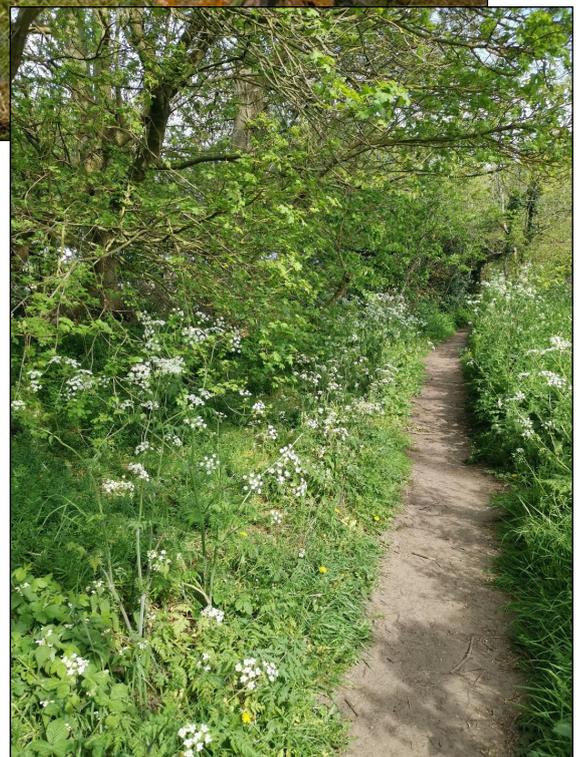


**SIX COUNTRY WALKS FROM THE
CASE IS ALTERED PUBLIC HOUSE
BENTLEY, SUFFOLK**



*This booklet is published
to commemorate the Coronation
of His Majesty King Charles III on
6th May 2023*



Views from the walks

Above

Walk 1 — 1. Holly Wood

Middle

Walk 1 — 2. Behind Silver Leys

Bottom

Walk 2 — 3. Case Lane

Bentley is blessed with 64 footpaths that take the walker through stunning countryside.

To commemorate the coronation of King Charles III, Bentley Parish Council have sponsored the production of this booklet for residents of Bentley. King Charles is a strong advocate of the benefits of walking and is passionate about the protection of nature and the environment. What better way to celebrate his coronation than to take a walk and experience the wonder of nature on our doorstep?

The walks in this booklet are based on the original, “*Six country walks from the Case is Altered Public House Bentley, Suffolk*” produced by resident, Michael Anderton. Michael is the author of a number of walking themed publications for walks all over Suffolk and a long-standing member of Bentley’s Footpath Society. He first published Walk 1 in the early 1980’s and this circular walk continues to be a very popular walk for Bentley residents and visitors today.

The walks will take you through some of our most cherished landscapes; ancient woodlands and rolling farmlands with large skies and long-distance views. Some take you to neighbouring villages, some use our designated ‘Quiet Lanes’ to connect to the footpath network and some are in the recently extended Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We hope you enjoy walking them.

Marianne Munday
Chair of Bentley Parish Council

With thanks to Tim Hamstead and Peter Utton for checking each walk and updating them to reflect recent changes in the landscape. Walk 2 has been rerouted and rewritten by Peter Utton as it was felt the original walk would now be too dangerous.

Walks 1, 2 and 3 can also be found on the Case is Altered website with additional aids to guidance.

Also thanks to Marianne Munday, Christine Campbell and Kate Spicer for editing and compiling this edition.

Bentley

Bentley lies in beautiful countryside on the edge of Constable's Dedham Vale and the Shotley Peninsula. The village is situated midway between the A12 and A137 roads, 7 miles from Ipswich and 12 miles from Colchester.

The Old English origin of Bentley is thought to be derived from the words 'beonet', meaning 'bent grass' and 'leah', meaning 'wood, clearing or meadow'. The countryside here was once heavily wooded and no doubt many clearings were made by man to provide land for his agricultural needs. The area is dominated by extensive chestnut woods and along the Bergholt Road, examples of the little known Wild Service tree can also be found.

The Case is Altered

Popularly known as 'The Case', a pub is thought to have existed in this area since 1777. The origin of the name is a frequent question which has remained unanswered although several theories exist:

1. Local legend has it that the pub was once held by a genial landlady who was not too fussy about payment for beer but when she married the, case was altered.
2. When Spanish soldiers were billeted in England they frequented the 'Casa Altera' or 'High House'.
3. The original pub stood further down the lane but to attract passing trade from the road, a nearby house was taken over and altered to become the present day pub. During extensive alterations during the past few years, evidence of bricked up doors and window were uncovered which could account for this story.

In 2011 the Case is Altered was put up for sale by its previous owners, Punch Taverns, and eventually in 2013 its doors closed. A group of dedicated and determined villagers started the 'Save the Case' campaign. Bentley Community Pub Ltd was formed and a community share offer was launched, giving supporters the opportunity to buy shares. On 18 February 2014 the keys were handed to the group and a programme of cleaning, renovation and redecoration began. Finally on 17 April (Maundy Thursday) the pub re-opened for business as Suffolk's first co-operative community pub. It is still wholly run by volunteers.

The Walks

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Circular Walk — 4 miles, several short cuts, 7 stiles | Page 6 |
| 2. Capel St Mary – 6 miles, crossing under the A12 no stiles | Page 8 |
| 3. East End — 3½ miles sometimes marshy in places, 4 stiles | Page 10 |
| 4. Dodnash Valley — 3½ miles, marshy in places 8 stiles | Page 12 |
| 5. The Railway — 4 miles, 2 cross field paths, A137, 500m, 6 stiles | Page 14 |
| 6. Old Hall Wood — 5 miles, a good leg stretcher, no stiles | Page 16 |

Some information before you go

The walks in this booklet are suitable for people of all ages and of average fitness. They are suitable for children but it is unlikely that you will make much progress with a push chair.

Rights of Way

The paths used on these walks are on public rights of way, although some short links may be on paths provided by land owners. Some of the walks also use sections of public highway to link the paths. Some of these including Grove Road, Hazel Shrub and Church Road are designated Quiet Lanes with signage to indicate to drivers that these narrow roads are a shared space.

Fingerposts (FP) & Waymarks (WM)

The start of most paths are marked with fingerposts and many routes are defined with waymarker arrows. The standard colours for waymark arrows are; yellow for footpaths, blue for bridleways, red for byways and brown for restricted byways.

Maps

The sections of Ordnance Survey maps provided with each walk should be all that you will need. If you require more detail, or to locate adjoining public rights of way, use the OS Explorer sheets 196 and 197. The blue grid square on the maps represent 1km (0.62 miles)

Distance

The distance of each walk is provided in the index. On average you should be able to cover between 3 and 4 miles in an hour on a country walk.

Footwear

Walking boots are recommended for all

seasons in order to protect your feet although walking shoes and trainers are adequate for much of the year. After wet weather it might be wise to wear wellies as some of the paths can get very muddy.

Dogs

You should always keep your dog on a lead in the countryside in order to avoid disturbing livestock and wildlife.

Clothing

Don't forget to take enough suitable clothing with you. When you are a mile or two from your car or nearby shelter and the heavens open up you will wish you had brought that waterproof. It can get quite chilly in an unexpected breeze or when you are out of the sun so it is well to be prepared.

Country Roads

Remember your Highway Code and walk on the right-hand side of the road if there is no footway. However when you are on the inside of a blind bend, cross over to the other side so that you can be seen sooner.

Gates

Always leave gates as you find them, if livestock are controlled by the gate, make sure you close the gate securely.

Car Parking

Lock your car securely and hide any tempting valuables out of sight. Remember always to park with care and consideration for others. If you are not on a public car park (e.g. pub) you should seek permission before you leave.

Walk No.1 Circular Walk

This circular walk is 3.5 miles around the outside edges of the village with links back to the centre like spokes of a wheel providing shortcuts. Most of the route is off road with one short cross field section. This walk has now become well established with wide paths and tracks and a variety of countryside to see. Unfortunately, the Great Storm of 1987 cleared many of the trees and efforts to replant will be seen on this walk.

Once you get started you will find the walk well marked with yellow circular walk arrows on Waymarkers (WM), and Fingerposts (FP) to guide you in either direction around the circuit.

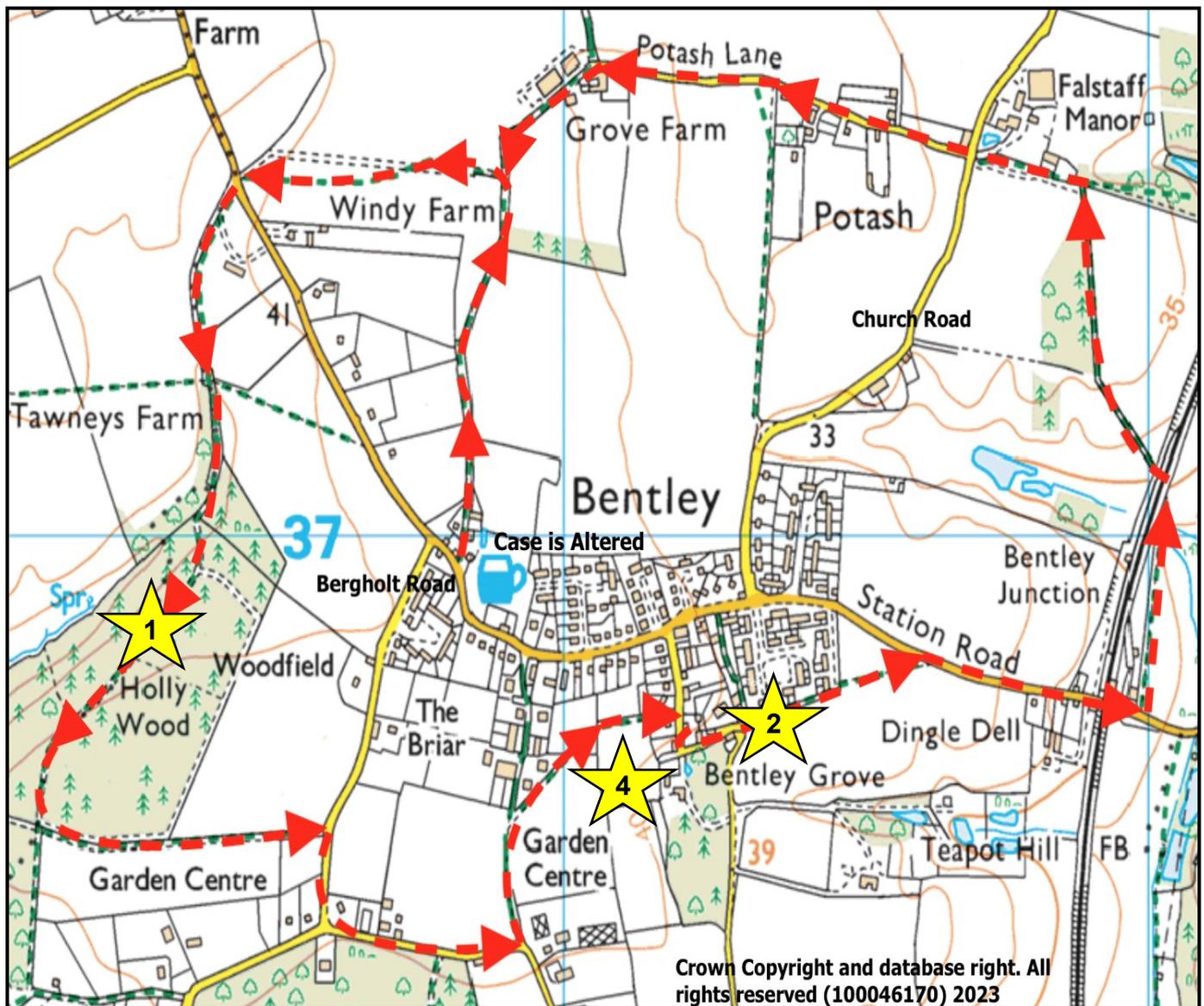
From the Case is Altered walk northwards along Case Lane past the playing field and out into open country. The path soon becomes a track with fields either side, and there is a T-junction marked by a Fingerpost before Grove Farm. Take the left track and follow this out to Capel Road.

Cross the road with care and enter the track, past the entrance to Earlwood, with a wire fence on your left you will enter a sunken track. This is called Cut Throat Lane, and I leave it to your imagination to decide why it got its name. Follow the old lane through the trees in the valley, ignoring any side turnings. As you rise up out of the valley bear right onto a wide track and into Holly Wood.

Continue through the woods on the wide track passing a bench under a tree and turn left onto the footpath marked with a (FP), along the edge of the first field after the trees, and out to the Bergholt Road. Turn right onto the road to the three-way junction, then left along Hazel Shrub. On the right is Dodnash Wood, taking its name from the 12th century Augustine Priory that once existed in the adjoining valley.

At the end of this short straight and just before the right hand bend turn left on to the bridleway (FP) across the field (back towards the village centre). As the bridleway continues and before the houses, take the footpath to the right along side the hedge. Follow this path over three stiles and through two pastures, to emerge onto Grove Road. If a short cut is required turn left to return to the centre of the village. Otherwise, turn right and follow the road around a left bend, continuing straight on at the next right-hand bend along a paved path to the rear of Silver Leys, and across an uncultivated field to reach Station Road. Be aware that the path emerges onto Station Road with a drop.

Turn right down the hill and cross the rail line. Bentley Station was once a



busy junction on the Great Eastern Railway serving the Hadleigh branch line. Opened in 1847 regular passenger and freight services ran to Capel St. Mary, Raydon and Hadleigh Stations. Passenger services ceased in 1932 and the line was finally closed under the Beeching axe in 1965. The station once boasted branch line platforms, freight yards, footbridge, and signal box. The Station Masters house, Crossing Keeper's Cottage and the Railway Tavern still remain as private houses.

Having crossed the line, take the field edge path on the left after the last house (FP). This path will lead you to a stile to cross the railway, make sure you "Stop, Look and Listen" before crossing as the trains travel at up to 100 mph on this section. The path continues between fences up the hill towards Falstaff Manor. This path meets a track at a T-junction, (FP) turn left and follow this track to Church Road.

Cross the road and continue down Potash Lane, straight through Grove Farm and out to the open fields. After the first left bend follow the track and path back to Case Lane, and the start of the walk at the Case is Altered.

Walk No.2 Capel St Mary

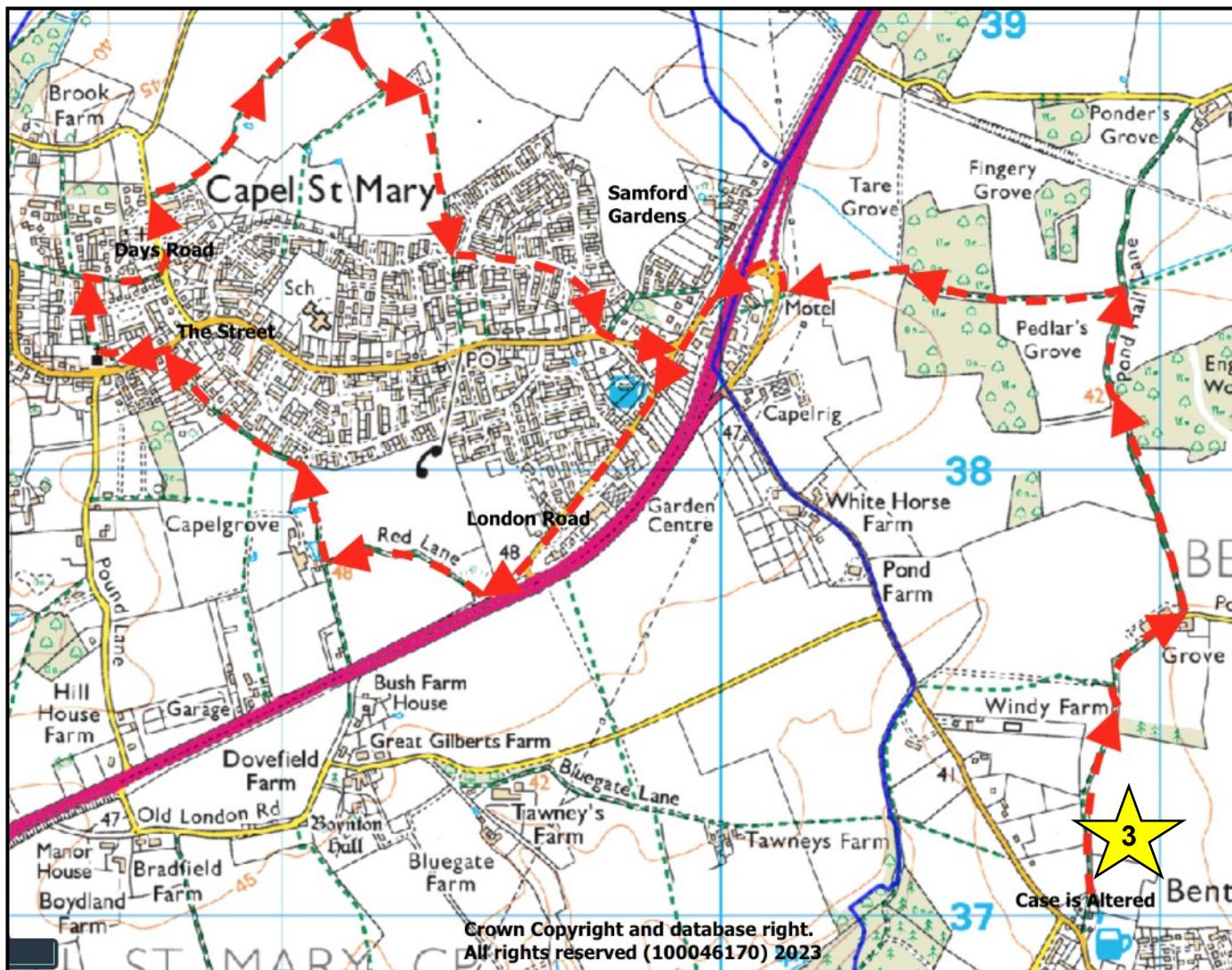
This walk is approximately 6 miles and runs across fields to reach the underpass to Capel St Mary at the A12. It then skirts around Capel St Mary and returns to the Case is Altered via the same route. As the walk is a loop you could cut it short to return to Bentley at any stage. The route is a mixture of off and on-road sections. Some of the sections can be quite muddy, some run through long grass.

From the Case is Altered walk up Case Lane past the entrance to the playing field and continue on to the footpath and then out into open country. Follow the path, ignoring the connecting track out to Capel Road. The path bends round to the right and crosses a farmyard. Just past the large barn on the left there is a Bridleway marked by a Fingerpost. This section can be quite muddy. Continue through wooded areas on the track known as Pond Hall Lane ignoring turnings to the left and right marked private. Just before you reach a wooden footbridge over a ditch, turn left onto a signposted footpath between two ash trees heading West towards the A12. The footpath runs alongside an open drainage ditch then enters more woodland. As it exits the wooded area bear half left to cross an open field. When you reach the far side of the field carry straight on across a rough area of long grass and continue to follow the track along the edge of the field which will lead down a slope to the roundabout on the A12 sliproad at junction 32A. Take care at this point – cross the road and keep to the left hand pavement under the underpass.

After the underpass, bear left after the Jet garage and walk along London Road with the White Horse pub on your right. At the end of London Road bear right just before you reach the A12, follow the road sign that says “Capel Grove only”. Keep to the right hand pavement until vegetation makes it impossible then follow the road as it bends sharp right leaving a residual footpath running ahead alongside the busy A12. This is labelled as a private road but it is also a public right of way. Follow the road (Red Lane) as it bends left and right but take care as there is no pavement and visibility is limited.

As you approach the start of buildings at Capel Grove look out for the end of the field on the left then look for a gap in the hedge on the right hand side. This marks the entrance to a footpath that is virtually hidden. Turn right onto this footpath and then bear left at the signpost to follow the onward route marked Bridleway. Follow this sheltered path until you emerge into an area of residential housing. Continue straight ahead on the pavement (along Cedars Lane) and turn left when you reach the main road, The Street.

Just before you reach the Pound Lane turning on the left, cross the road and take the path on the right towards the main entrance to St Mary's Church. Follow the path past the main church entrance and skirt around the building to the left, pass the new church hall and exit the church yard via the short flight



of steps. Continue on the path straight ahead. Cross the road and continue on the footpath opposite (yellow, waymark). Continue until you reach the new Saxon Meadows housing development, then turn right onto the footpath that crosses in front of you. Follow this path onto Days Road and turn left.

Walk north up Days Road and take the signposted footpath on the right just after the main entrance to Saxon Meadows on the left. The footpath can be muddy and slippery. At the intersection of several footpaths, keep right where a path leads forward on both left and right sides of the hedge in front of you. Then turn to the right and walk along the path to the left of a wire fence edging a field.

At the next footpath junction, take the path to the left which then arcs round to the right, then follow it across the open field and continue onto the sheltered path. Eventually emerge at Thorney Road (with a bus stop on your right) and turn left. Follow Thorney Road as it gradually arcs round to the right.

When you reach the main road (The Street), cross the road at this point and turn left, continue towards the Jet garage using the right hand pavement. Continue under the underpass and then re-trace your steps back towards Case Lane and the start of the walk at the Case is Altered.

Walk No.3 East End

From the Case is Altered turn right along Capel Road then left down Bergholt Road and walk 500 metres to a Fingerpost (FP) and waste bin on the right to a path between the hedges just before the Threeways junction. Walk to the end of the field to join a crossing track, indicated by a FP. Turn left to reach the main entrance of the wood yard.

Cross the drive and take the path (FP) alongside the wood yard fence to join the track at the rear. Walk straight along the main track, ignoring any side turnings, to the end at the top of a hill (FP). Follow the path ahead as it meanders down to eventually reach a bridge over Dodnash Brook. At the other side follow the left path up the steps to a kissing gate, then diagonally left across the field to reach a track via another kissing gate.

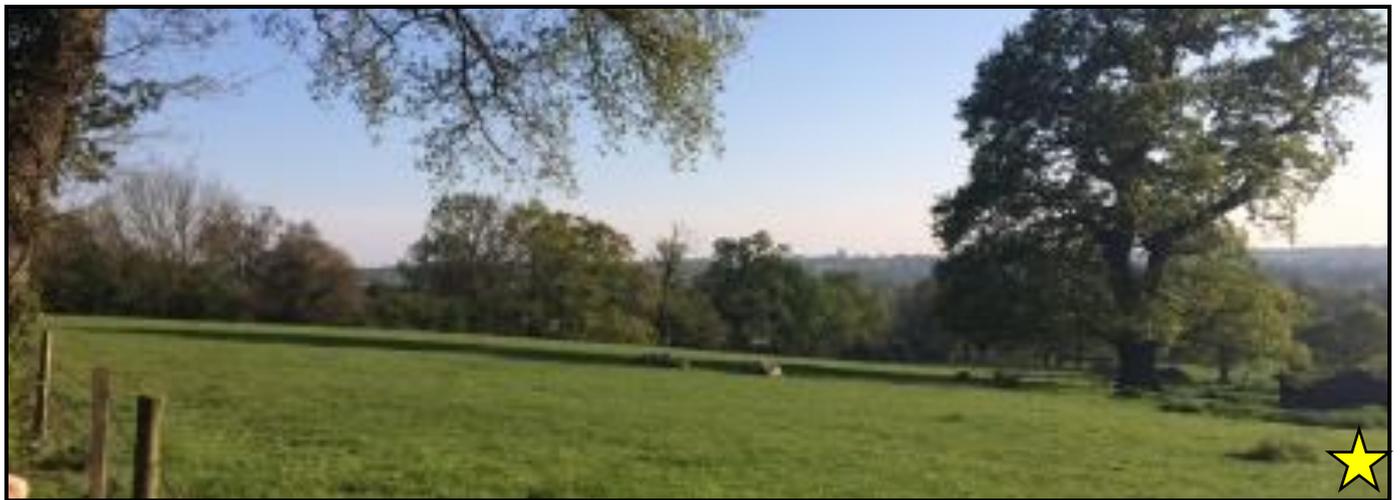
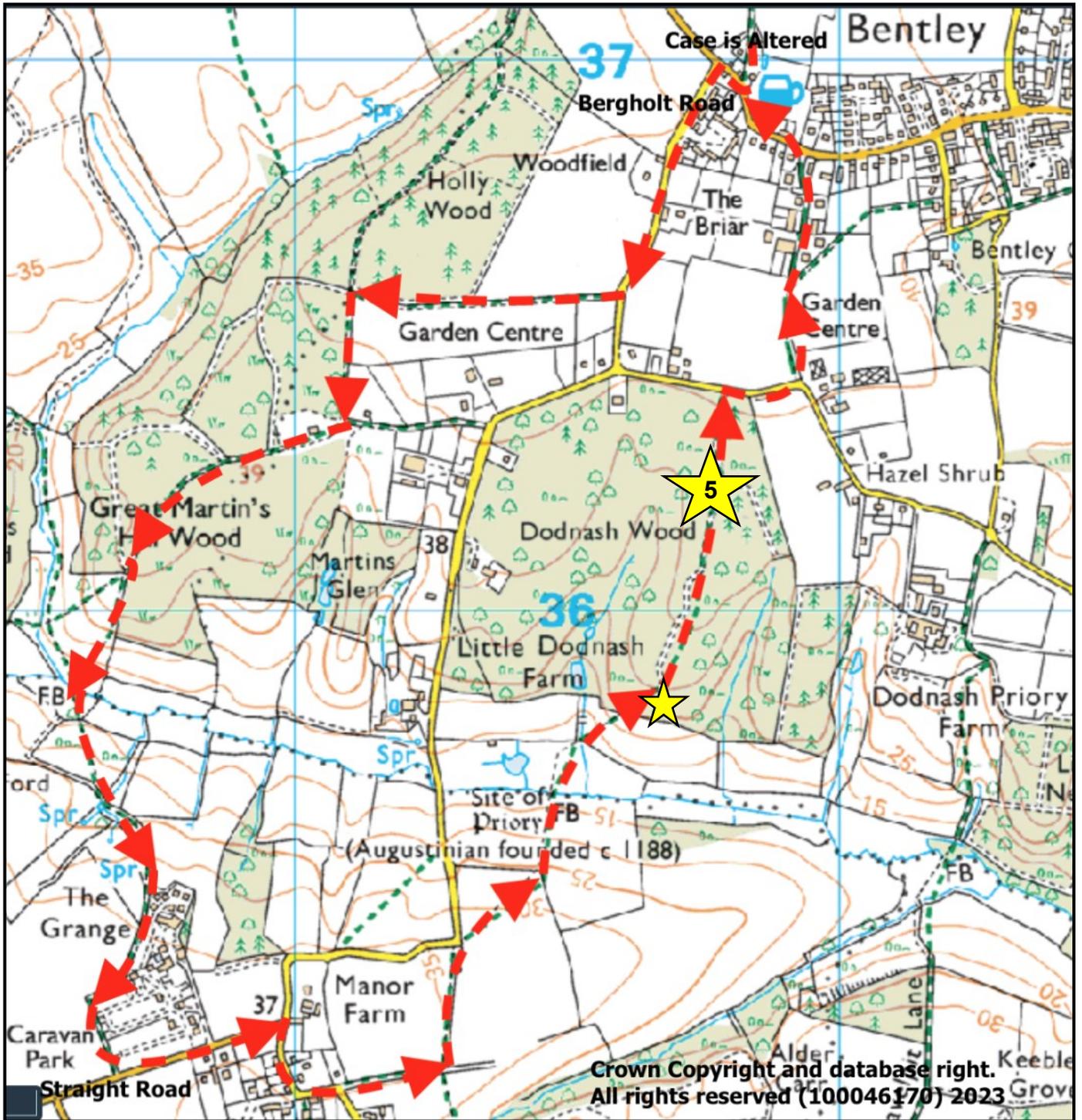
Turn left and follow the track up to the rear of the caravan park and around the edge to reach Straight Road. Turn left and walk to the junction at the end of the road, then right (signed East End) past the Royal Oak pub. Continue around the next left bend and, at the next right bend, with the house 'South View' on your left, continue straight along the footpath ahead.

At the junction at the end, turn left on a field-edge path and through a gate to reach the Bergholt Road. Turn immediately right through a gap in the hedge to walk diagonally down the field to a further gap in the hedge. After passing through this gap in the hedge continue straight down across the next field to reach a footbridge over the Dodnash Brook again.

On the right in the meadow is the Dodnash Priory Stone, all that remains of the 12th century Augustine Priory that once existed here and believed to have been founded in 1188 by an ancestor of the Earl of Norfolk. Originally spelt Dodneis, the Priory is perpetuated in the modern name for the area now dominated by the extensive Dodnash Wood.

Cross a very marshy area of meadow ahead, diagonally right to a stile, and again diagonally right up the next section of meadow to a stile in the fence at the edge of the wood. Here is a bench made from a railway sleeper. Walk up through the wood, the path soon becomes a wide track to eventually reach a kissing gate at Hazel Shrub.

Turn right along the road and, at the first bend, turn left on the bridleway (FP) across the fields to join Link Lane. Follow the lane out to the main road through the village and turn left to return to the Case is Altered.



Walk No.4 Dodnash Valley

From the Case is Altered turn left along the road for about 150 metres and then right into Link Lane. Follow this bridleway past the houses and between a fence and a hedge (The Acorns, and Oakwood House) and out across the field to Hazel Shrub. Turn right along the road for 150 metres and then turn left into Dodnash Wood through a kissing gate. Follow the track to the end bearing right down through the trees to a stile in the fence, besides which is a bench made from a railway sleeper.

Cross the pasture to a stile and a gate down to the right, then bear right across the next section of marshy land to a stile and a footbridge across the stream. Before you cross, note the piece of masonry on the left. This is all that remains of the Dodnash (originally Dodneis) Priory. A 12th century Augustine structure giving its name to the surrounding area. Walk up across the field on the other side to a gap in the hedge and then diagonally right across the next field to another gap in the hedge by a large oak tree, leading out onto Bergholt Road. Turn immediately left through a gateway onto a field edge path, at the large oak continue straight into the next field (Waymark in next field). This leads down and up to the houses ahead passing a children's play park and emerges on the road at East End.

Walk along the pavement past Broom Knoll and turn left on a footpath between a house called Quiet Ways and a pailing fence, along a short section of road by a line of garages (on your left) then right at the end to Slough Road. Turn left along the road, first on a path on the left, then when the path ends crossing the road to a parallel access road leading out to the A137 Ipswich to Manningtree Road. Turn left for 50 metres then left again into Gravel Pit Lane.

This lane leads straight to Bentley, first as a road, then as a track and eventually a footpath through a wonderful tunnel of foliage to the valley. At the end of this natural tunnel go left over a stile by a gate then right through a section of rough pasture. Pass through another gap and diagonally right across another piece of rough pasture (with newly planted willows 2022) to a stile and a bridge across a stream.

From the bridge follow the path ahead, taking care over the marshy areas particularly after the next stile beyond the trees. Follow the waymarkers delineating the route of the path up through the valley. Follow the path right and up (after the pond on your right) to an oak tree where you bear left keeping to the right of the hedge heading towards Dodnash Priory Farm, then right along a hedge lined drive, across the crossroad, and into Grove Road (a Quiet Lane) to the centre of the village. At the T-junction opposite the bus stop and post box turn left and return to your starting point at the Case is Altered.



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Walk No.5 The Railway

From the Case is Altered walk northwards along Case Lane past the playing field and out into open country. The path soon becomes a track with fields either side, and there is a T-junction marked by a Fingerpost (FP) before Grove Farm, continue on round the right hand bend. Just past the large barn on the left there is a Bridleway marked by a Fingerpost. This is Pond Hall Lane, which you follow through the trees for around ½ mile. At the junction just before a wooden bridge, turn right on the path along the field edge, following a deep ditch on your left. Where the path and ditch curve to the right, the path runs parallel to the bed of the old railway. When the two are at the same level bear left and continue along the track bed. On this secluded section of the track it is reputed that the Royal Train of King George VI once halted overnight during World War II.

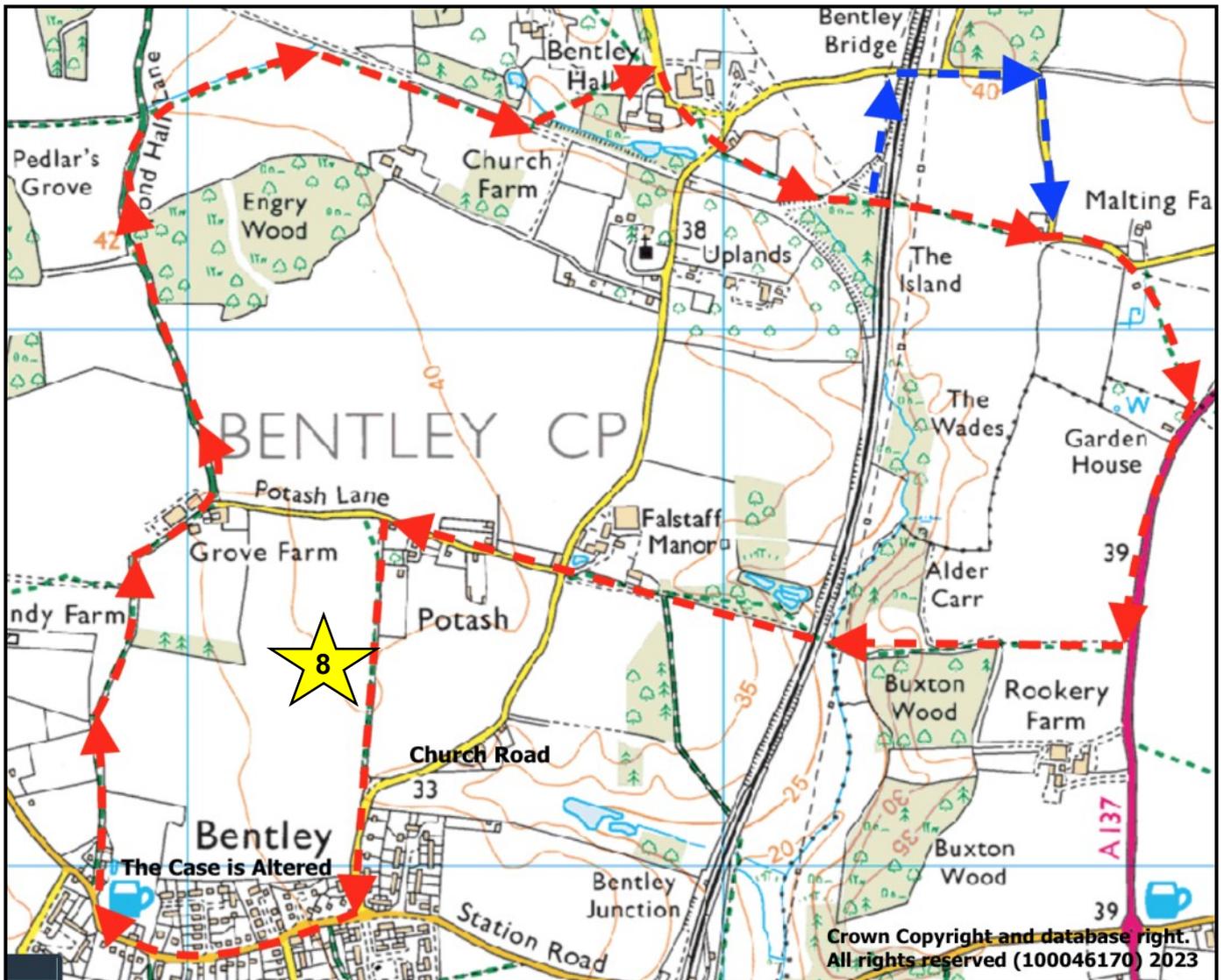
When you reach the point where the track bed is overgrown and prevents further progress, turn left through a small gate (waymark indicated) into Bentley Park. Walk down across the ditch over a sleeper bridge and up to the gate ahead (tennis court on your left). Cross the next section of meadow, passing to the right of a large beech tree to reach a gate and stile onto the road opposite the Long Barn. This Tudor barn is 55 metres long and is reckoned to be the longest historic barn in Britain. Turn right and, just around the bend opposite the end of the barn, seek out the path down to the right through the trees to reach Church Road.

To the right of the trees is Bentley Hall, the medieval seat of the Tollemache family. The medieval west wing and an outbuilding remain, together with the 16th century hall. Follow down through the trees to rejoin Church Road.

Just up to the right is a restored crossing cottage at the point where the Hadleigh railway crossed the road and was controlled by a pair of gates. However follow the footpath directly in front of you right of the entrance to Hillside (FP). Follow the path between the garden fence and trees, continuing on the embankment through the trees to meet a field.

Follow the right side of the field fence until you reach a concrete post that marks a right turn onto The Island, a triangular area of land formed by the embankments of the old railway junction. This can be seen quite clearly on Ordnance Survey maps, although the Ipswich leg of the triangle was probably never used.

Follow the path across the Island to reach a stile giving access to a crossing over the main line. Cross with great care, the trains can approach around the bend at up to 100 mph and you must remember to Stop, Look and Listen. Follow the electricity wires on the other side to reach Church Road at a bend. Turn right and walk along the road to Maltings Cottage, turning right on the footpath (FP) at the end of the road side hedge.



Follow the right hedge then the electricity wires across the field to a stile in the fence at the A137. Turn right along the roadside verge, taking great care to keep off the road when traffic approaches. Before Rookery Farm there is a large gap in the hedge showing the divide of two fields, shortly after, the footpath is found on your right (FP). Follow this footpath aiming for a stile in the rabbit fence at the corner of Buxton Wood.

Follow the track ahead to the right of the woods and down into a valley, to reach a steep railway embankment. Cross the railway over two stiles again taking great care to Stop, Look and Listen for the speeding trains. On the other side follow the path to the left of the fence ahead, continuing straight up along the track to reach Church Road by Falstaff Manor.

Cross the road and continue down Potash Lane, turning left after 350 metres at Red Cottages (FP) on to a field edge path. At the far side of the field descend to Nackey Down (also known as Gypsy Down and other variations) onto Church Road and turn right up the hill to the war memorial. Turn right through the village to return to the Case is Altered.

Warning: In the future the railway crossing point used for this walk may close, if this occurs please use the alternative route, shown in blue.

Walk No.6 Old Hall Road

From the Case is Altered walk northwards along Case Lane past the playing field and out into open country. The path soon becomes a track with fields either side, and there is a T-junction marked by a Fingerpost (FP) before Grove Farm, continue on round the right hand bend. Just past the large barn on the left there is a Bridleway marked by a Fingerpost. This is Pond Hall Lane, which you follow crossing a wooden cart bridge and the bed of the dismantled railway to reach Bentley Hall Road, at Pond Hall Farm.

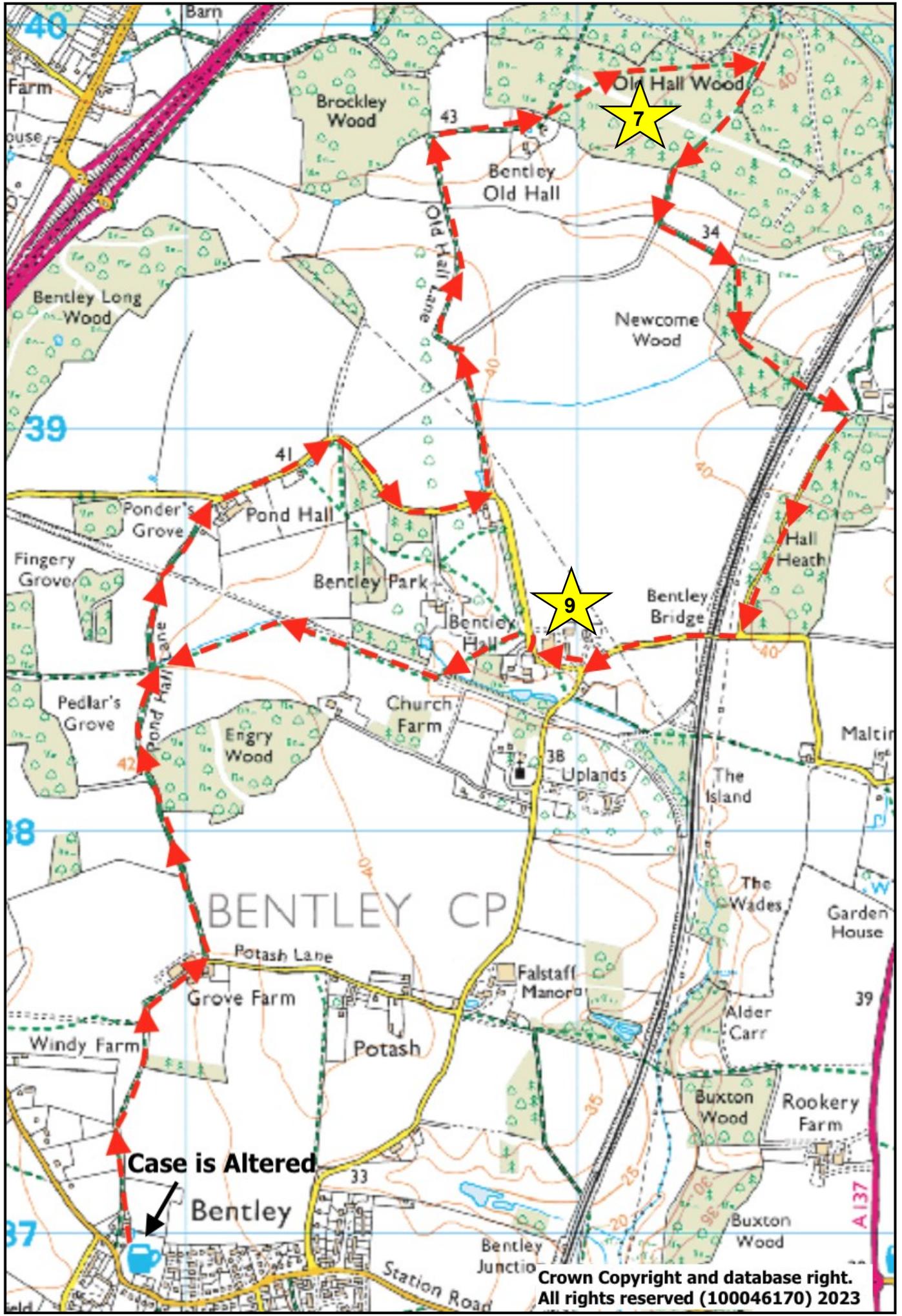
Turn right and follow the road past Bentley Park (not a public park) and Park Cottage, then take the signed track (FP) leading to Old Hall. Walk the full length of this track past Old Hall, to a kissing gate at the edge of Old Hall Woods. Turn right along a meandering path and almost immediately bear left (keeping right will take you along the edge of the wood) through the fir trees. Cross the first "Ride" (wide access through the wood) and continue on the path meandering through the trees to eventually reach a wide Bridleway (FP) through the centre of the woods.

Turn right and follow this Bridleway out of the woods and down to a T-junction in the dip. Turn left and follow the path up through Newcome Wood, out the other side and across the railway on a brick built bridge to reach the road leading to Bentley Manor. Turn right to reach Church Road, and then right again to cross the railway bridge.

Follow this road keeping right at the T-junction signed to Capel St Mary (there is a footpath on the left hand verge if required) pass the end of the Long Barn and the entrance to Bentley Hall. Bentley Hall was the medieval seat of the Tollemache family until the acquisition of lands at Helmingham where the family later became established. In 1668 the hall was sold to the Gosnold family from Otley, famed through Bartholomew who founded the first European colony in North America in 1607, and gave his name to Martha's Vineyard. In 1974 the Hall appeared abandoned and due for demolition but was saved by a major restoration programme.

After the bend, turn left over a stile (FP) giving access onto Bentley Park. Bear left to the fenced off Chestnut tree to a gate by the tennis court. Walk down to a sleeper bridge in the next section of the meadow and up to a wicket gate giving access onto the bed of the dismantled railway.

Turn right and follow the old railway to a point where the path bears left (WM) onto an adjoining field, and then along the edge of the field to meet Pond Hall Lane, by the wooden cart bridge. Turn left down this lane to return to Grove Farm, then right to return along Case Lane to the Case is Altered.





Above:
Walk 1 — 4. Oak Tree behind Village Hall

Middle:
Walk 3 — 5. Dodnash Woods

Bottom:
Walk 4 — 6. Water Meadow



Above:
Walk 6 — 7. Old Hall Woods

Middle:
Walk 5 — 8. View south from Potash Lane

Bottom:
Walk 6 — 9 Long Barn.

The Countryside Code



Your guide to enjoying parks and waterways, coast and countryside

Respect everyone

- be considerate to those living in working in and enjoying the countryside
- leave gates and property as you find them
- do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking
- be nice, say hello, share the space
- follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available

Respect the environment

- take your litter home — leave no trace of your visit
- do not light fires and only have BBQ's where signs say you can
- always keep dogs under control and in sight
- dog poo — bag it and bin it — any public waste bin will do
- care for nature — do not cause damage or disturbance

Respect the outdoors

- Check your route and local conditions
- Plan your adventure — and know what to expect and what you can do
- Enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory

Photographs in this edition have been supplied by:

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Bob Mawkes
Nicky Moxey
Marianne Munday
Nigel Paul
Kate Spicer



This book was originally written by Michael Anderton



Follow advice and local signs

The arrows show the legal and recorded rights of way for different user groups

Footpath



Bridleway



Restricted Byway



Byway open to all traffic



Permissive Path

Follow the advice on local signs as landowners voluntarily provide access to these paths and choose who can use them. Some open access areas are also made available in the same way.



National Trail

National Trails are created for walking, with horse-riding and cycling possible on some trails or trail sections.

www.nationaltrail.co.uk



Open Access

You can walk and explore away from paths

www.openaccess.naturalengland.org.uk

For further information visit www.gov.uk/country-code

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