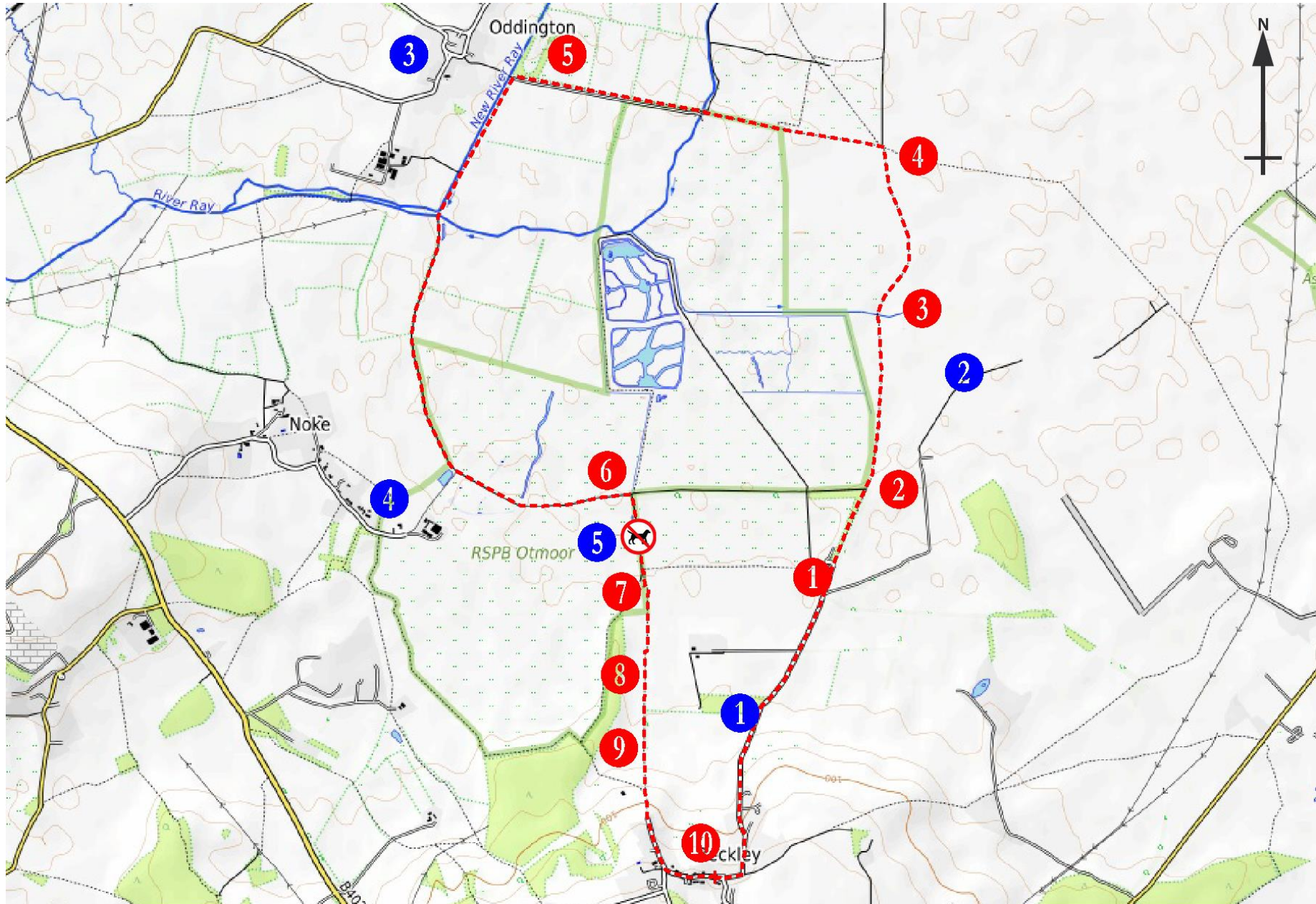


Walk 10 – Otmoor Circular



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Notes

This is a walk of 6 miles through and round wetland nature reserves that should take around 2 hours. Walking is easy underfoot, except after rain, when it can be very muddy. There is one quite steep ascent on the section from the RSPB reserve back to Beckley that can be avoided by following the alternative route described in point 6 below.

Restrictions

1. Part of the walk crosses an MOD shooting range. **DO NOT USE THIS ROUTE IF THE RED FLAGS ARE FLYING (SEE NOTE 2 BELOW AND ON THE MAP).** Walks 4 or 6 can be used as alternatives if you get to the flags and find they are flying. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/south-east-training-estate-firing-times> for when it is safe to walk.
2. Dogs are not allowed on the section of the walk where it passes through the RSPB reserve

The walk starts from The Abingdon Arms, Beckley, goes north down Otmoor Lane following the old Roman road, then loops round Otmoor on grassy paths, passing close to Oddington and Noke. The walk can be made two miles shorter by starting and finishing at the RSPB Nature Reserve instead of at the pub.

Route Notes

- 1 Go straight ahead onto a grassy path from the tarmacked road. The entry to RSPB Otmoor car park is on the left and can be used as an alternative start and end point for the walk.
- 2 The gate here is where the flag posts may have flags flying indicating that the rifle range is in use. **DO NOT USE THIS ROUTE IF THE RED FLAGS ARE FLYING.** Instead, either turn left along the public footpath and join Walk 6 'Otmoor Nature Reserves' or back track up Otmoor Lane to a not very conspicuous footpath sign on the left to join Walk 4 'Beckley Park Circular'.
- 3 Go through gate and over bridge. The path veers off on the diagonal here but is clearly visible.
- 4 A five-way foot- and bridle- way crossroads. Turn left into a wide, straight green lane, ignoring the stile with a public footpath sign which goes off towards Charlton Church, whose tower you can see in the distance.
- 5 Turn sharp left here along the gravel track, ignoring the footpath over a bridge straight ahead with Oddington in sight.
- 6 The walk turns right here towards a large RSPB hide, signed 'The Wetlands Watch'. **DOGS ARE NOT ALLOWED ON THIS SECTION OF THE WALK.** If you have a dog, instead of turning right continue along the path for about ¼ mile until you meet a track to the right which will take you back to the RSPB car park off Otmoor Lane, and retrace your steps along the lane back to the Abingdon Arms.

- 7 Continue along the track past the RSPB hide and on through the pedestrian gate on the right of the five barred gate by the hide.
- 8 Turn right after the gate at the end of the track, follow path to next T junction where you turn right again through a kissing gate and follow the hedge along the right hand side of the field to a another kissing gate, continuing straight for another 100 yards.
- 9 Turn sharp right then immediately sharp left along the obvious footpath and keep going till you get to a gate which you go through to reach the bottom end of Beckley's Church Street.
- 10 Turn left at the top of Church Street and follow the High Street back to the Abingdon Arms.

Points of Interest

- 1 Beckley Community Orchard – a local amenity that preserves a wide variety of different local fruit trees, open to the public.
- 2 The MOD land, part of an Otmoor SSSI since 1952, managed jointly by the army and conservation bodies. Once part of an extensive area of wetland dependent on winter flooding and traditional summer grazing and hay-cutting regimes, it is home to a wide variety of flowers, birds, butterflies and other insects, several of which are nationally rare.
- 3 The village of Oddington, one of Otmoor's 'Five Towns'. No pub or public facilities. You might want to detour to St Andrew's Church in Oddington to visit the grave of influential Maori princess Makereti 'Maggie' Papakura who is buried in the grounds. The princess, also known as Margaret Pattison Staples-Browne, came to the village in the early 20th century and commissioned what is thought to be the only memorial to Maoris killed in the First World War, which sits inside the church. Since then, Maoris have regularly visited Oddington to leave their tributes to Ms Papakura.
- 4 The village of Noke, another of Otmoor's 'Five Towns', not easily visible from the path though there is a public footpath that goes there from here. This is where you enter the RSPB reserve. Noke has no pub or public facilities.
- 5 RSPB hide, normally open to the public, with viewing positions, bird books, and information about the reserve.