birmingham2022.com)

[www.warwickdc.gov.uk/CG2022](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/CG2022)



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Information Guide  
What to See and Do & Map

# KENILWORTH Visitor Guide — 2020 —





## A historic, rare little gem of a town

Nestled in beautiful Warwickshire countryside, Kenilworth has a wonderful central location close to the larger centres of Warwick, Royal Leamington Spa and Coventry and within easy reach of the world-renowned Stratford-upon-Avon, Cotswolds and Birmingham.

The town has fantastic travel links, with its own railway station and direct connections to Leamington, Coventry and Nuneaton and is ideally placed to access the wider motorway network of M1, M6, M40 and M42.

Kenilworth is also very close to the universities of Warwick and Coventry and within a 30 minute drive of Birmingham International Airport.

The town is steeped in history and is home to England's largest ruined castle, the remains of a medieval monastery set in 68 acres of parkland and many buildings of architectural interest. There are also many superb restaurants, pubs and cafes as well as a variety of independent and artisan shops. All this with its beautiful wide open spaces provides visitors with the perfect location for a day trip or short break.

## Places to stay

Kenilworth offers a variety of high quality accredited accommodation from large international hotel chains, to small boutique hotels, family run B&Bs and a range of self-catering options.

## Fabulous food

Boasting the only Michelin starred restaurant in the district and a variety of eateries including Indian, Thai, Chinese, Italian, French and English, Kenilworth has a reputation for great food and hospitality. There are also plenty of independent pubs, coffee shops and cafes with daily menus to suit every taste and an award-winning cocktail bar.



## Markets and events

Kenilworth has a packed calendar of events throughout the year including Food and Arts Festivals, an agricultural show at the nearby Stoneleigh Park, cycle races, a famous Two Castles Run and Half Marathon, culminating in the world-renowned Fireworks Gala at the Castle Meadows to celebrate bonfire night and finishing the year with two Christmas Lights Switch-ons! [www.warwickdc.gov.uk/events](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/events)

There's a bustling weekly market too, where you can find fresh produce, jewellery, clothing and hand-crafted goods taking place every Thursday at Abbey End.

## Great shopping

Castle Hill and High Street in The Old Town offer independent restaurants, bars, cafés and shops in fine listed buildings dating back to the 15th century. Only a short walk across Abbey Fields is the centre of modern Kenilworth on Warwick Road, Abbey End together with Talisman Square and Millar Court which all offer a wide variety of big name shops, including Sainsbury's and Waitrose, and independent artisan shops selling unusual items and if looking for a bargain there are charity shops with high quality goods. [www.taliskankenilworth.co.uk](http://www.taliskankenilworth.co.uk)  
[www.kenilworthweb.co.uk](http://www.kenilworthweb.co.uk)



## Theatre and the Arts

**Talisman and Priory Theatres**  
The town is well served by two excellent theatres, The Talisman and The Priory, both of which offer an extensive programme of plays, musicals, shows and films throughout the year. [www.talismantheatre.co.uk](http://www.talismantheatre.co.uk)  
[www.priorytheatre.co.uk](http://www.priorytheatre.co.uk)

## Railway Station

Kenilworth has a much treasured and thriving station. After a closure of 53 years Kenilworth Station was rebuilt in the character of the original station and re-opened to the public on 30th April 2018. Two stained glass windows and signage from the old building were salvaged and incorporated into the new build. Kenilworth has direct links to Leamington Spa, Coventry and Nuneaton. [www.westmidlandsrailway.co.uk](http://www.westmidlandsrailway.co.uk)

# Working Towards Carbon Free Kenilworth



Plastic Free  
Kenilworth

Free tap water  
[www.refill.org.uk](http://www.refill.org.uk)



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|---|---|
| 1 Kenilworth Castle and Leicester's Gatehouse | 12 Market (Thursdays)                     |
| 2 Millennium Walk                             | 13 St. Augustine's Church                 |
| 3 Little Virginia and High Street             | 14 War Memorial                           |
| 4 Abbey Fields Historic Park                  | 15 Castle Farm Recreation Centre          |
| 5 The Abbey of St. Mary the Virgin            | 16 Abbey Fields Swimming Pool & play area |
| 6 Abbey Barn Museum                           | 17 Priory Theatre                         |
| 7 St Nicholas' Church                         | 18 Talisman Theatre                       |
| 8 The Clock Tower                             | P Parking                                 |
| 9 The Square                                  |   |
| 10 Parliament Piece                           |   |
| 11 Library & Tourist Information Centre       |   |

## 10 Places to visit...

## 1 Kenilworth Castle and Elizabethan Gardens

From medieval fortress to Lancastrian palace, Kenilworth Castle has been at the centre of England's affairs for much of its 900 year history. Built by Henry I as a motte-and-bailey castle it was extended by King John, John of Gaunt and Henry V and become a much loved royal palace. It was the scene of the longest siege in England, and place of confinement for Edward II. In 1563 Elizabeth I granted it to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who converted it into a lavish palace and created the stunning gardens. [www.english-heritage.org.uk/kenilworth](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/kenilworth)



## 2 Millennium Walk and The Greenway

**The Millennium Walk** is a beautiful 6.5 mile circular walk starting at Kenilworth Castle. The trail is part of the 100 mile Millennium Way across the Heart of England. This delightful trail takes walkers past the most extensive castle ruins in England and explores farmland and open countryside and the site of Henry V's 'Pleasance in the Marsh' outside the castle.

**The Greenway** is a short, 2.3 mile traffic free path and cycleway between Kenilworth and Burton Green which follows the National Sustrans Route 523 and links with Route 52 and Route 6 in the area. The scenic route is great for wildlife lovers all the year round with sightings of rare flowers, insects, fungus and wild birds in the hedgerows.

Further information on walking and cycling in the area can be found on the following websites:

[www.thegreenwaytrust.org.uk](http://www.thegreenwaytrust.org.uk)

[www.k21cycleway.org](http://www.k21cycleway.org)

[www.walking.41club.org](http://www.walking.41club.org)

[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

## 3 Little Virginia and Old Town's High Street

The hamlet of Little Virginia originally consisted of fifteen thatched cottages which date from the 17th century. Their claim to fame is that the first potatoes brought to England were planted in this location by Sir Walter Raleigh - it is said! They are found at the bottom of Castle Hill leading to High Street with its numerous examples of listed buildings, charming restaurants, tea shops and unique artisan shops.

## 4 Abbey Fields Historic Park

A beautiful public open space forms the green heart of Kenilworth linking the original part of the town with the new. The 68-acre parkland is rich in history and includes the remains of the historic Abbey, a lake, two children's play areas, swimming pools, tennis courts, a trim trail, a café and heritage trails.

[www.warwickdc.gov.uk](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk)

## 5 The Abbey of St Mary the Virgin

The ruins of the Augustinian Priory, founded in 1119 and raised to Abbey status in 1448 are located within Abbey Fields the site is a scheduled ancient monument. The Tantara Gatehouse is still standing and will be opened in the near future to display the artefacts currently stored there.

[www.warwickdc.gov.uk/abbey](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/abbey)

## 6 The Abbey Museum & Heritage Centre

The Museum is open on Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday afternoons (2.30pm - 4.30pm) between Easter and mid-September. Free entry. [www.khas.co.uk](http://www.khas.co.uk)

## 7 St Nicholas' Church

This is Kenilworth's oldest church, first referred to in 1291 and possibly built on the site of a Norman parish church. It is noted for its fine west doorway, reconstructed between 1550 and 1620 using Norman material from the Abbey. It is documented that Elizabeth I attended Divine Communion at the church in 1566, 1568 and 1572.

## 8 The Clock Tower

The tower was presented to the town in 1906 by G.M. Turner in memory of his wife. The top of the tower was damaged in 1940 by a land mine which destroyed a nearby hotel and the surrounding areas of Abbey End, killing 25 people (8 residents and 16 evacuees all named, and one unknown) who are remembered on a nearby memorial.

## 9 29 The Square

The modern façade replicates that of the King's Arms & Castle Hotel, which formerly stood on this site. Sir Walter Scott stayed here in 1815 prior to writing his novel 'Kenilworth' and Charles Dickens is thought to have stayed here.



© Sue Steward

## 10 Nature Reserves

There are four local nature reserves in Kenilworth. All are managed through a partnership between Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Warwick District Council.

**Parliament Piece** is a 14 acre 'piece' of open land just 5 minutes' walk from Abbey Fields. It's a wonderful peaceful open space with open grassland and tall trees for all to enjoy. Its name originates from the belief that Henry III's Parliament met there in 1266.

**Crackley Wood** is an ancient woodland with a mixture of woodland types, glades, ponds, ditches and boundary hedges. Within easy walk of the town centre, the hard surface path makes it accessible for wheelchairs and pushchairs. The wood also links to the Kenilworth to Berkswell Greenway opening up a 4 mile walk into the countryside.

**Knowle Hill** is a diverse area of grassland, scrub and woodland which is particularly important for butterflies.

**Kenilworth Common** is a wooded common within the town. A pleasant place to be, just minutes from the town centre and an easy walk along the Finham Brook from Abbey Fields.

[www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk)