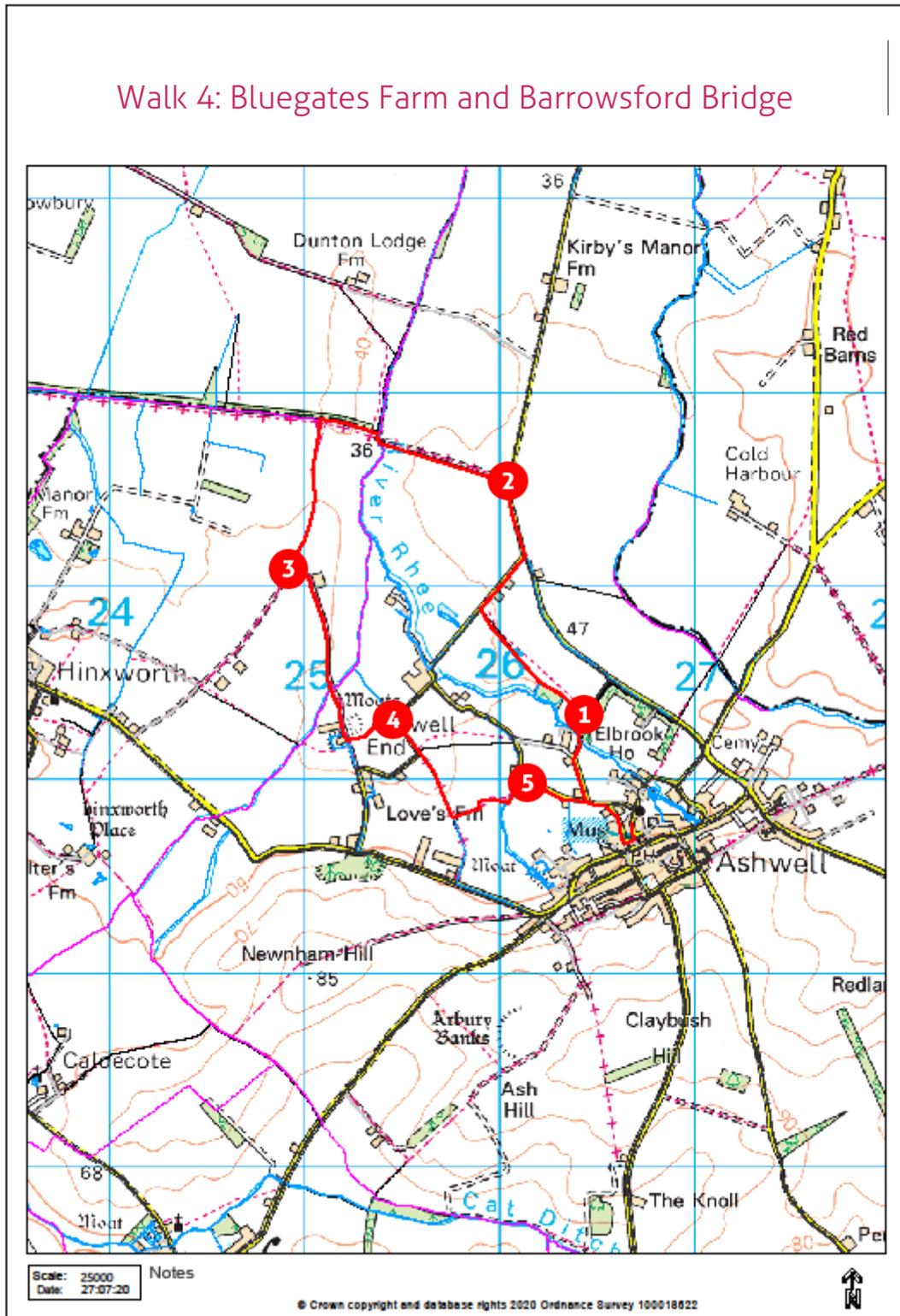


ASHWELL WALKS

Walk 4: Bluegates Farm and Barrowsford Bridge



Length and timing

7.5 Kilometres (4¾ miles), about 1hr 30 mins walking briskly, 2hr 10 mins at leisure.

A flat walk with some stretches of quiet road.

Though passing by a dairy on exiting the village this walk mostly crosses open arable farmland. There are some wooded, shaded sections along paths at field margins.

Directions

With your back to the Parish Church lych gate go left toward the museum but before getting there, turn right into Swan Street at the village sign and then right into Gardiners Lane. You should see the white Cob wall running along the lane on the left hand side.

Follow Gardiners Lane past the entrance to the doctors' surgery on the left, up to a large house ('The Grange') at the T junction. Turn right.



Gardiners Lane: at the T junction, turn right. Apparently our part of England is semi-arid..

The road bends right by the Dairy (seen on your left) then bends left and right again.

1 Look out for the finger post on the left indicating a track across a field toward a cluster of mature trees. Take the track.

This track goes along the right hand side of the tree cluster and cuts across an open field to reach a road.



To infinity... and beyond

When you get to the road turn right up to a junction and turn left.

This section of road is quiet but vehicles go at quite a pace along it, given its width, so beware.. From the junction it is 400 metres up to the turn off to the left, which is indicated by a finger post.

2 The farm track goes west to Barrowsford Bridge, though why it is called a bridge, I have no idea. The path crosses the river Rhee as it enters a wooded field margin but you have to be alert to notice. As it crosses water it is technically a form of bridge, I suppose.

As you carry on, keep a lookout for the path on the left that you need to take. It's only visible once you are right there. It cannot be mistaken as there are two wooden bollards, presumably to prevent the entry of vehicles.

This wooded path going south turns into an open track on a field margin after a short distance. It is a bit uneven underfoot, so take your time.

3 At the next track junction, turn left toward a solitary barn and pass it on the right. The track widens and takes you toward two houses at the medieval moats.



Go to the right of the solitary barn

The moated enclosures here are not that obvious if like me you are unfamiliar with these things. One I cannot see at all. According to Historic England, enclosures like this form a significant class of medieval monument and are important for understanding the distribution of wealth and status in the countryside during the thirteenth and fourteenth century.

Follow the direction of the finger post left along the path to Ashwell End (the moat will be on your left). It comes out onto the road at a sharp bend.

4 Go right and continue until the road bends sharply again to the right but continue straight ahead down the track. It becomes more shaded after a short distance.



This shaded avenue makes a pleasant change from open farmland

Look out for a break in the trees and shrubs on the left where there is a small footbridge over a ditch. Cross it and follow the track first ahead then a dog-leg to the left and right.

Keep following it through the trees and then left. After a short distance you will reach Gardiners Lane where you go right.

5 Gardiners Lane takes you back into the village. Look out for the Cob Wall running alongside the road on the right hand side. Apparently it is home to six species of mason bees. In the summer time, if you take a minute, it is easy to see them coming and going.

Keep an eye out for the cottage garden at the junction of Gardiners Lane and Swan Street. You may want to sit there while considering your refreshment options.

From Swan Street a left turn into Mill Street takes you back to the church.



Ashwell village under cloud: looking south east from the track leading to Gardiners Lane