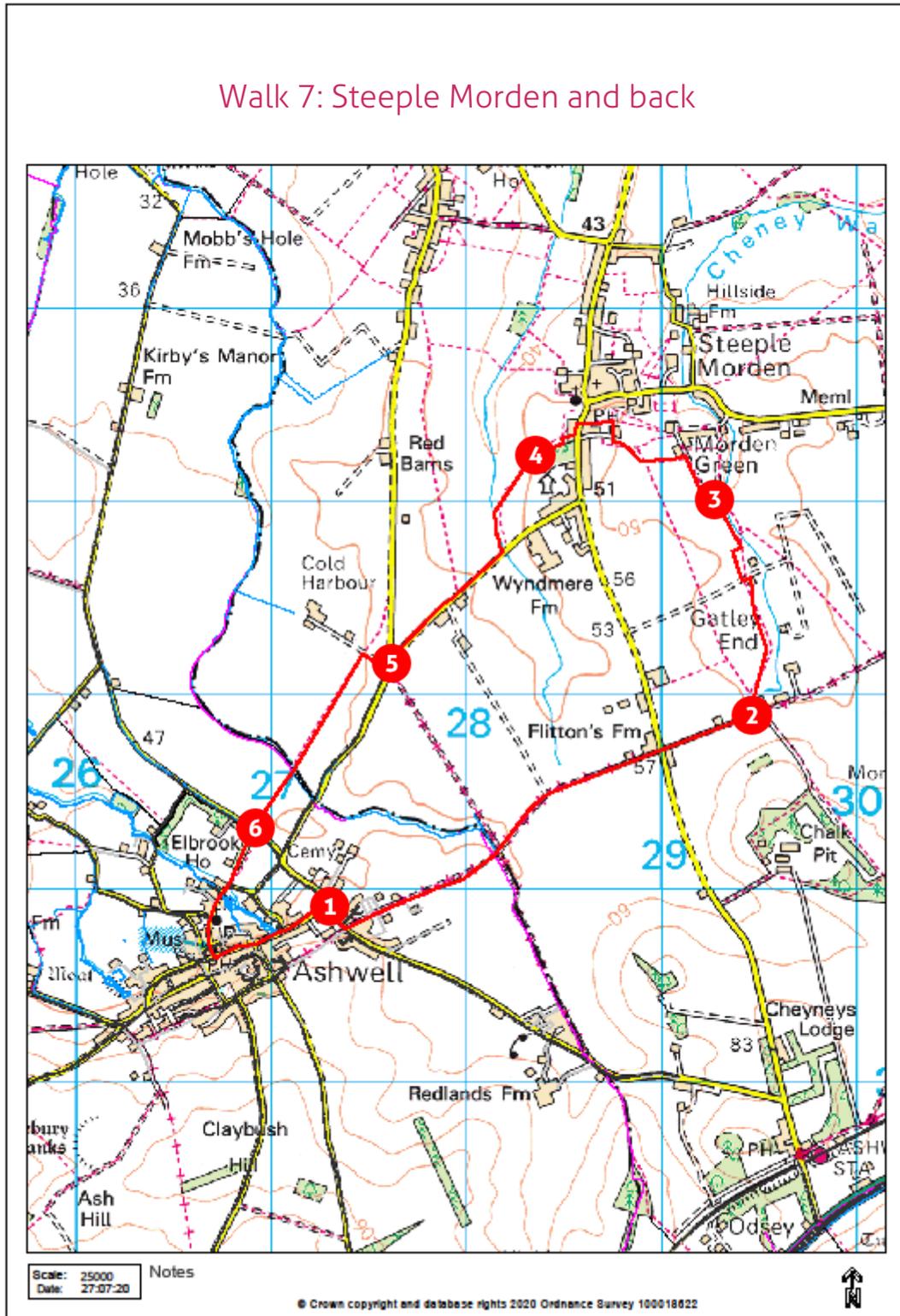


ASHWELL WALKS

Walk 7: Steeple Morden and back



Length and timing

9.2 Kilometres (5¾ miles), about 1hr 50 mins walking briskly, 2hrs 50 mins at leisure.

A flat, easy route along a wide byway and field tracks. Some is on a road but visibility along it is good.

The walk takes you through arable farmland to a nearby village where there is a pub and an attractive church with a 'witches hat' spire.

Directions

With your back to the Parish Church lych gate head left along Mill Street, cutting through to the High Street via Alms Lane between the Parish Rooms on the left and the Museum on the right.

Turn left along the High Street and keep going, pausing to have a look down at the Springs on your left (easy to miss below the green railings). Then continue to the Recreation Ground and War memorial. This memorial was designed by the architect Edwin Lutyens, who also played a major part in building New Delhi, amongst many other notable projects.

1 Turn right at the junction into Station Road. Just past Philosophers Gate on the left there is a lane: Ashwell Street. Turn onto it. Some claim it is part of the Icknield Way. This was an ancient trackway over southern and eastern England, which extended between the Ridgeway in Buckinghamshire to the start of the Peddlars way in Suffolk, though opinions seem to vary on the exact start and end points.

The lane turns into a track after the caravan site. From here it is straight ahead, eastwards through open farmland for 1.5 Kilometres up to a road.

Cross the road and carry on past two semi-detached cottages on the left for a further 150 metres. Take the track indicated by the fingerpost to the left, just before the farm buildings.



Left turn off Ashwell Street, heading north

2 The track skirts round the farm alongside the field margin, heading north..

Keep to the field margins except where there is an obvious track through the crops until you reach a lane crossing your path with a paddock beyond. Pass by the paddock on the left hand side. At the end go through the break in the tree line and immediately turn right toward the corner of the field. Through the trees there is a private garden but a path runs off to the left along its edge.

3 After this wooded path you emerge into open farmland again. The village of Steeple Morden will be visible in the middle distance to the North north east. Look for the track between fields that goes in that direction.



Coming into Steeple Morden from the South, turn sharp left here

When you reach the southern edge of Steeple Morden turn left keeping the garden fence on your right until you see a field corner and gap in it.

Through the gap head diagonally right across the meadow up to a broken down stile. This meadow is quite a sight in April and early May when the cowslips are flowering.

Right at the stile and follow the path to the right of a house (seventies or eighties built?), round the back along a gloomy path until you come out into the centre of the village by the Waggon and Horses pub.



The path is on the right hand side of the house, goes round the back and left to the Waggon and Horses pub

This is a good spot for a break, if not in the pub, then on the bench next to the path.

Where the path comes out onto the road, turn left and look for the fingerpost in a gap between the houses on the right hand side of the road.

Follow the path around the back of the houses and gardens, straight on, then left and right until you see the track cutting diagonally across a field. as you are turning an outside corner.

4 Cross the field, Look back, you should be able to see the mill, no sails on it these days, though.

After crossing the field take the path through scrub land that winds round to the left and reaches the road.

Turn right along the road and keep going up to the junction while keeping an eye out for traffic.

5 At the junction go ahead toward Coldharbour Farm, looking out for the turn-off onto a track across the field on the left. It is a short distance before the entrance to the farm.



Straight ahead now. St Mary's is just visible dead ahead in the distance

This is the last leg of the walk: the tower and spike of St Mary's is your objective now.

Cross the large field and the footbridge above the ditch. Then cross yet another field and over the road.

6 Take the path dead ahead on the opposite side of the road: it takes you into the village. Going through the gate you will come to the Mill and a small bridge over the River Rhee. St Mary's will be right in front of you.



The Church of St Peter and St Paul and the Waggon and Horses pub, Steeple Morden