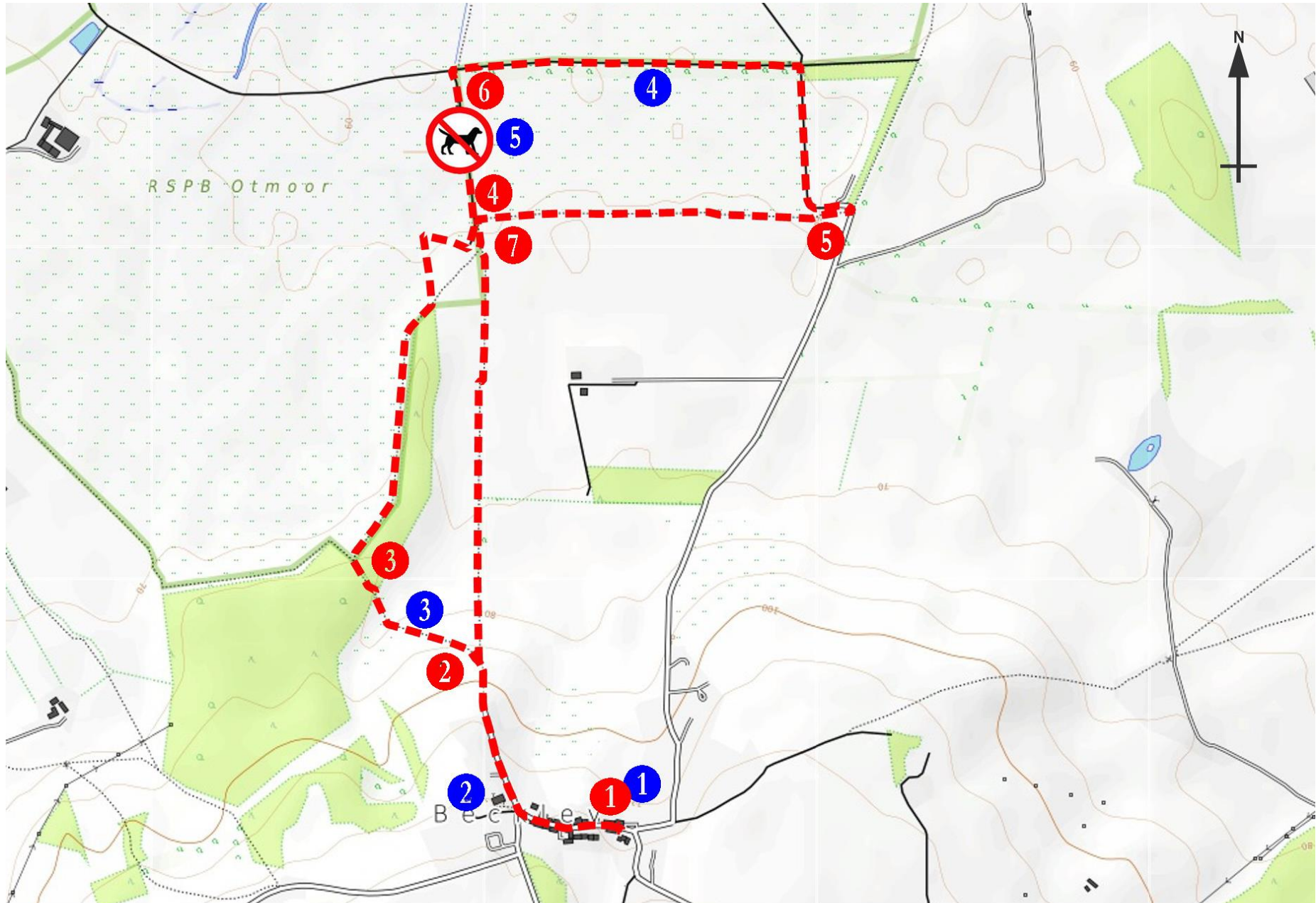


Walk 6 – Otmoor Nature Reserves



Notes

This is a walk of 3.7 miles with total ascent / descent of 240 feet, and is generally easy underfoot. The walk starts from The Abingdon Arms, goes through Beckley and down onto Otmoor, loops through the RSPB nature reserve, then returns to Beckley and The Abingdon Arms. Binoculars may prove valuable!

Much of the route consists of a 'figure of 8', both loops of which can be walked in either direction. It is possible to make this into a circular walk by missing out the section through the nature reserve and returning to Beckley village up Otmoor Lane – see route point 5.

IMPORTANT: Please note that dogs are not allowed on one section of this route in the nature reserve, even on leads. It is possible to miss this section out – see note above. The grass may be long in some sections of the route, so trousers are advised to protect against tick bites.

Route notes

- 1 From The Abingdon Arms, turn right (west) up the High Street, cross the brow of the hill, and then turn right at the church. Walk down Church Street, continuing after the tarmac ends to a gateway where the Oxfordshire Way forks to the left through a kissing gate.
- 2 It is possible here to walk straight ahead down the hill, but following the Oxfordshire Way has the merit, while crossing this field, of excellent views to the north. Pass through a second kissing gate at the bottom of the field, and the path enters Noke Wood.
- 3 Emerging from the wood, the Oxfordshire Way goes straight ahead, but turn right here and walk north along the side of Sling Copse. After leaving the copse behind, the path turns sharp right across a footbridge and comes to a gate on the left to the RSPB nature reserve - where dogs are not allowed.
- 4 Here, at the waist of the 'figure of 8', continue straight on across another footbridge. *A kissing gate on the right leads back to Beckley – completing a shorter walk of 1.7 miles (see point 7).* To follow route 6, turn left and then right and follow the path along the northern edge of 3 fields to emerge onto a road.
- 5 *It is possible here to turn right up Otmoor Lane and return to Beckley village (total distance 2.8 miles), an option for dog walkers and others who favour a circular walk.* To follow route 6, turn left onto the road and enter the RSPB reserve. Pass the car park to another kissing gate, then follow the driveway to a T-junction. Turn left onto the bridleway, which affords lovely views across water meadows – on a good day a wide variety of birds may be heard, if not always seen!
- 6 Turn left at the first gate towards the viewing hide, the Wetlands Watch. In normal times, it is well worth spending a few quiet minutes in the hide – even if few birds are seen, there are lovely views across the meadows. Continue past the hide (no dogs please) with views ahead to Beckley, leaving the reserve (point 4). Turn left and cross the footbridge again.
- 7 Turn right through a kissing gate, along the edge of a field to a second kissing gate, then zig-zag right and left to follow a path through a pretty tunnel of trees. The path steepens to reach the bottom of Church Street. Here retrace your steps back into Beckley and The Abingdon Arms.

Points of Interest

- 1 The Abingdon Arms is a Grade 2 listed building, dating from around 1700. Note the blue plaque on the pub's front wall which records its association with the author Evelyn Waugh. He frequented the pub when a student at Oxford University, stayed here for his honeymoon and later with a lover, and returned to write parts of several books at the pub. See <https://bacbs.org/literary-associations>.
- 2 Church of the Assumption of The Blessed Virgin Mary – Norman, 14th century
- 3 Views across Otmoor and RSPB nature reserve towards Charlton on Otmoor, with RSPB viewing hide in middle distance - <https://ww2.rspb.org.uk/groups/oxford/places/278487/>.
- 4 Views across water meadows towards Oddington and Charlton on Otmoor
- 5 RSPB viewing hide, the Wetlands Watch