

Pink ribbon walk: Bletch to Kirtlington loop

Distance: 6 km

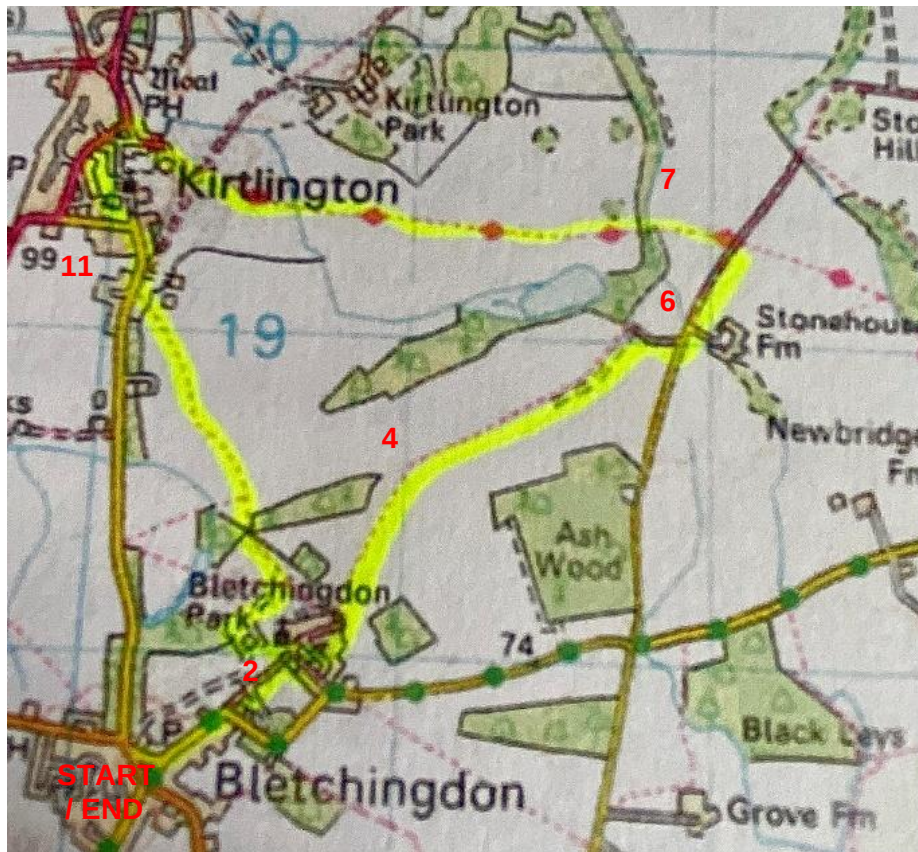
Duration: 2 hours

Difficulty: Medium

Obstacles: Stiles, gates and some road verge walking.

Pub info: Oxford Arms (12 yrs and over) or Dashwood

Starting point: The Blacks Head Inn, Bletch, OX5 3DA.



1. With the pub behind you, walk straight ahead along Weston Road towards Church path (the road begins behind the green in front of the pub).
2. Go along Church path, passing the St Giles Church and the Bletchington Stable's coach houses on your left (note the path changes to gravel in front of the coach houses).
3. Just past the coach houses and their parking, take the stile on your left into the field with the horse shelter.
4. Instead of taking the gate exit on the left towards the ponds, go over the stile in front of you (there is a dog 'flap' too). This takes you into a huge clay field. Even if it is muddy, please stick to this path. It goes right through the centre of the field and exits into another field below. On joining this onward field take a right hand turn (you'll know you are correct as there is a sunken stagnant pond on the left that your dog might have found already!)
5. Follow the hedge line that runs almost roman road-like down towards Stonehouse farm in the distance. Keep the hedge on your right. At the bottom you cross onto a path. Turn right and walk along up to the gate and roadway beyond it.

6. Once over the stile, turn left through the gate onto the bridle-path. About 5 minutes' walk up the bridle path is a footpath on your left that cuts right across the field into the woods beyond. (The right hand footpath a little further up this bridle path leads eventually to Weston on the Green – more pubs there!).

7. On entering the woods keep straight over the little stone bridge and onto the gravel road ahead. Cross straight over this onto the Oxfordshire way (signposted) and you will now cross two very large fields. The paths are really clear and you'll see the 18th C Palladian house Kirtlington Park away to your right.

8. The path leads to a corner with a gate to your right, go through this gate and cut across the field to the gate in the hedge line (its slightly to your left when you look over upon entering this field). This final gate leads you into the large famous Capability Brown designed parklands. There are often livestock grazing in here so keep dogs on leads. Turn right on entering the parkland and follow the path up to a stony track. Cross this track and aim for the onward path leading to the village hall car park. A large grey metal gate marks your exit from the parkland.

9. Follow the road out of the car park and into the village green. The Dashwood is in front of you for drinks and refreshments. The other option is the Oxford arms which is a little further and part of your return journey.

Returning home

10. With the Dashwood behind you retrace your steps along the green as if walking back to the village hall car park but half way along cut off to your right along church lane and follow it down to the Church of St Mary the Virgin. If you want the Oxford arms take the right hand track almost opposite the church front door and proceed along the passageway. The pub is at the end of this walkway (this is Troy lane, look to your right and you will see the pub). If continuing homeward, pass through the churchyard, keeping the Church on your left, and follow the stony path flanked by a stone wall all the way down to the roadside. You pass a couple of little cottages on your left as you meet the road.

11. Walk straight ahead onto Oxford Road and past one of the many entrances into Kirtlington Park ignoring the footpath sign on the left by Park House. About 50m further on, opposite the point between the houses at 14 and 15 Oxford Road, almost hidden at this time of year by a lot of foliage, is an awkward stile that cuts across a horse field to an even more awkward stile the other side. This brings you out into the back of Kirtlington Park. Walk across the field to the stony path and turn left onto it. Follow the track until you see a wooden gate to your right. This gate takes you back into the Bletchington Park estate.

12. Take the left hand path that crosses to a large 5-bar gate, continue up the hill, past a small copse of trees and into the horse shelter field. You should recognise where you are now as you have looped the loop! Continue past the church and back along Weston Road to your starting point.

Please note, livestock is present in many fields. Please keep dogs on leads in fields where they are present. If any approach, let your dog off the lead, shout at them and wave your lead. If you feel unsafe, walk to the next field and then call your dog to you. The livestock are interested in your dog not you!

We hope you enjoyed the walk! Please share photos on Facebook (Bletch Village Community Group) or WhatsApp (BletchNet).

Blue ribbon walk: Bletch village

Distance: 3 km

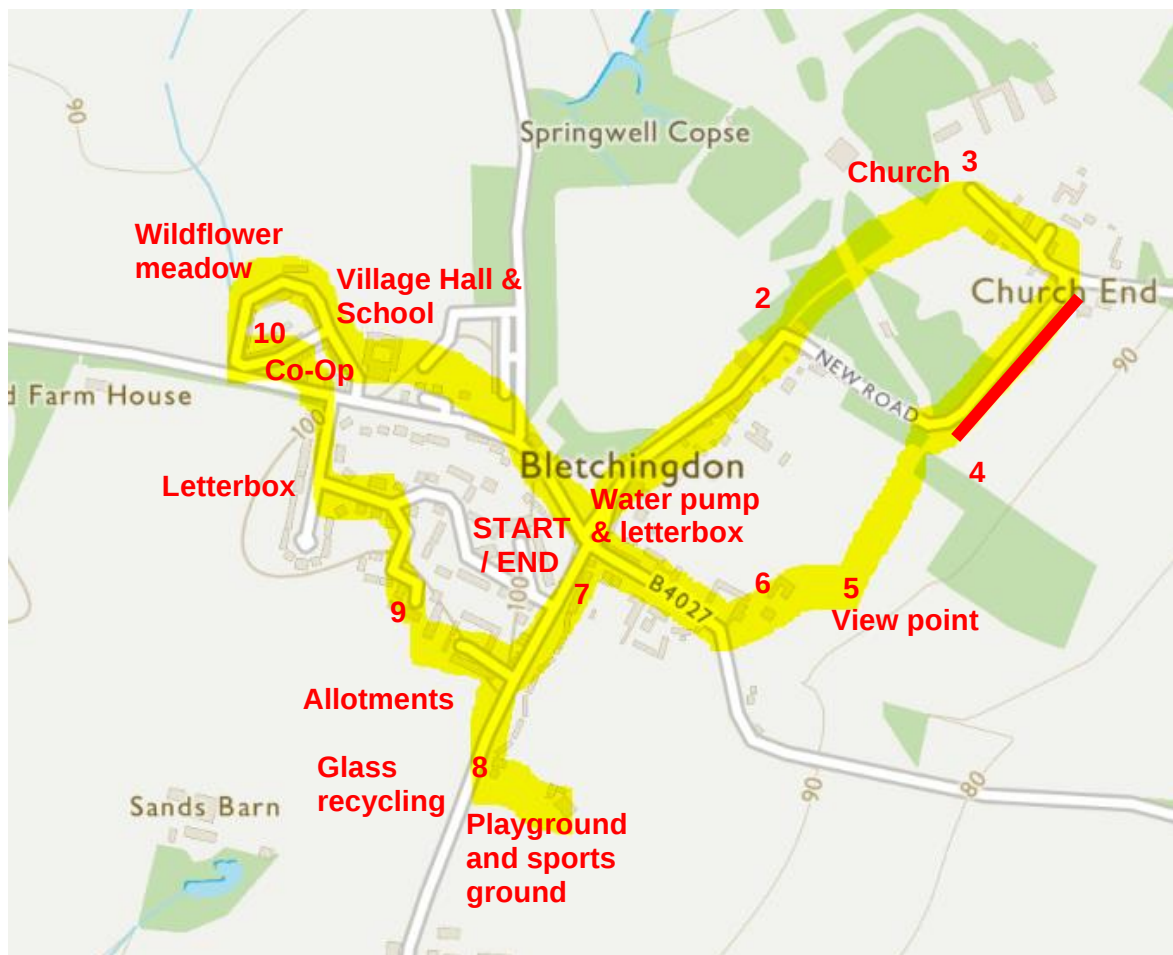
Duration: 45 mins – 1 hour.

Difficulty: Low

Obstacles: Small section of road verge walking (see red line).

Pub info: We wish! Drinks also available at the Sports and Social Club (check their website for opening times)

Starting point: The Blacks Head Inn, Bletch, OX5 3DA.



1. With the pub behind you, walk straight ahead, along the edge of the Village Green and onto Weston Road. See if you can spot the water pump and letter box on the eastern side of the Green.

2. Pass through the gate where the road turns sharply right and walk along the path until you reach the church.

3. Turn right at the Church and walk along Church End Road. When the road forks, turn right and walk along the verge. Please note this section of the route (highlighted in a red line on the map) has uneven terrain or requires walking on the road. An alternative is to retrace your steps.

4. Pass through the gate on the left (the small pedestrian gate positioned between two large gates) and walk along the footpath which runs parallel to Weston Road. After the trees on the left end there is a great view down the hill.

5. Turn right just before the large house, following the yellow arrow. Walk up the field, following the path as it turns to the left. Go through the gate, as indicated by the 'public footpath' sign.

6. Walk past the large blue container and then turn to the right, walking over the gravel driveway to end up back on the road by a footpath sign. Turn right and walk along the pavement back to the Village Green.

7. Take the first road on the left, just before The Black Head Inn and walk along the road, almost out of the village, until you see a large gate on the right (opposite the bottle banks). Through the gate you'll see the children's playground and further ahead is the Sports and Social Club.

8. Go back to the road and turn right, walking back into the village the way you came. Take the first left, ("Lenthal") and walk straight ahead, going onto a footpath when the road ends. Follow the footpath round, past the allotments and onto Annesley Close. Please note there is a metal bar across the footpath which may make passing with a wheelchair/buggy difficult.

9. Follow the road and where it forks, take the road on the left. At the end of the road turn right (you'll see the letterbox on your left) and walk towards the Co-Op.

10. Cross over the main road and walk left along Station Road past the Co-Op, taking the footpath on the right into Duchy Fields where you'll arrive on Dairy Crescent. Turn left and walk the circular road, passing what will be, when it grows, a wildflower meadow adjacent to a small Copse. Keep going straight, past a turning to the left and right until you arrive almost back at the Co-Op.

11. Pass through the village square in-front of the Village Hall (on your left) and keep walking past the entrance of the School to the car park. Walk along the pavement, keeping the car park on your left and keep going until you come out at the corner of Springwell Road and Station Road. You'll see The Blacks Head Inn straight ahead.

We hope you enjoyed the walk! Please share photos on Facebook (Bletch Village Community Group) or WhatsApp (BletchNet).

Yellow ribbon walk: Bletch to Hampton Gay loop

Distance: 6 km

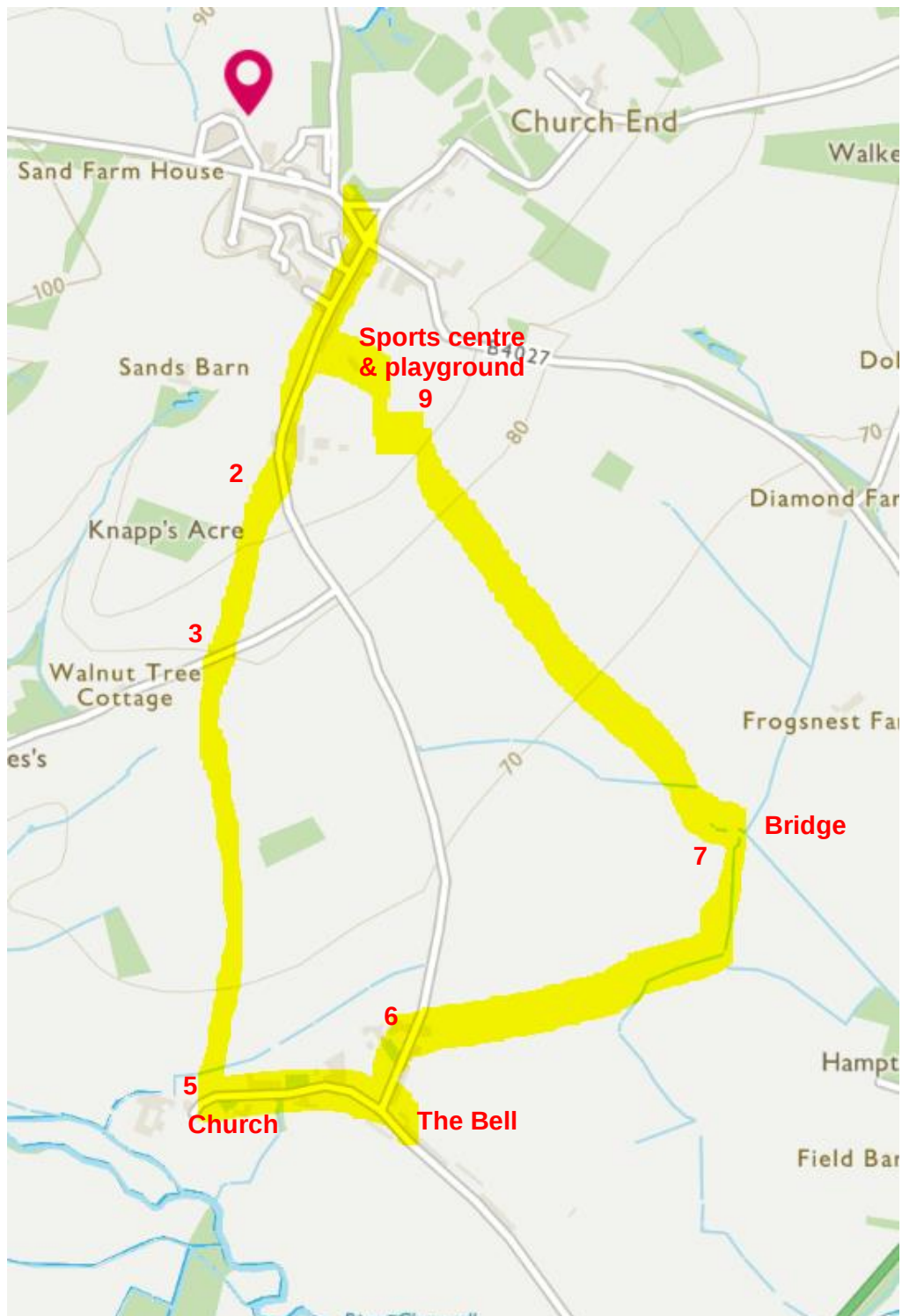
Duration: 2 hours

Difficulty: Medium (one hill on return route)

Obstacles: Many stiles, one which dogs will need to jump or be carried over; Gates.

Pub info: The Bell. Closed Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Starting point: The Blacks Head Inn, Bletch, OX5 3DA.



1. With the pub behind you, turn right (walking away from the Co-Op) and then turn right again onto Oxford Road. Go past the allotments and onto the verge until you see a footpath sign by a large tree on the right-hand side. Ensure your dog is on the lead going through this field.

2. Continue over the stile into the 'bird field'. This field was planted two years ago by the local farmer to encourage biodiversity. It's been so successful that he will plant again in 2021-2022. The path cuts diagonally across the field and through a hedge boundary and over another stile. The next field is often full of gypsy ponies and their foals so dogs on leads again. The next stile with a little bridge, is ahead of you on a diagonal from the hedge boundary you've just come through.

3. Now you cross Hampton Gay road and onto the clearly marked footpath opposite. Follow this through 3 fields (no stiles just walk through the hedge margins. In the third field the path isn't always easy to find. Keep the large tree in the middle of the field on your right and walk straight ahead and you will come to a stile in the hedge.

4. Ahead of you you will see Kidlington's St Mary's spire and if you look closely the Hampton Poyle's church, of the same name, but with a somewhat squat tower. Cross the field to the 'awkward' stile! There is not an easy way to get a dog over it unless it will jump or you can carry it over!

5. Walk along to your left until you reach the junction. Turn right to the Bell for refreshments or left to continue the walk.

6. You are now on your way home! Walk along the road towards Bletch and locate the fingerpost on the RHS before you leave the village. The huge puddle there is in fact a spring! You can walk to the right of the puddle in the dry. Follow the clear path for about 10 -15 mins until you reach a T junction.

7. Turn left and walk along the field boundary. As you reach the hedge line you'll see a bridge. Don't go over it but instead locate a small path to your left. It is not very clear but you'll see a stile ahead.

8. Once over the stile, walk to your right and follow the hedge line. Another stile is up ahead, this one has a bridge. Follow the path to another stile (it has a tyre by it for assistance). Now walk up the field using the farm machinery at the brow of the hill for your marker. You need to stay to the right of it.

9. Over another stile and into an area of lots of machinery and cars. Navigate your way through and locate the stile in the fence adjoining the playing fields. If you have a dog, please ensure it is on the lead.

10. You come out by the Sports centre and playground, and can make your way home by turning right into the village.

Please note, livestock is present in many fields. Please keep dogs on leads in fields where they are present. If any approach, let your dog off the lead, shout at them and wave your lead. If you feel unsafe, walk to the next field and then call your dog to you. The livestock are interested in your dog not you!

We hope you enjoyed the walk! Please share photos on Facebook (Bletch Village Community Group) or WhatsApp (BletchNet).