

Foka Wolf's Arnold Schwarzenegger chomping on Seven Capital hoardings to 'No fly-tipping installation art pieces' on Hazelwell Lane.

As you emerge from the gyratory road system, past Skinny's Ink tattoo parlour, cast your eyes to the skies to see a **Top Cat figurine** sitting on a satellite dish above TopSat Digital. Everyone loves a visual pun.

Cross at the pedestrian crossing and enter the alleyway at the side of the Balti Bazaar

for a freaky fairground side show. Here you will find not one but two **hall-of-mirrors doors** in the restaurant car park. Take a warped photo of yourself as a memento of your visit to St urchley.

Finish by retreating to The Bournbrook Inn next door for sustenance and a lively discussion about how the Bourn might be a brook but the Bournbrook runs through Selly Oak, this one is just the Bourn and how it's a fair mistake but that the pub should be renamed the Bourn Inn really.

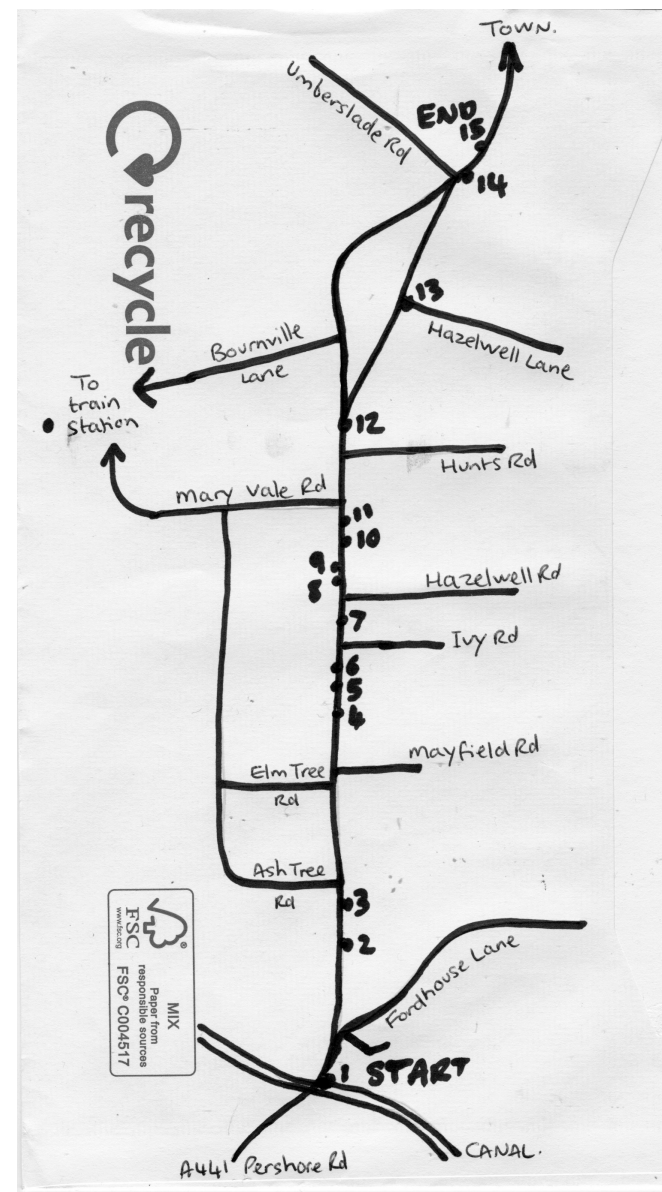
**This walk has been curated from pins on the Survey of Sturchley map. Visit Walkspace's Mapping Sturchley project for many more local curiosities.**

1. Birmingham skyline view
2. Robots of Sturchley
3. Sturchley Street – part of the old roman road of Icknield Street
4. Ricky
5. Old entrance to Whitmarley
6. Ann Place
7. Red Stork above Artefact
8. Baffling vintage postbox notice
9. Interlaced bricks and a tiger
10. Sturchley Gorilla
11. EF Cash & Sons doorstep
12. Ghost of cobbled pavement
13. Hazelwell Lane art gallery
14. Top Cat figurine on satellite dish
15. Hall-of-mirrors doors

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## Sturchley walk series: 1

# High Street Highlights



This short tour of Sturchley high street combines local landmarks, art, architecture, innovation, history and curiosities.

It starts at a high point and descends to a flat bit.

This is the first of some Sturchley taster walks, perfect for everyone who wants something every time.



We start on Bridge 75 of the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, at the junction of Pershore Road and Lifford Lane. Pause to take in the double aspect view, first of the canal through the gateway and then, as you meander down the Pershore Road, of the **Birmingham city skyline**.

Cross over the treacherous junction at Fordhouse Lane and hug the pavement past residential houses to a set of shops, passing Stirchley's only charity shop serving the neuro-divergent community, and our main brothel, Kitty's Massage Parlour. Look for heart-shaped shutter decorations and windowless frontage.

A few doors along, a lawnmower is glued to the external wall. This is Tomlinson's tool hire shop. Peer into the window to spot homemade **Stirchley droids** such as R2D2, a robot Minion and more.

From the future to the past – get your ancient Rome on by imagining you're on the old **Roman road** of Icknield Street running from Gloucestershire to South Yorkshire, because you are, albeit in its distant future.

An example of Stirchley waymarking can be found on the next block, past Mayfield Rd, in the form of a single name etched into a paving stone: **'Ricky'**. It's hard to know when this piece was made but it is thought that the author might be a child as it's not joined-up writing.

A few steps further is a gap in the buildings. Reminiscent of precision bombing, this is in fact the **old entrance to Whitmarley** Engineering factory, a former MG Rover supplier, that was briefly turned into a free school and guerrilla exhibition and performance space in 2011 before being razed to make way for a housing estate.

On the same block look up to see an etched grey doorway named **Ann Place**. Pause to consider the potential romance betwixt Ann and Ricky.

Past Ivy Road, there is a **red stork** perched above Artefact Café. This is one of Gavin Rogers' flock of migrant red stork sculptures that landed across Birmingham in 2018/9. All Brummie families were immigrants at some point so raise your hat to your fellow importee.

Cross over the school pedestrian crossing to a small cluster of miniature must-sees. First is the postbox, which displays the **baffling notice**: 'Await delivery of stamp before inserting a further coin.' Do you understand what this means? If you do, revel in your smugness.

Walk to the first building on your right and examine the unusual design feature of **interlaced corner bricks**. Now look up to see a carved wooden **tiger**, fangs bared, staring down at you from inside the window.

Staying on the left side of the high street, pause at the surprisingly imposing building at 1429 Pershore Rd. Formerly a Lloyds Bank, it became the Belgian and Netherlands Consulate after a bank employee called David Cooper became the honorary consul for Belgium and suggested his former work premises as a suitable location. Until recently hopeful visa applicants would travel on the 45 bus to queue here.

Look across the road to see the **Stirchley Gorilla** perched above the carpet shop. The polycarbonate primate has become a Stirchley landmark, possibly erected in homage to

Birmingham's famous King Kong statue. It cost £7,500, was made in the Philippines and shop owner Mr Khan bought it because: "We have a flat roof and I thought King Kong would look good sitting on it."

While under the Gorilla's gaze, ponder the street protest of 2018 where tenants of the flats behind unionised and gathered to draw attention to their poor housing conditions, and the generally inadequate state of affordable housing in Stirchley.

Cross for a closer look and continue walking towards town. A few shops along is an **EF Cash & Sons** doorstep sign. This former business was best known for Cash's embroidered name tags, sewn into generations of school clothes. Bird watchers may spot a pigeon or 20 living in the hoardings above the shop. Don't forget, bird poop on the head brings good luck.

Walk past the derelict graffitied building and pigeon roost to the fork in the road. At the **ghost of a cobbled pavement** in front of the British Oak public house, take the right fork. This stretch has many temporary artworks in its ever-changing **street gallery**: from paste-up artist