



**Great Barford and The River Great Ouse**

**A riverside route which follows the River Great Ouse, with historic sites at Barford Bridge, Danish Camp and Willington Dovecote**

<b>Essential Facts</b>	
▪ Route distance:	12.5 km (7.8 miles)
▪ Approximate time:	3 hours 15 mins
▪ Optional shorter route:	8.9 km (5.6 miles)
▪ Approx. total ascent:	30 metres
▪ Start point Grid Ref:	TL 134 516
▪ GPS Ref:	TL13421 51665
▪ Recommended O.S. Map:	Explorer 208
▪ Toughness Rating	The Chilterns 1

Please see the notes on Toughness Ratings at the end of this report

**Up For A  
CHALLENGE ?**

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An Individual Walk  
A Team Effort**

**Full Info from the Great Walks web site**

## THE ROUTE

Like our Two Rivers route, this walk starts outside the Anchor Inn, Great Barford. Park in New Road, outside the church. Barford's fifteenth-century bridge is a popular mooring for river craft.

From start point, **S**, approach the bridge. Do not cross but descend on the western side to a footpath along the river bank. Continue over stiles to reach a footbridge. Cross the river on to an island. Cross another small bridge and pass a lock-keeper's cottage on the left. Cross the lock. Continue right, along a track, with the river on your right. Where the track turns sharp left continue straight on to reach Willington Lock, at **A** (for a shorter walk, cross the river here).

Continue along the riverside, on a tarmac path, and after a short dogleg follow a cycle track along the former Bedford to Sandy railway to pass 'Danish Camp'. After approx. 1 km, reach a T-junction, at **B**, and turn left to find Willington Dovecote and Stables.

Follow the road bending left at the church and continue through the village of Willington. At the far end of the village, at the Methodist chapel, veer left and continue along Chapel Lane, joining a concrete track. At the end turn left to rejoin the cycle track. Retrace your steps to Willington Lock, at **A**.

Cross the river over the weir and on the far side turn sharp left along the riverbank. Where the path drops down to the right, turn left to follow the edge of a field, eventually returning to the riverbank. Where a hedge crosses the path, stay close to the river to find a stile within the hedge, at **C**. Turn half right and take a diagonal course across a field to reach a gate in the opposite corner. Join a track. After 50 metres, turn right across a bridge and through a gate. Turn left to follow an indistinct path beside a hedge. Near a pylon, cross a stile and walk up a lane.

At the top of the lane, cross the main road and follow tarmac footways to cross the A421 dual carriageway. Leave the second roundabout via a road signposted to Renhold. Follow the road on the right-hand verge for about 800 metres and then turn right into Woodfield Lane. When the lane enters a private estate veer left along a concrete track round to the rear of the property. Avoid a footpath to the left through an avenue of conifers and continue across a yard in the direction of overhead power cables to find the path continuing along the left side of a hedge.

As the path emerges from a spinney, at **D**, turn sharp right and enter a wood. Reaching a bridge over a ditch, turn right and cross the bridge. Follow the path beside a stream. As the stream turns right pass straight on through a hedge and continue for a further 150 metres to a waymarker. Turn sharp left and cross a field heading for another waymarker in the hedge opposite. Turn right at the hedge. Follow the hedge around to the left to reach a kissing gate. Turn briefly left, through a gate, and head downhill with a hedge on the right.

Cross a stile and turn right to follow a path under the A421. Emerging from the subway, avoid a track to the right and continue straight on. Climb over an embankment and continue with a stream on your right to join a road. Continue on the road.

On reaching a crossroads, go straight on into the High Street, passing a shop on the right. Continue through the village to the bridge. Turn left to return to The Anchor Inn, **S**.



**Willington Dovecote**



**Great Varford Bridge**

## Refreshment

<p>The Anchor Inn Public House New Road, Gt Barford Tel: 01234 780364 Meals and bar snacks available</p>	<p>The Three Horseshoes Public House Top End, Renhold Tel: 01234 870275 Meals and snacks</p>
<p>Danish Camp Visitor Centre Restaurant and Café Chapel Lane, Willington Tel: 01234 838709 Meals and bar snacks</p>	<p>The Crown Public House Station Road, Willington Tel: 01234 838308 Ales and food</p>

## LOCAL INFO

**Willington Dovecote and Stables** were commissioned by Sir John Gostwick, the Earl of Gostwick, and they were completed around 1541, at about the time when Henry VIII is thought to have visited the village. The stone for the buildings was obtained from the dissolution of Newnham Priory, between Willington and Bedford.

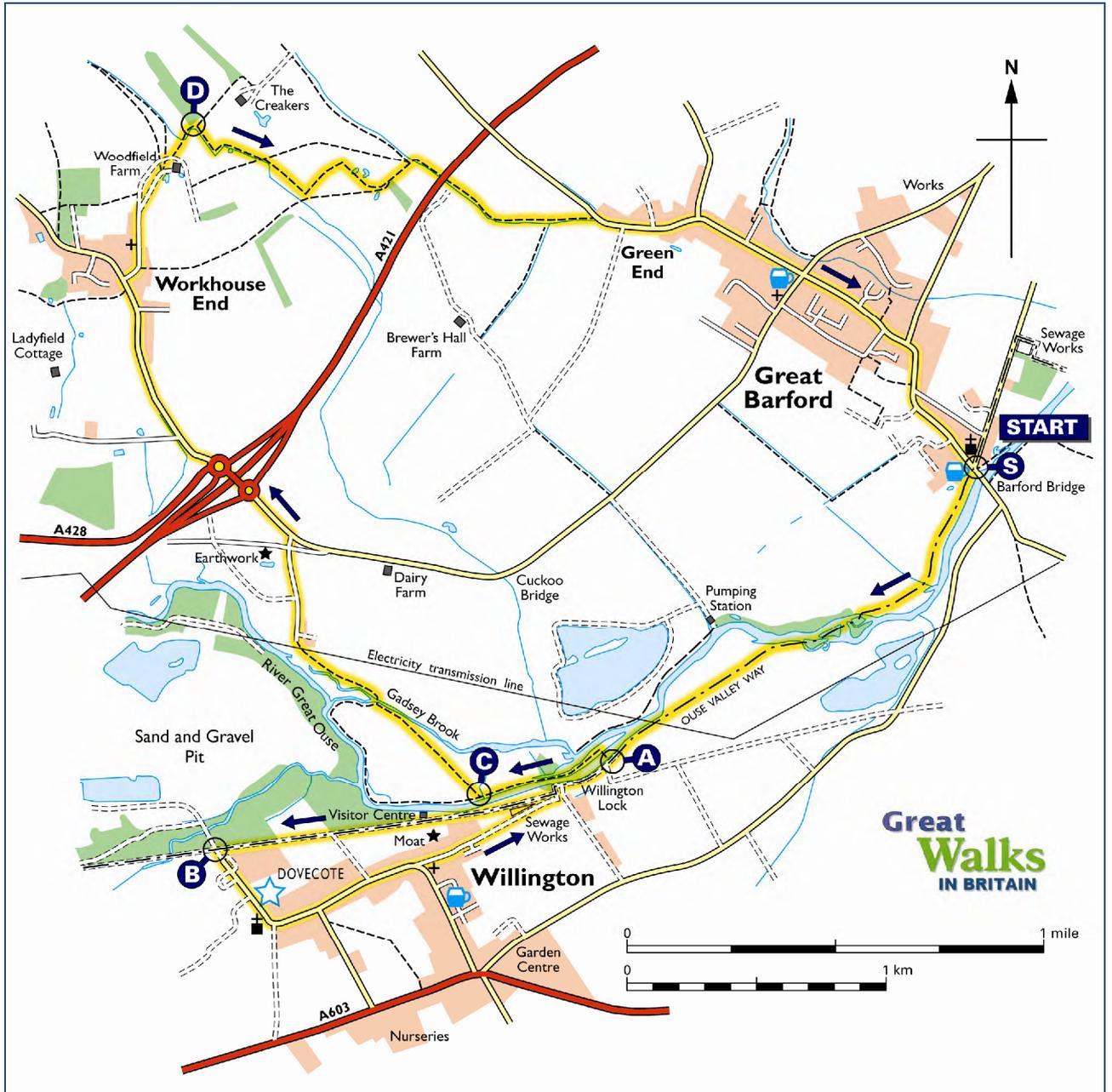
The dovecote has 1,500 nesting boxes within. There is allegedly a signature of John Bunyan carved into the stone. It is also a nesting site for barn owls and kestrels.

Sir John is buried in the nearby Church of St Lawrence in Willington, and above his tomb is hung the tabard that he wore at a diplomatic meeting between Henry and the King of France – known as ‘Field of the Cloth of Gold’.

The moat and earthwork known locally as **Danish Camp** is an English Heritage scheduled monument, believed to have been built by the Vikings as a place in which to live and a harbour to repair their boats. The moat (now a small lake and a home to ornamental wild fowl) is situated on the southern side of the present day cycle track. The Visitor Centre hosts various activities and guided tours are available at certain times.

## GREAT BARFORD & THE RIVER GREAT OUSE G.P.S. WAYPOINTS

WAYPOINT NAME	MAP REF	CO-ORDINATES	ELEVATION: Metres
BAR S	S	TL 13421 51665	20
BAR A	A	TL 12021 50501	20
BAR B	B	TL 10487 50140	23
BAR C	C	TL 11513 50355	20
BAR D	D	TL 10380 52988	50



MAP LEGEND					
	Great Walks route		Church with tower		Spot height - metres
	M6 Motorway		Church with spire		Information centre
	A23 Main road		Other place of worship		Parking
	B2116 Secondary road		Cathedral / Abbey		Public convenience
	Minor road		Building		Public house
	Other road		Built up area		Picnic site
	Track		Woodland		Camp site
	Footpath		Sand, shingle or mud		Major tourist feature
	Bridleway		Water feature		Other tourist feature
	National trail				
	Railway				

## Safety First

**Safety should always** be your first priority in planning and undertaking a walk, whether on your own or leading a group. Please read these Safety First and Walking Our Routes notes.

**Lead a group** of other walkers only if you have leadership and navigational experience adequate for the 'worst case' conditions which may be encountered on the particular walk, bearing in mind the terrain, possible weather and navigational demands.

**Weigh up the capabilities** of your party, in terms of fitness and walking speed. Adjust your time expectations accordingly.

**Ensure** all your party are adequately clothed for the weather and conditions. Footwear is particularly important. Clothing must protect against cold, wet or strong sun according to the time of year.

**Emergencies** are quite rare, but it is essential to think ahead about what to do if someone in your party sustains an injury. Will you have a First Aid kit? Is there a qualified First Aider in the party? How could help be summoned in a serious eventuality?

**Refreshment**, particularly water, can be vital. Dehydration in hot summer conditions can be rapid, and frequent intake of fluids is essential.

**On tougher walks** it is a good idea to tell someone where you are planning to go – and when you expect to be back. Remember - mobile phones often lose reception in mountainous or isolated areas.

**All our walks use legitimate routes:** Public Rights of Way, Public Footpaths, Bridleways, Permissive Paths, Access Land, Byways and Roads.

**Road** walking calls for particular care. When there is no defined footpath or verge wide enough for safe walking it is usually best to walk on the right – facing oncoming traffic. An exception may be a tight bend, where walkers would be more visible on the left.

**Occasionally** you may find a public footpath blocked or unuseable. It is perfectly in order to take the shortest available diversion without damaging crops, perhaps around a field margin.

**It is courteous** to close gates after passing through, sometimes even if the gate was open when you arrived – particularly if it is obvious livestock may escape.

**Mutual respect** for farm animals is to be encouraged! Don't frighten or annoy them, but equally don't put your party members in danger or discomfort. You certainly wouldn't be the first walkers to go round the outside of a field of frisky bullocks.

**Dogs** should always be kept on a lead anywhere near farm animals, and under close supervision elsewhere in the countryside.

## Walking Our Routes

**Our walks** are designed to be negotiated using the route directions in conjunction with the map section provided. We suggest walkers also take the Ordnance Survey Explorer or Outdoor Leisure map recommended for each walk.

**On mountain, moorland and open heathland** walks it is **ESSENTIAL** to have navigational expertise and tools, including the recommended Ordnance Survey map(s).

**Take care** to observe any cautions in the route description; exposed paths, areas liable to flooding etc.

**Consider conditions before setting off.** Will heavy rain have made a water meadow impassable? Will frost or snow make a path slippery?

**When navigating the route** look for clues to confirm you are in the right place. Are map features where you would expect on the ground? Are features mentioned in the text where expected? If you suspect you may have taken a wrong turn, take action sooner rather than later. It is better to re-trace to a known point rather than carry on regardless with the possibility of becoming increasingly confused.

**All our routes are carefully checked** before publication, but features can change on the ground – sometimes surprisingly quickly. Footpaths may be re-routed, buildings can appear or change significantly and these days pub names seem to change frequently.

**The approximate time** given for each walk is based on an average walking speed of 2.5 miles per hour (4 km/hour), plus an allowance for ascent, descent and any difficult terrain.

**Total ascent** is the approximate total ascent over the whole walk.

**GPS users** can enter in the waypoints provided in each of our walk reports. It is important to read our guide **Introducing GPS for Walkers**, available as a PDF file from the Great Walks in Britain web site.

**Remember that GPS** is a great navigational tool, but only one of those available to the navigator. Never dispense with conventional map and compass – and the training and skills to use them, especially on mountain, moorland or open heathland walks.

### TOUGHNESS RATINGS

All our **Chilterns** routes can be undertaken by reasonably fit walkers able to utilise our map segments, together with the route guidance notes. Always consider recent and forecast weather.

Each walk has been allocated a **Toughness Rating**:

1. Easier walks with modest ascent and generally on well defined paths. There may be stiles or narrow gateways to negotiate.
2. Routes which are more demanding. They may include more ascent and possibly paths which are looser or more difficult underfoot.
3. More strenuous walks with some steep sections, higher paths or places which may be wet and boggy.
4. The most demanding walks in this edition. There may be prolonged steep ascents. Conditions may be challenging underfoot.

Toughness Ratings are allocated in the context of the terrain in the edition area. For example a walk rated as demanding in the Chilterns may be equivalent to an easier or moderate route in the Brecon Beacons.