

## Walk 6

### **Birdingbury, Long Itchington and Leamington Hastings**

A circular walk of 8 km (5 miles).



Historical notes on points of interest are shown in italics.

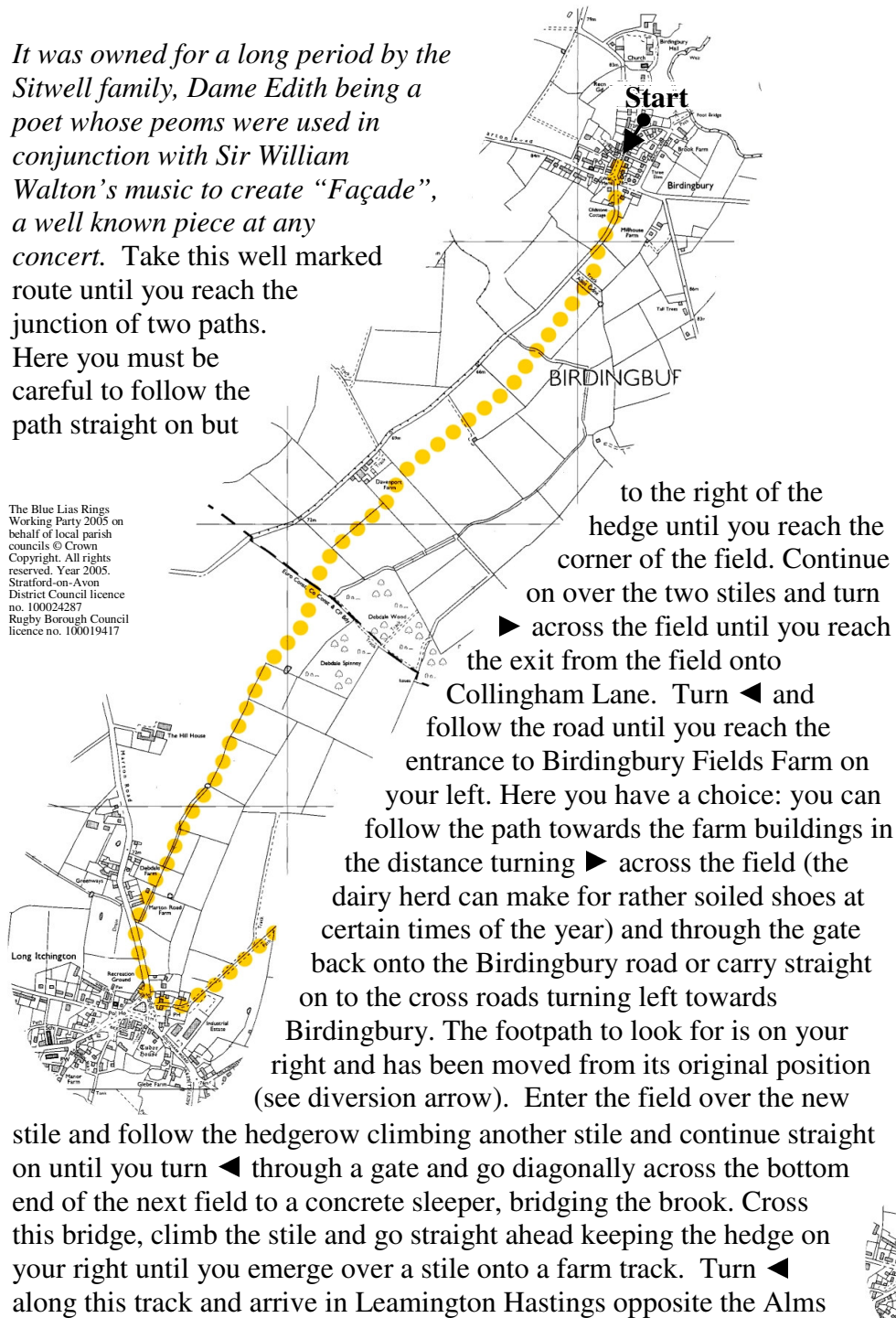
Stiles referred to in the text may have been replaced with gates as part of an ongoing access improvement plan.

Start at the Monument at the crossroads in Birdingbury

From the monument in Birdingbury leave the village up the hill sign posted Long Itchington. On the crest of the hill pause to take in the panoramic views across the rolling countryside. Follow the waymarker on the left over the stile and down the hill to Birdingbury allotments. Go through the allotments over the stiles and across the next field (always well marked by the farmer) to the rather grand foot bridge. This leads straight across through several gates/stiles until you appear on the main Marton / Long Itchington road in Long Itchington. Turn ◀ along the main road towards the pond. *In 1918 a German howitzer was placed by the pond for all to see. Unfortunately it was never a popular ornament and found its way into the bottom of the pond, only to be reclaimed in WW2 for its valuable metal to be used in weapons manufacture.* Then look for way marked path on the left immediately opposite this beautifully cared for village pond. (Why not rest awhile or visit one of the splendid hostelrys). Beyond the pond to the left lies the Tudor House. *The Tudor House dates from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century originally as an inn, then a farmhouse and now residential.*

It was owned for a long period by the Sitwell family, Dame Edith being a poet whose poems were used in conjunction with Sir William Walton's music to create "Façade", a well known piece at any concert. Take this well marked route until you reach the junction of two paths. Here you must be careful to follow the path straight on but

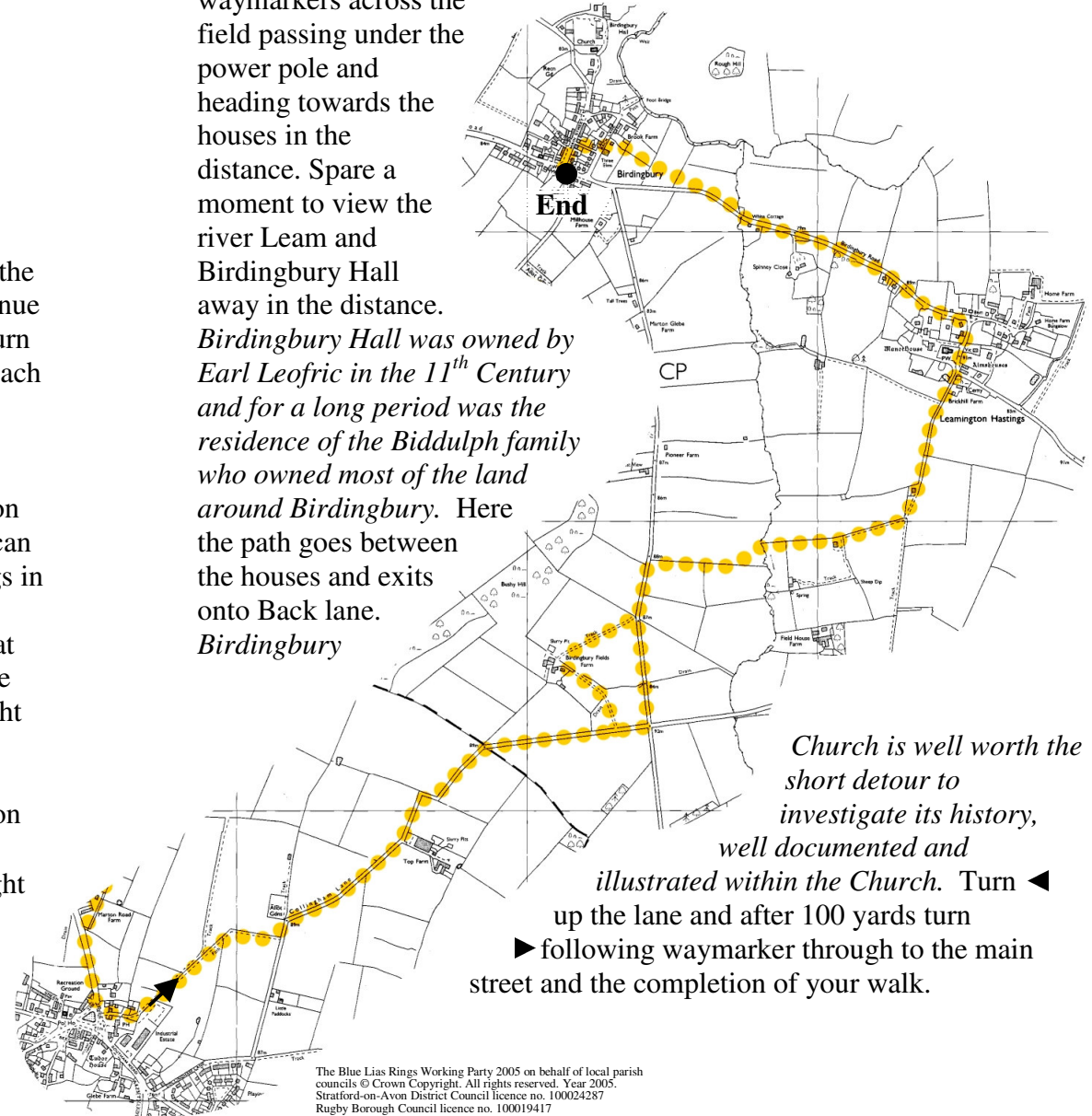
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to the right of the hedge until you reach the corner of the field. Continue on over the two stiles and turn ► across the field until you reach the exit from the field onto Collingham Lane. Turn ◀ and follow the road until you reach the entrance to Birdingbury Fields Farm on your left. Here you have a choice: you can follow the path towards the farm buildings in the distance turning ► across the field (the dairy herd can make for rather soiled shoes at certain times of the year) and through the gate back onto the Birdingbury road or carry straight on to the cross roads turning left towards Birdingbury. The footpath to look for is on your right and has been moved from its original position (see diversion arrow). Enter the field over the new stile and follow the hedgerow climbing another stile and continue straight on until you turn ◀ through a gate and go diagonally across the bottom end of the next field to a concrete sleeper, bridging the brook. Cross this bridge, climb the stile and go straight ahead keeping the hedge on your right until you emerge over a stile onto a farm track. Turn ◀ along this track and arrive in Leamington Hastings opposite the Alms

Houses. The Almshouses were built in 1633 and extended in 1696. Information on their history can be found within the Church. Keep straight ahead and maybe pay a visit to the lovely church of All Saints before continuing along the lane towards Birdingbury. **This section of road can be quite busy so do take care and walk on the right.** After crossing the brook turn ► through the gate into the field and follow the waymarkers across the field passing under the power pole and heading towards the houses in the distance. Spare a moment to view the river Leam and Birdingbury Hall away in the distance. *Birdingbury Hall was owned by Earl Leofric in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century and for a long period was the residence of the Biddulph family who owned most of the land around Birdingbury.* Here the path goes between the houses and exits onto Back lane.

*Birdingbury*



Church is well worth the short detour to investigate its history, well documented and illustrated within the Church. Turn ◀ up the lane and after 100 yards turn ► following waymarker through to the main street and the completion of your walk.

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