

# Welcome to Gislingham

The village of Gislingham is in rural mid Suffolk, 9 miles north of Stowmarket. There is a thriving shop, which as well as supplying a wide range of fresh meats, delicatessen, and bakery products provides take-away food and beverages such that you can picnic during your walk; and a village hall where car parking is available.

## History

Gislingham's recorded history starts in 910 A.D. when a Norseman, Gisling started a settlement, probably on the site of an existing Saxon village. The Domesday Book described it as a prosperous and populous village with three manors and ten estates; the place names of Rush Green and Jenny's Farm go back to this time almost 1,000 years ago. From 1150 to 1312 the village was home to the Knights Templar; their Hall was probably at the 15th C. Manor Farm. The parish had a brick-works which employed 11 people, located near the railway line and a fine windmill, built in 1821 on the north side of Mill Street, which operated for over a century.

## Church of St. Mary the Virgin

The Church is around 900 years old and is Grade 1 listed. Of particular interest is the fine red brick tower, the double - hammerbeam roof and the Georgian box pews. There are fragments of rare 15th C. painted glass in the North window including possibly the oldest botanical depictions in the UK. The 6 bells, which had not rung for 60 years, were refurbished and 2 more added in 2006 to make the church popular with visiting ringers. In 1822 a bell-ringing record was set here which stood for over 150 years. A tablet in the belfry commemorates the local feat with the professions of the champion ringers illustrated by the tools of their usual trades.



This leaflet has two longer varied walks with three alternative shorter versions including one suitable for pushchairs, and can be used with **Ordnance Survey Explorer Map No. 230 (Diss)**.

The car park is at Grid Reference 075718 on the main road-junction in the village centre; nearest post code for Sat-Nav: IP23 8JX.

## Public Transport:

### **Bus (Galloways) No. 457 or 458:**

From Stowmarket at 10.00 am, returning from Gislingham at 13.57; and from Diss at 11.10 am, returning from Gislingham at 15.25; weekdays only.

**Tel: 08712 002233** or visit: [www.travelineeastanglia.co.uk](http://www.travelineeastanglia.co.uk)

## Access Suffolk linking communities to nature

Published by Gislingham Parish Council with the assistance of Suffolk County Council

Discover more circular walks and great days out in the countryside at [www.discoversuffolk.org.uk](http://www.discoversuffolk.org.uk)

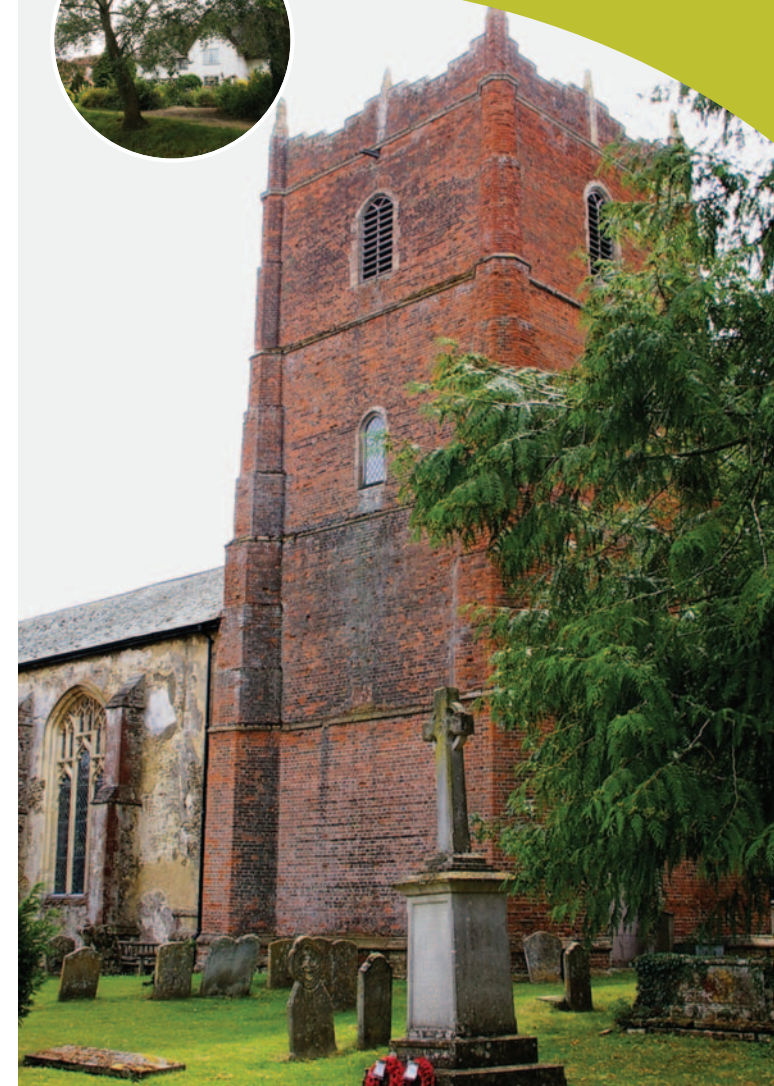


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## CIRCULAR WALKS

# Gislingham





# Circular Walk I

About 4.25 miles (6.8 Km)

Turn left from the Village Hall car park onto Mill Street and turn immediately left again onto Thornham Road. Follow the road to the front of St Mary's Church and take the signed footpath right, through the churchyard to the field beyond ①. The footpath goes diagonally (south-east) across the field to meet a hedge; with the hedge on your left continue on to reach Coldhams Lane ②.

Turn right and immediately left across the lane and follow the footpath round the field edge (hedge on your left) until turning left over a wooden footbridge which crosses a ditch through the hedge. Follow the path across the field and after going through a gap in the hedge opposite, turn right onto a wide track ③ which leads over the railway line on a brick bridge. Walk along this track, which narrows to a path continuing straight onwards through a small wood and then follow the path alongside a field with the hedge on your left. Ignore the first path off to your left.

As you approach a clump of trees about ½ mile (800

metres) after the bridge, the path forks; bear slightly left past some ponds and keeping to the left (north) of the cottages ④ (hidden by the trees) until meeting a concrete track. Turn immediately right past the front of Little Swattesfield. Follow the concrete track, which becomes a wide grassy path through woodland ⑤ and then walk down the field edge until reaching Clay Street ⑥ in about ½ mile (800 metres).

(\*) Go straight over this road and continue down the wide track, crossing the ford, to the hamlet of Wickham Street ⑦. (A path left before the ford leads to a footbridge, if the river is high). At the main road, turn right and walk along the road edge (no pavement) for 300 metres. Turn right over a wooden bridge (footpath signposted by the first bus-stop on the right); follow this path between hedges until you reach a large arable field ⑧. Turn left onto the field-edge; then immediately turn left again, to join a path through a small spinney. Emerge from the wood, turn right, and follow the field edge with a ditch and hedge on your right. At the far end of this field turn left, entering a small copse ⑨ which you walk through.

Cross over a plank bridge onto a field edge, and turn left and immediately left again, for 15 metres taking you round the end of the wood. You are now facing a wide gap in the hedge, with a wooden signpost ⑩. Turn right; and take the grassy track (north) with hedge on your left heading away from the small wood; follow this track until the hedge ends, then bear right for about 70 metres on a wide farm track towards a large oak tree.

The oak tree stands in a large gap between the hedges ⑪ next to a wooden signpost, and close to power lines on wooden posts to the left of the buildings of Starhouse Farm. Continue ahead, under the power lines with the farmhouse and buildings on the right, but keeping to the right side of the hedge that leads away from you. Ignore the grass farm track crossing your way ahead, and keep the hedge on your left along another field edge.

After about 300 metres, and before you reach the end of the field, turn left through the hedge over a small plank bridge ⑫. Walk diagonally across the field to meet a substantial footbridge through the next hedge; one often sees Fallow Deer in this field, particularly in winter. Walk diagonally across the next field to 2 stiles crossing over the railway line (note caution notices). From the crossing go about 30 metres to the next field corner, turn left and follow the well used path around this field, keeping either hedge or ditch on your left.

At the final hedge end ⑬ go straight across a wide grassy area to join Morleys Lane ⑭; turn right up the lane and continue north into and along the High Street noting some of the old village houses ⑮. Go straight on to return to the Village Hall.

## Alternative Route

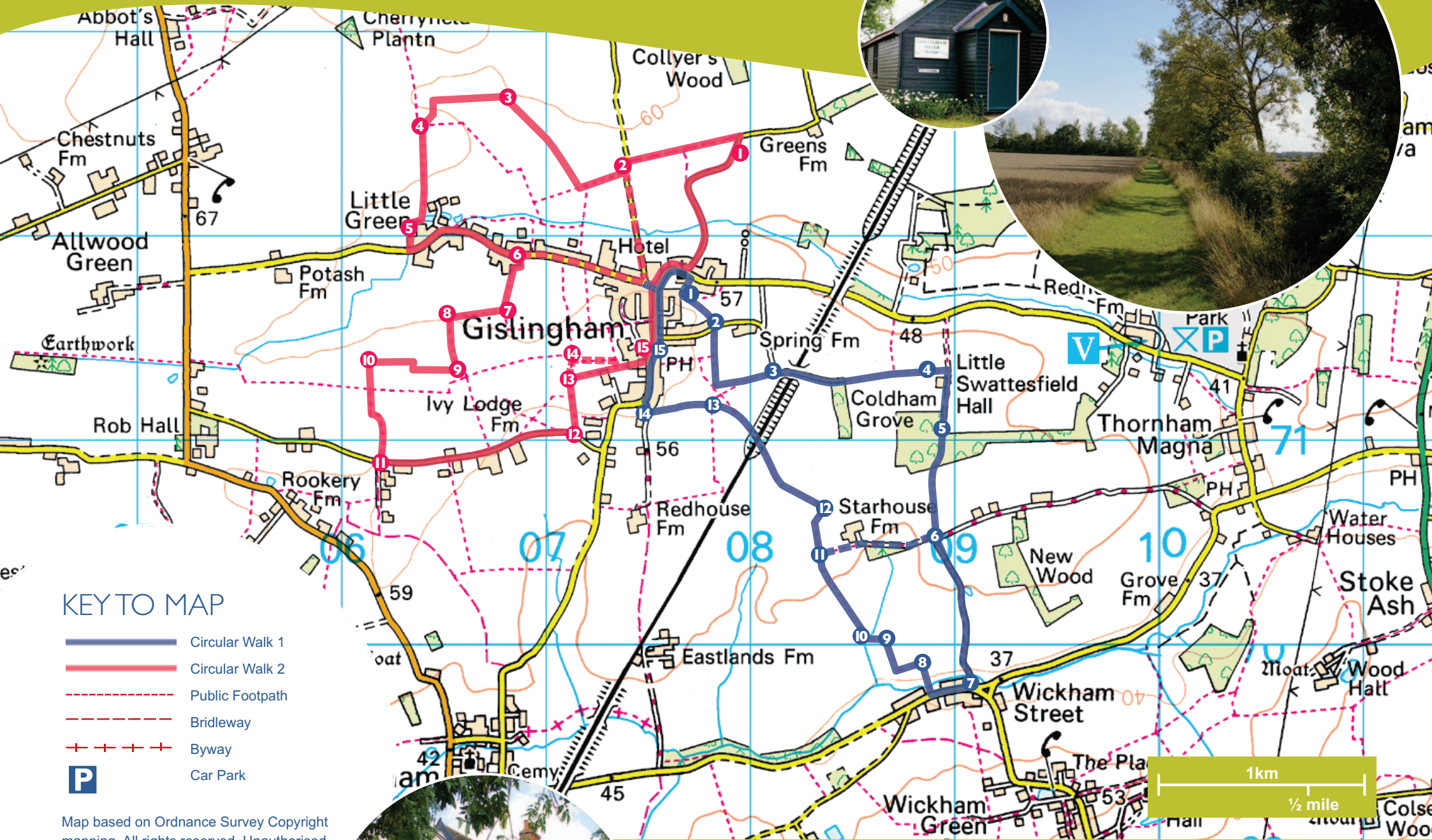
(\*) **Alternative Route 1a** (3.25 miles (5.2 Km.)) turn right at Clay Street ⑥ and follow the road ¼ mile (400 metres) to Starhouse Farm passing 'Jim's Wood' on the left. Bear left (signed) at a bend in the tarmac just before the house, and then right, around the farmhouse garden and go straight to the large oak tree ⑪ to meet the main walk.





# Gislingham Circular Walks

## Circular Walks





# Circular Walk 2

4.7 miles (7.5 Km)

The walk begins in the Village Hall car park. Turn left from the car park onto Mill Street and then left onto Thornham Road. Follow the road until opposite St. Mary's Church (see insert) and turn left into Mellis Road (no pavement). Follow this winding country lane, where in springtime the banks are covered with primroses and cowslips, for about ½ mile (800 metres), ignoring a footpath sign on the left. On the second sharp right hand bend, near the top of a slope **1**, turn left into a bridleway called Green Lane. The view back over the village is worth turning round for. This ancient tree-lined lane is known for the profusion of sloes and blackberries in late summer.

(\*) At the end of Green Lane turn left onto Burgate Road **2** and after 30 metres turn right onto a wide farm track with open views all round. Follow this track for 160 metres to the field junction and go straight ahead with the ditch on your right on a footpath beside a cultivated field. A small herd of Fallow Deer are often to be seen in this area. Follow this path till the end of the ditch and turn left, with the hedge on your right **3**. Proceed to the next hedge and cross the plank footbridge. Turn immediately left for about 80 metres and left again over the footbridge into a small spinney **4**. This is Northlands Lane, an ancient drovers' track, now reduced to footpath width. In spring the lane is home to primroses and cowslips. Turn right and follow the lane south to its end; after 1/3 mile (600 metres) cross the footbridge, bear right briefly on a gravel track, then left to walk between garden fences **5**. The exit on to Mill Street is via a gravel driveway by a barn conversion.



(\*\*) Turn left down Mill Street, passing the ancient Manor Farmhouse on the left and after ¼ mile (400 metres) turn right into a signed footpath between a hedge and a fence just after Pear Tree Cottage **6**. (Sign partly obscured by telegraph pole). Follow this path (south) over a small footbridge; before the last paddock turn right as signposted **7**

and follow the path over a bridge in the next hedge. Keep straight on with a hedge on your right. At the hedge end go straight into the field for 70 metres and then turn left (south) **8** towards a gap in the distant hedge. Cross the footbridge through the hedge and turn immediately right **9**; follow the field-side path keeping the hedge on your right. At the third marker post **10**, turn left (south) across the middle of the field and follow the path about 1/3 mile, (600 metres) to Back Street **11**.

Turn left along Back Street, renowned in the early spring for the migration of hundreds of toads crossing to their breeding areas. Continue on the road eastwards for about 2/3 mile, (1 km.), ignoring three footpaths on the left and one on the right. Approaching another modern barn conversion at Rush Green Farm on your left **12**, turn left (north). Follow this wide, well-signposted footpath past the first plantation of trees on your right, ignoring one footpath on either side. Turn right (east) before the second plantation **13**; the Georgian house on the right was the Rectory. Follow this path with the Old Rectory garden wall on your right, until it exits on the High Street **15** opposite the Six Bells in about ¼ mile (400 metres). Turn left for the shop and Village Hall.

[To visit the adventure playground, take the next path right **14**, just after the second plantation; this reaches the road **15** parallel to the above].



## Alternative Routes

(\*) **Alternative Route 2a** (1.5 miles (2.5 Km.) total length – suitable for pushchairs). At the end of Green Lane turn left down Burgate Road **2** and follow this road back to the Village Hall. In the early mornings and evenings Barn Owls can be seen hunting in the meadows at the south end of Burgate Road.

(\*\*) **Alternative Route 2b** (2.8 miles (4.5 Km.) total length). Turn left **5** and walk along Mill Street (no pavement). Go straight along the road, **6** noting the many old houses, the Old Guildhall, the former school house, and the Gislingham Silver Band Hut. This will bring you back to the Village Hall.

