



The Fen Edge Trail Walk: Wistow to Warboys

5.8 miles / 9.3 km
in partnership with



'You are never more than a quarter of a mile from a volcano on this walk (its beneath you!).'

Mike, Warboys
Archaeology Group

a journey across a landscape and time



2.1f Wistow



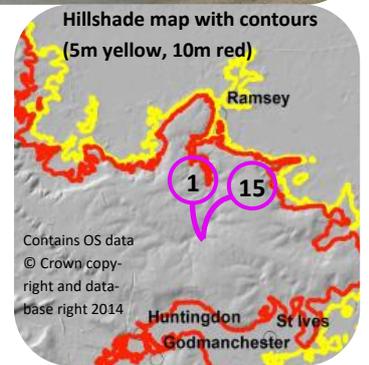
9.1f Broughton Village green



8.2f Broughton

The route: 'high hills, distant skies and deep time'

This walk, on the south western Fen Edge, is the second stage of the Trail linking **Ramsey** and **St Ives**. Having arrived in **Wistow** from Ramsey via the valley of the of **Bury Brook**, the route continues to climb up the valley leaving it at the village of **Broughton** to head east, passing over higher land to the larger village of **Warboys**. Starting at about 11 metres a.s.l. at the bridge over the brook in Wistow, the walk reaches the 'heady heights' of 30 metres a.s.l. as it approaches Warboys and passes one of the famous **RAF Pathfinder** airfields whilst following the **Pathfinder Way** for the second half of the journey. In this area you are also near the site of the 'Warboys borehole' where samples of rock obtained from depths of about 150 metres (below sea level) were found to be part of the **extensive volcanic complex** (long extinct!) that underlies this part of Cambridgeshire. The walk finishes at the Public Library in **Warboys**, a significant village once famous for its brickmaking, that stands on the higher land on the edge of the fen, in an area of historic importance as a crossroads.



3.1f Wooden footbridge



8.4f Broughton Church



15.2f St Mary Magdalene cemetery



7.2f Broughton village sign

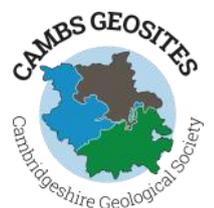
Practicalities As with all of the Fen Edge Trail, you can walk the complete length of any suggested walk using transport one way or choose a shorter or longer round trip option, or just visit some of the places on the route.

More information Numbered points on the walk are shown on the accompanying Map leaflet together with grid references. The GPS track can be downloaded from our website, which also has links to local organisations, services and places of interest.

Length of walk (one way) approx. **5.8 miles** (guide time if not stopping 3hrs). Maps O.S. Explorer 225/227. **BGS Geology Map 172** (1:63,360/1:50,000, New Series). Online map viewer www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology (plus iGeology mobile app).

Transport and services Wistow and Warboys are on the bus route between **Huntingdon** and **Ramsey** (www.stagecoachbus.com). There is also a bus between Warboys and **St Ives** (www.dews-coaches.com). **Buses do not run on all days**. There are **train services** to **Huntingdon** (8 miles) and **Peterborough** (17 miles). On-street **parking** in Wistow: avoid regular bus route along Manor St and Parsonage St (narrow roads). In Warboys there is parking at the Parish Centre behind the library on High St. Please only park where allowed and in consideration of others. There are cafes, pubs and shops in Warboys and a restaurant in Broughton.

Safety Please be aware of any risks that you may encounter and take note of any warnings given by landowners or on pathways. Take particular care with uneven terrain, when near water, soft or slippery ground, in the presence of livestock or when walking onto or along roads where there is traffic.



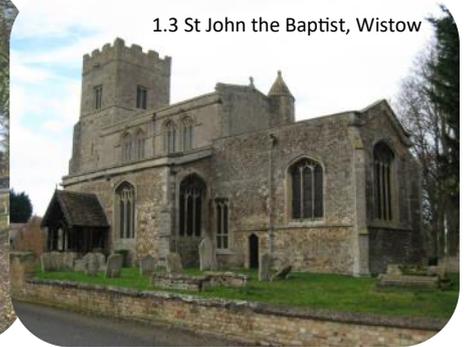
Places of interest along the Trail



1.1 Wistow bridge



1.2 Left turning into Manor Street



1.3 St John the Baptist, Wistow

1 The walk starts at the bridge over the **Bury Brook** as it winds its way down to Bury and then Ramsey. The brook has cut down into the underlying bedrock, **Oxford Clay**, forming a valley that is larger than the current stream, showing that a much stronger water flow once existed. The valley has still been prone to flooding in recent times. The brook has deposited fine grained material (**Alluvium**) along the valley to the side of the current channel. Note the **mid-17th century thatched houses** to the left at the start of the walk.

2 **Wistow** (*ph2.1f*) was originally known as **Kingston** as it was a royal demesne belonging to King Edgar (959 - 975). It was called Wistow in the Domesday book (1085), where it was assessed at 9 hides and had a priest, a church and a mill, all pointing to its being a place of importance. The increasing frequency of winter flooding made it difficult for the monks here to remain in contact with their mother church at Ramsey. In the winter of 1178, this forced them to move from Wistow to take up residence at **Bury** church. Wistow then took on a subordinate position as a berewick and chapelry of Bury. The church is made of rubble (mixed local stone) with dressings of Barnack Stone, a good quality limestone quarried near Stamford, Lincolnshire. As you walk past the (closed) pub, you are near the **5m contour** (i.e. 5 m above sea level).

3 By the time you turn left onto the footpath, you have started to climb up onto the **Glacial Till** and reached 20m above sea level.

4 Going uphill, away from the brook, the field on the right is c.1m higher than the field you are in (*ph 4.1*). This may be the result of a glacial lake, a remnant feature from a glaciated landscape. Further along, there is also a possible '**kettle hole**', a depression made by an ice block left by a retreating glacier, which then fills with water, forming a small lake (or it may be a former gravel quarry).



4.1 Near field is c.1m lower than the one behind the hedge



3.2 2nd wooden bridge



5.1 Path through hedge



5.2 Footbridge



6.1 Pond in depression (possibly formed as a 'kettle hole')



7.1 Gate decorated with tractor wheels

5 From the valley the walk goes back up onto **higher land** formed by the Glacial Till.

6 The depression in the clump of trees on the right could be another kettle hole (*ph6.1*).

7 The walk then gradually descends again into the valley, to **Broughton** (*ph7.2f*). Despite being small, Broughton was historically very important. The church was the centre of an ecclesiastical barony in Saxon times and the village is first recorded in 10 century charters as '**Broctana**', probably meaning '**the village by the brook**'.

8 **All Saints church** (*ph8.1 and ph8.3*) is Grade II listed with a tower and spire of c.1500 (*ph8.4f*) and a 14th century chancel between two Norman walls. They gave the font its fine arcading c.1100. Nothing remains of the church which existed in the time of the Domesday Survey (1086). The earliest surviving part is the base of the 12th century chancel arch. Rebuilding took place in the 13th and 14th centuries and gradually continued from the chancel to the nave, aisles, tower and south porch. There is a 15th century wall painting of the Last Judgement or Day of Doom. Originally a saddlery, the **Crown Inn** (*ph8.5*) is a beautiful Grade II listed building.



8.3 Local stones used in church



8.1 Broughton church



8.5 Crown Inn (across road from church)



9.3. Broughton village 'lock up'

9 The lockup (*ph9.3*) can be seen in the old animal pound (now a village green) in Causeway Road and dates to about 1840. Village lock-ups are historic buildings that were used for the temporary detention of people in rural parts of England and Wales. They were often used for the confinement of drunks who were usually released the next day or to hold people being brought before the local magistrate. A typical village lock-up is a small structure with a single door and a narrow slit window or opening. As with a few other buildings in the village (including the Baptist Chapel further north along the road), it is built with locally quarried creamy 'gault' ('Warboys White') bricks, made from a layer in the Oxford Clay (Jurassic age) - rather than the true Gault Clay (which is younger, of Cretaceous age) found further southeast.



10.1 'Bull' bridge over Bury Brook, Broughton



10.2 Bury Brook, Broughton, once known as Bull Brook



10.3 Moated enclosure

10 **Bury Brook** (*ph10.2*) flows from near Kings Ripton via Broughton and Wistow to Ramsey. It is also called Broughton Brook, and once Bull Brook, hence the name of the bridge here is Bull Bridge. Walking up Illings Lane you reach the northeast of the village where there is a moated enclosure ('The Moat') in which are earthworks of the foundations of the Hall where the Courts of the Barony of Broughton, dating back to the 12th century, were held every 3 weeks. Two great courts were held after Easter and Michaelmas before the abbot or his steward. The Hall was owned by Ramsey Abbey and the Abbot, who held the title Baron Broughton, was entitled to a seat in the House of Lords. It is also known as the **Abbot of Ramsey's Manor**. Little is known of the hall except that in the time of the anarchy of Stephen's reign, Daniel, the "evil-disposed" monk of Ramsey, built a tower here with many hiding places.

11 A **borehole** (*ph11.1*) was drilled in this area (site no longer visible) that reached down at least 150m, where **volcanic rock** was found, formed from material erupted in **Ordovician** times (480 to 450 mya).



11.1 Area of borehole (over 'Warboys volcano')



11.2 Footbridge



13.1 Crossroads on old airfield

12 You are now on **Warboys Airfield**. During the early years of the Second World War, Warboys was a relatively conventional bomber station which was supplemented with the addition of an exceptionally long main runway measuring 6,290 feet [1,917 m] in August 1942. RAF Warboys later became one of the original **Pathfinder Force** stations. On 15 December 1945, Warboys was placed under a care and maintenance basis with its parent station, RAF Upwood. Over the following years RAF Warboys reverted to agricultural use. The buildings became derelict and the runways and taxiways were gradually broken up.

13 **Bloodhound** air-defence missiles of **257 Squadron** were based at Warboys from 1 July 1960 with the return of the Royal Air Force. By the end of December 1963 they had been withdrawn and the Royal Air Force relinquished the airfield for the 2nd time.

14 As you walk towards Warboys, there are views over to **St Mary Magdalene Church** (*ph14.1*).

15 Notice the gates of the **cemetery** (*ph15.2f*) donated in 1984 by Pathfinder Force (*ph15.3*).



14.1 View across to Warboys church



15.1 St Mary Magdalene cemetery



15.3 Commemorative plaque on gate of cemetery

15.4 St. Mary Magdalene, Warboys parish church



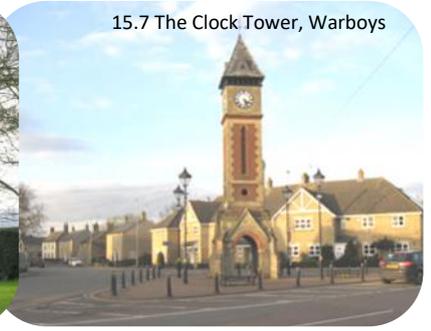
15.5 Commemorative window

The original church was built around 1086. Nothing remains of this building and the oldest parts of the existing building date from the 12th century, namely the chancel arch and a small piece of walling in the nave. **St Mary Magdalene** has an Early English broach tower and spire. Other noteworthy features include a late 12th century knocker, a restored 13th century font, a 14th century grave slab and a 17th century parish chest. It also has a commemorative window (*ph15.5*) dedicated in May 1991 to Bomber Command casualties of the 2nd World War.

It is thought that the first **Manor House** (next to the Parish Church) was built around 1250. Sir John Leman later modified the house around 1620 to what we see today, with a Dutch Gable to the front of this grade II listed building. **Warboys Archaeology Group** found an interesting brick floor (possibly 17th century) under the lawn of the manor house. The **Jubilee memorial clock**, built in 1887, commemorates Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee and cost £230. The weather vane on top of the tower commemorates the sad story of the three 'witches of Warboys' who were hanged in 1593.



15.6 The Manor House

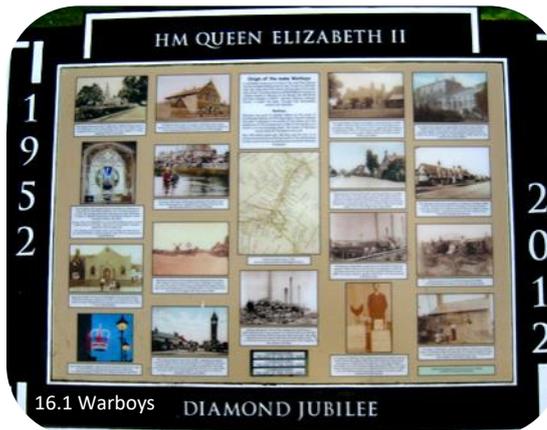


15.7 The Clock Tower, Warboys

16

It is thought that the name **Warboys** (*ph16.1 and 16.2*) is unique and that there are no other settlements of that name in the world. It originates from the 11th century 'Wardebusc' meaning road junction. Warboys was returned in the Domesday Survey among the lands of St. Benedict of Ramsey and it was stated then that the abbot had 10 hides in the manor which paid geld. There was a priest and a church and 3 acres of meadow and there was wood for pannage '1 mile long and 1 mile broad'.

Warboys once had a thriving **brick industry** based on the **Warboys Clay**, a pale clay found locally within the Oxford Clay. **Warboys Pit**, about a mile to the north, was a major brickpit that became a Geological SSSI due to the important sequence of Jurassic rocks that could be studied there. Despite legal protection, it did not escape infill and so is no longer accessible. A c.160 million year old fossil **Ichthyosaur** (a marine reptile) was found there in about 1986). It is an important fossil example of its species **Ophthalmosaurus icenicus**. The Pit had a significant exposure of the 'Warboys Rock' (also known as the **Elsworth Rock**). Known only from Cambridgeshire, this is a coral-rich layer of Jurassic limestone (classified as part of the West Walton Formation) that occurs at the base of the Ampthill Clay (i.e. over the Oxford Clay). There is a Wildlife Trust nature reserve nearby, **Pingle Cutting**, with meadow grassland on an old railway track leading from the pit (www.wildlifebcn.org).



16.1 Warboys

DIAMOND JUBILEE

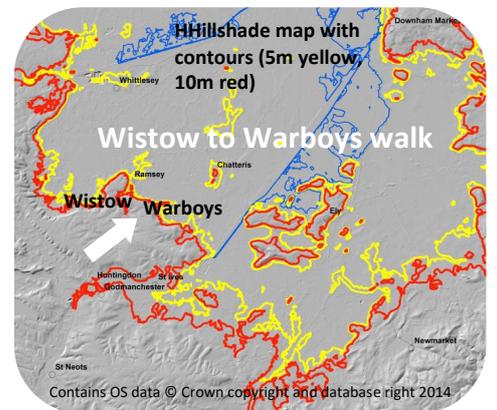


16.2 Warboys village sign (past library, further up High St)

About The Fen Edge Trail

Linking the landscape of the Fen Edge to the local geology, history, culture and wildlife

The **Fen Edge Trail** is a walking route around the Cambridgeshire Fens, roughly following the 5 metre contour (the land that is 5 m above sea level), where the low-lying fenland meets the surrounding higher land. From the Lincolnshire border near Peterborough in the north west, via **Ramsey, St Ives** and **Cambridge**, to the Suffolk border at Isleham in the south east, it will also extend to include the 'fen islands' of Ely, Whittlesey, March, Chatteris, Thorney and Wisbech. The Fen Edge Trail is an initiative set up by the **Cambridgeshire Geological Society** as part of their **Geosites** work which aims to identify and protect local sites of landscape and geological value, and share their importance and interest with local people and visitors to the county. We are working with several community organisations who are each exploring their local landscape to help develop the Trail. **This section of the Trail has been developed in partnership with Warboys Archaeology Group**. Information on the Trail, and points of interest along it, are gradually being added to the website together with the walk guides.



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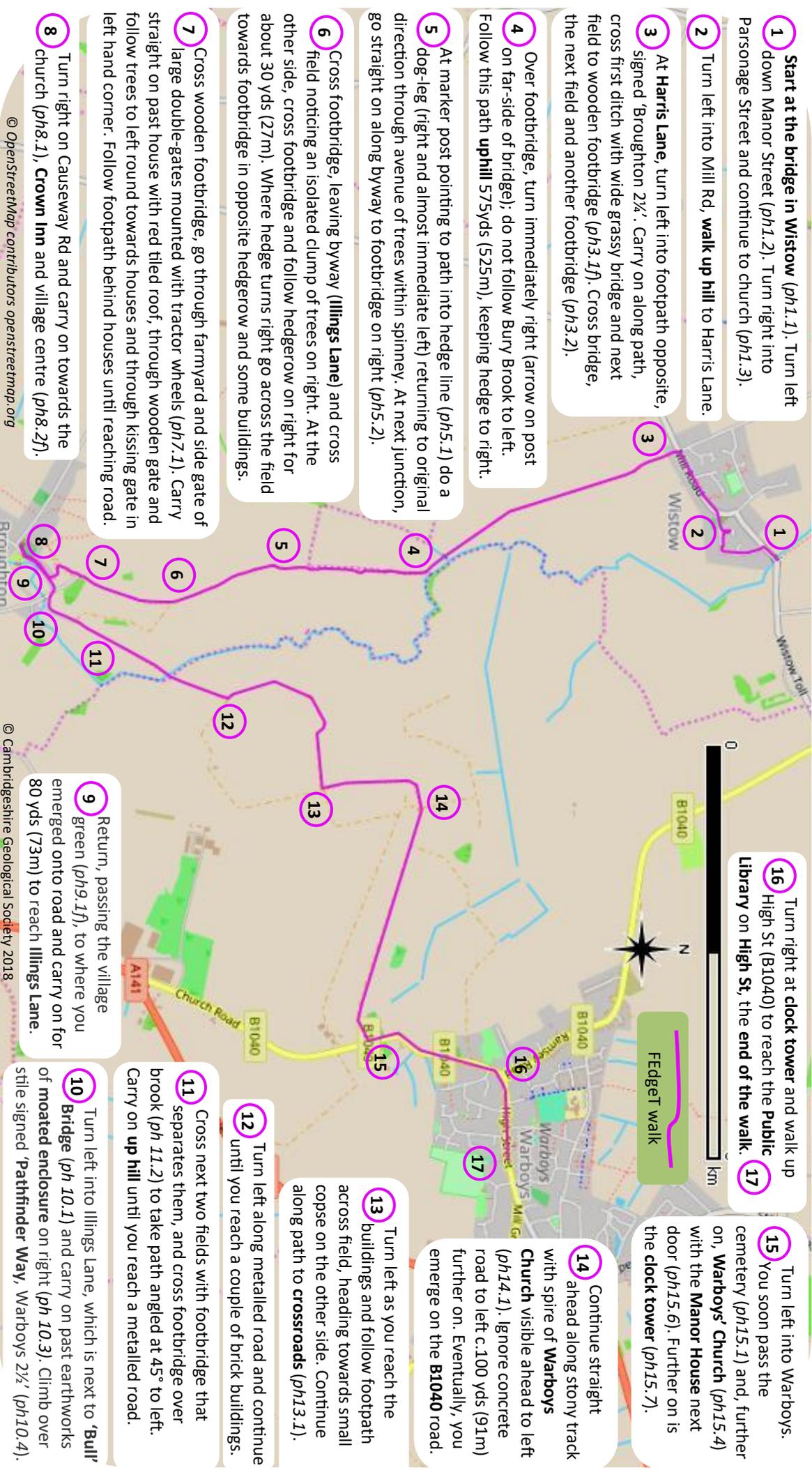


www.fen.land

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The Fen Edge Trail Walk: Wistow to Warboys

Directions map (5.8 miles / 9.3 km)



1 Start at the bridge in Wistow (ph1.1). Turn left down Manor Street (ph1.2). Turn right into Parsonage Street and continue to church (ph1.3).

2 Turn left into Mill Rd, walk up hill to Harris Lane.

3 At Harris Lane, turn left into footpath opposite, signed 'Broughton 2½'. Carry on along path, cross first ditch with wide grassy bridge and next field to wooden footbridge (ph3.1f). Cross bridge, the next field and another footbridge (ph3.2).

4 Over footbridge, turn immediately right (arrow on post on far-side of bridge); do not follow Bury Brook to left. Follow this path uphill 575yds (525m), keeping hedge to right.

5 At marker post pointing to path into hedge line (ph5.1) do a dog-leg (right and almost immediate left) returning to original direction through avenue of trees within spinney. At next junction, go straight on along byway to footbridge on right (ph5.2).

6 Cross footbridge, leaving byway (Illings Lane) and cross field noticing an isolated clump of trees on right. At the other side, cross footbridge and follow hedgerow on right for about 30 yds (27m). Where hedge turns right go across the field towards footbridge in opposite hedgerow and some buildings.

7 Cross wooden footbridge, go through farmyard and side gate of large double-gates mounted with tractor wheels (ph7.1). Carry straight on past house with red tiled roof, through wooden gate and follow trees to left round towards houses and through kissing gate in left hand corner. Follow footpath behind houses until reaching road.

8 Turn right on Causeway Rd and carry on towards the church (ph8.1), Crown Inn and village centre (ph8.2f).

16 Turn right at clock tower and walk up High St (B1040) to reach the Public Library on High St, the end of the walk.

17

FEdget Walk

15 Turn left into Warboys. You soon pass the cemetery (ph15.1) and, further on, Warboys' Church (ph15.4) with the Manor House next door (ph15.6). Further on is the clock tower (ph15.7).

14 Continue straight ahead along stony track with spire of Warboys Church visible ahead to left (ph14.1). Ignore concrete road to left c.100 yds (91m) further on. Eventually, you emerge on the B1040 road.

13 Turn left as you reach the buildings and follow footpath across field, heading towards small copse on the other side. Continue along path to crossroads (ph13.1).

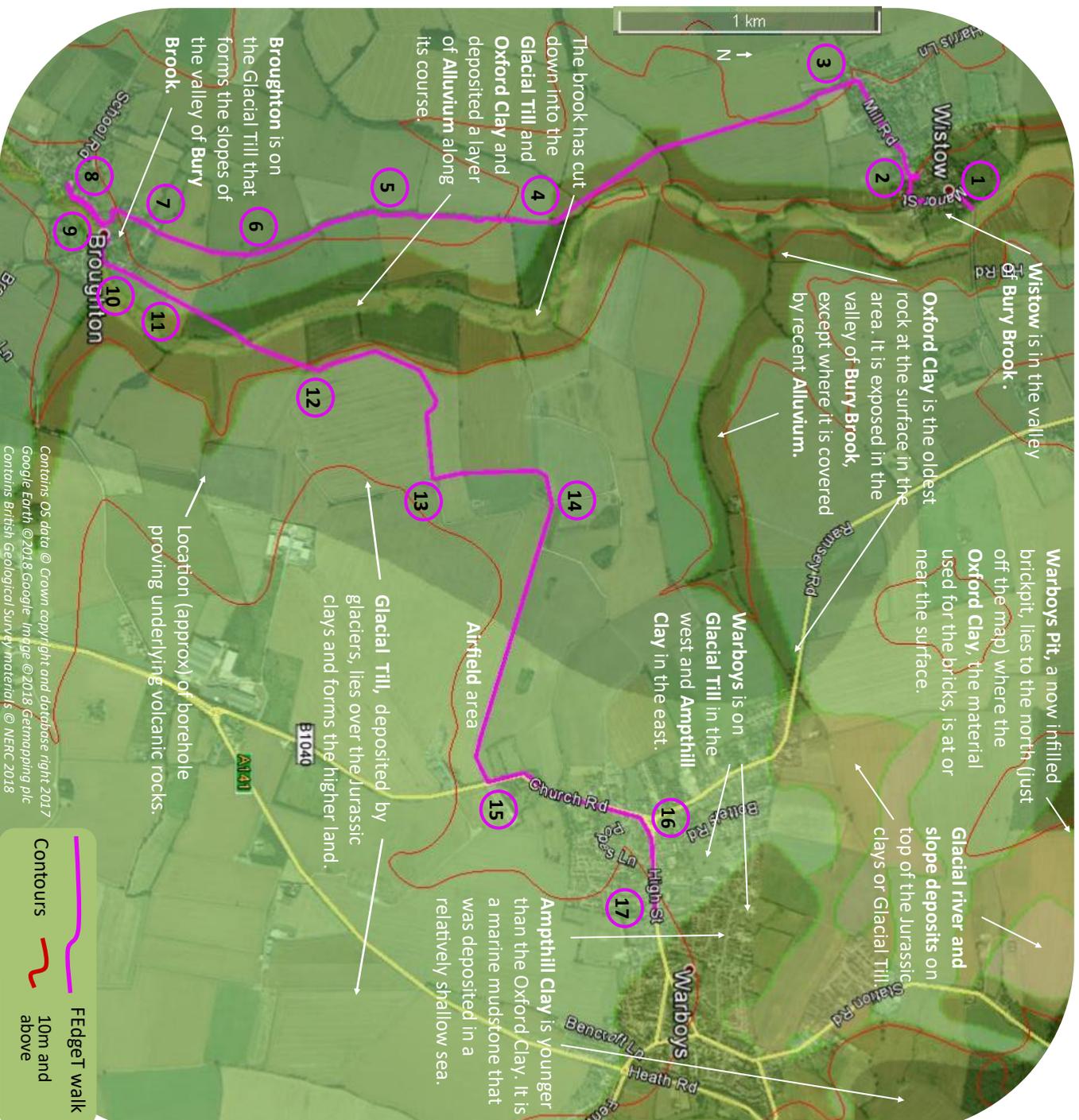
12 Turn left along metalled road and continue until you reach a couple of brick buildings.

11 Cross next two fields with footbridge that separates them, and cross footbridge over brook (ph 11.2) to take path angled at 45° to left. Carry on up hill until you reach a metalled road.

10 Turn left into Illings Lane, which is next to 'Bull' Bridge (ph 10.1) and carry on past earthworks of moated enclosure on right (ph 10.3). Climb over stile signed 'Pathfinder Way, Warboys 2½' (ph10.4).

9 Return, passing the village green (ph9.1f), to where you emerged onto road and carry on for 80 yds (73m) to reach Illings Lane.

Walk: Wistow to Warboys - geology and contours map



Landscape and Geology

In this area there are three general types of 'rock' currently at the surface. The oldest, seen in the river valley and forming the lowland around the fen edge, is **Oxford Clay**, which is c.160 million years old (Jurassic age). An extensive sea covered this part of Britain at the time with the clay forming from material deposited on the sea floor - it is famous for the fossils of marine reptiles such as **Ichthyosaurs** (one was found in **Warboys Pit**). **Amphihill Clay** is younger but also Jurassic. It lies on top of the Oxford Clay and is at the surface in Warboys. Between the two clays (although not seen at the surface here) is a layer of coral-rich limestone known as the **Elsworth Rock** or, locally, as **'Warboys Rock'**. The other two surface 'rocks' are much younger, being from the current 'Ice Age' which started 2.6 million years ago. The first are glacial, river and slope deposits (such as gravels and finer 'till') of **Pleistocene** age (older than 11.7 thousand years), and the last is **Alluvium** - finer, river material deposited more recently, in the **Holocene**. Beneath all of these, is the **'Warboys Volcano'**! A borehole (south of the airfield *ph11.1*) reached volcanic rocks 150m down, formed in **Ordovician** times (c 480 to 450 million years ago) when the Iapetus Ocean, to the north west, was closing, causing **volcanic activity** as the oceanic and continental plates collided (see website).

