

Ely Circular			Witchford Loop and Ely Extension		
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This walk has been checked as noted above, however the publisher cannot accept responsibility for any problems encountered by readers.					

Ely Circular

Start: Ely station

Finish: Ely station

Ely station, map reference TL 543 793, is 23 km north east of Cambridge, 102 km north north east of Charing Cross, 5m above sea level, and in **East Cambridgeshire**.

Length: 18.0 km (11.2 mi), of which 4.3 km (2.7 mi) on tarmac or concrete.

Cumulative ascent/descent: negligible.

For a longer or a shorter walk, see *below* **Walk Options**.

Toughness: 2 out of 10

Time: 3 ¾ hours walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 7 ½ hours.

Transport: Ely Station is on the Fen Line from Cambridge to King's Lynn, i.e.: it is being served by trains from King's Cross (quicker) and Liverpool Street. From King's Cross there are two direct trains per hour Mondays-Saturdays and one on Sundays (journey time from 70 mins).

Saturday Walkers' Club: Take a train no later than 10.15 hours.

OS Landranger Map: 143 (Ely & Wisbech)

OS Explorer Map: 226 (Ely & Newmarket)

Walk Notes:

This walk is centred around Ely, the second smallest city in England, and the low-lying land of the Isle of Ely, the site of the supposed 'Last Stand of the Saxons', led by Hereward the Wake against the Norman Invaders, a landscape reminiscent of the Low Countries or Northern Germany: open fenland, largely flat, former marshy and boggy ground now drained for intensive agriculture, with long straight tree-lined farm tracks, hedge-lined meadows and big, cloud-filled skies. The River Great Ouse, ditches, dykes, embankments and catchwater drains all help to create the special atmosphere of Fenland.

The walk leads into the prevailing wind direction in the morning, and on a windy day the raised banks beside the river can feel very exposed as the wind sweeps in from the Fens, so you may have to work hard to get to lunch in the 'hilltop' village of Stretham.

In the afternoon you see Ely cathedral rising above the Fens like a castle or a ship ahead of you, the towers seeming like masts. It dominates the area for kilometres around and shows from everywhere an outline different from any other English cathedral, largely due its famed central octagonal tower.

Ely's Old Town, the Cathedral and numerous tea options are passed before a quayside stroll and the finish back to the station. Stile Count: 2.

Traffic noise from the A10 and the Ely Bypass can be heard on significant parts of the walk.

A short extension near the end leads to the river meadows of the Great Ouse for an extended stretch.

A westerly extension (or alternative route) leads through Grunty Fen along rougher grass tracks to Witchford, then through the remains of the WWII airfield of RAF Witchford, largely along concrete tracks.

Walk Options:

You can walk a slightly longer variation in the morning, further along the Great Ouse (map-led).

You can walk a very short Ely – Little Thetford – Ely route of 11.6 km/7.2 mi (with lunch back in Ely).

You can shorten the route through Ely by going straight to the station from its fringes (cut 2 km).

You can add a westerly loop from Little Thetford to Witchford and its pub,

- either in addition to the Main Walk (adds 7.5 km/4.7 mi, **rated 4/10**);
- or as an alternative to the southerly loop from Little Thetford via Stretham, for a distance of 19.1 km/11.9 mi, **rated 2/10**.

You can add an extension in Ely for a stroll through the meadows of the Great Ouse (add 2.4 or 3.6 km).

Buses 2 (Ely – Addenbrooke's Hospital), 9/X9 (Cambridge to Chatteris) and the Ely Zipper serve Little Thetford and the lunch destination Stretham (more than hourly, but not on Sundays).

Lunch (details last updated 04/10/2021)

The Red Lion 47 High Street, Stretham, Cambridgeshire, CB6 3LD (01353 648 132,

<http://redlionstretham.com/>). The Red Lion is located 8.2 km (5.1 mi) into the walk.

Open Mon-Thu 11.00-23.00, Fri-Sat 11.00-24.00 and Sun 12.00-20.30.

Food served Mon-Sat 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-21.00 and Sun 12.00-21.00.

The Village Inn 80 Main Street, Witchford, Cambridgeshire, CB6 2HQ (01353 663 763). The Village Inn is located 9.4 km (5.8 mi) into the alternative walk, cutting out Stretham, and 15.8 km (9.8 mi) into the extended walk, including Stretham. Open all day every day.

Tea (details last updated 04/10/2021)

Plenty of options in Ely, the ones passed en route are mentioned in the text.

Recommended are:

The Refectory Café Ely Cathedral, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB7 4DL (01353 660 346). The Refectory Café is located 2.1 km from the end of the walk.

The Almonry Restaurant 36 High Street, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB7 4JU (01353 666 360, <http://www.elycathedral.org/visit/the-almonry-restaurant>). The Almonry is located 1.3 km from the end of the walk in a truly unique location nestled amongst the medieval precinct of Ely Cathedral. The main restaurant is located in the 13th century undercroft in a stunning yet informal space for lunches and bistro dining. The Almonry Tea Room overlooks the gardens. Open 10.00-16.00 Tue-Sat and 11.00-17.00 Sun.

3 At 3 Real Ale & Craft Beer Café Three Cups Walk, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB7 4AN (01353 659 916, <http://3at3deli.com/>). 3 At 3 is located 1.2 km from the end of the walk. Open to 17.00 Mon-Thu, to late Fri-Sat and to 16.00 Sun.

Peacock's Tearoom 65 Waterside, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB7 4AU (01353 661 100, <http://www.peacockstearoom.co.uk/>). Peacock's is located 800m from the end of the walk. Open Wed-Sun 10.30-17.00 (last orders 16.30). Open on Bank Holidays.

The Cutter Inn and Riverside Restaurant 42 Annesdale, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB7 4BN (01353 662 713, <http://www.thecutterinn.co.uk/>). The Cutter Inn is located 530m from the end of the walk.

Notes:

Ely

Ely is a cathedral city in Cambridgeshire, and the second smallest city in England. The origin and meaning of Ely's name have always been regarded as obscure by place-name scholars, and are still disputed. It is built on a 60 km²/23 mi² Kimmeridge Clay island, which – at 26m – is the highest land in the fens. Major rivers including the Witham, Welland, Nene and Great Ouse feed into the fens and, until draining commenced in the 17th century, formed freshwater marshes and meres within which peat was laid down. There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the city: a former Kimmeridge Clay quarry, and one of the UK's best remaining examples of medieval ridge and furrow agriculture.

River Great Ouse

The River Great Ouse is the longest of several British rivers called "Ouse" (from the Celtic or pre-Celtic **Udso-s*, probably meaning "water" or slow flowing river), and, being 230 km (143 mi) long, mostly flowing north and east, one of the longest rivers in the UK. From Syresham in Northamptonshire, the Great Ouse flows into East Anglia before entering The Wash. It has been historically important for commercial navigation, and for draining the low-lying region of wetlands and fens through which it flows, and has been extensively modified, or channelised, to relieve flooding and provide a better route for barge traffic. On its way from rolling countryside to open black-soiled fenland landscapes it passes towns including: Buckingham, Milton Keynes, Olney, Bedford, St. Neots, Huntingdon, St. Ives, Ely, Downham Market, and King's Lynn. Its best-known tributary is the Cam.

Fen Rivers Way

The Fen Rivers Way is a linear waymarked 77 km/48 mi long-distance footpath between Cambridge and King's Lynn following the Rivers Cam and Great Ouse across the fenland landscape into The Wash. The waymark is a blue eel logo.

Cawdle Fen Walk

The Cawdle Fen Walk is a circular waymarked 10 km/6 mi footpath that runs south from Ely to Little Thetford through Cawdle Fen and back along the banks of the River Great Ouse, mostly through open fenland. Cawdle means 'cold spring' and this spring once supported a thriving monastic community at Brahmewere (nowadays Braham Farm).

Fenland

The Fenland landscape is a man-made environment constructed over many centuries. This fertile land is dominated by agriculture and is dissected by dykes, draining ditches, rivers and embankments. Vast open landscapes and big skies contribute to the character of the Fens.

Ely Cathedral

Ely Cathedral has its origins in AD 672 when St. Etheldreda, daughter of the East Anglian King Anna, built an Abbey Church. Later accounts suggest successor abbesses were also members of East Anglian Royalty. Viking raids led to its destruction, but some monks provided continuity through to its re-foundation in 970, under Benedictine rule. The present building dates back to 1083, and cathedral status was granted in 1109. Until the reformation it was the Church of St. Etheldreda and St. Peter, at which point it was re-founded as the Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, continuing as the principal church of the Diocese. Architecturally it is outstanding both for its scale and stylistic details. Having been built in a monumental Romanesque style, the galilee porch, lady chapel and choir were rebuilt in an exuberant Decorated Gothic. Its most famous feature, however, is the central octagonal tower, with lantern above, which provides a spectacular internal space and, along with the West Tower, gives a unique exterior landmark that dominates the surrounding landscape. Ely's octagon is considered "one of the wonders of the medieval world" and architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner believed the octagon "is a delight from beginning to end for anyone who feels for space as strongly as for construction".

The only pavement labyrinth in an English cathedral was installed below the west tower in 1870.

Ely Cathedral is a major tourist destination, receiving around 250,000 visitors per year (ticketed entry).

Oliver Cromwell's House

Oliver Cromwell, the former Lord Protector, lived in this house from 1636 to 1646 after inheriting a 16th century property. It has been restored to provide a vivid recreation of 17th century life. It serves as the Ely Tourist Information Centre and is also the site of regular ghost hunts and para-normal sessions.

Grunty Fen

Grunty Fen consists of the low-lying land at the centre of the Isle of Ely that separates the villages of Wilburton and Stretham from Witchford and Wentworth; the area lies at less than 5 metres above sea-level. Despite the importance of nearby Ely, the land around Grunty Fen was uninhabitable even following the draining of The Fens in the 17th century, and was still only used for sheep grazing and turf cutting through the 18th century. One of the last parts of the fens to be drained, a catchwater was dug in 1838, though it took another couple of decades for the land to become completely dry. Following enclosure the land was farmed, but the thin peaty soil soon eroded. There are now several working farms covering the fen.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train in **Ely** on platform 1 and leave it through the station building. On the forecourt *turn right* towards **Station Road** and in 100m *turn right* at a T-junction along its right-hand pavement. You go under the railway line and in another 100m – that's 30m **before** crossing **Ely High Bridge** over the **River Great Ouse** – *turn right* (signposted 'Cawdle Fen') to in 20m pass a redundant metal kissing gate with **Fen Rivers Way, Cawdle Fen Walk, Via Beata** and **Circular Walk** markers on a post, along a signposted footpath (Dimmocks Cote 5 etc.).

You now follow the embankment of the River Great Ouse (which is a little away to the left) towards the left of a car wide driveway (200°), with the station visible on your right-hand side across some sports fields, through open **fenland**. The lower drive is a little more protected from the wind. In 800m ignore a ramp on the right leading up the new A 142 **Ely bypass-road** and in 80m go under the raised road. In 100m you walk through a set of metal gates to the left of metal field gates either side of the **Peterborough – Ipswich Railway**. In 900m cross a prominent raised and railed footbridge over a tributary to the Great Ouse (**Braham Dock Drain**).

Here you have a choice:

For a slightly longer variation, along the Great Ouse, continue in the previous direction along the river and follow the route as per the route map. Pick up the directions below at the asterisk *).

For the Main Walk, *turn hard right* with a Cawdle Fen Walk marker post along the left side of this tributary, leaving the Great Ouse behind. With first views of **Ely Cathedral** on the right beyond the raised A road, you walk towards the **Cambridge – King's Lynn Railway (the Fenline)** 250m away to then cross it (with stiles on either side) and follow the path with the water on your right. In 100m you *curve left* with the path, now following **Grunty Fen Catchwater (Drain)**, and in 100m cross a farm track leading to the fields on your left, to continue in the same direction to the left of a rusty metal field gate between rows of trees. In 280m the trees discontinue and you have open fenland again on both sides. In 130m another farm track joins from the right over a bridge and in 550m, just before the drain bears right, **[!]** you reach a marker post pointing into the field on the left. *Veer left* across the field corner along a usually well-cleared path (175°), and pick up the drain-side path, now along the **Thetford Catchwater**. In 240m *turn right* along a gravel driveway and in 70m reach a road (**Holt Fen**) at a T-junction.

Here you have a choice:

For cutting out the main walk's lunch destination Stretham and either returning straight to Ely or following the westerly extension loop with lunch in Witchford, *turn right* along the road through **Little Thetford**. The name of the road changes to **Main Street** and in 360m a signposted bridleway (Thetford via Burying Way 1 ³/₄) joins from the left along a tarmac lane (the Main Walk's return). In 40m a signposted footpath turns right (Cawdle Fen Walk, Ely 2 ¹/₂), this is the Main Walk's continuation to Ely;

- **to return to Ely** *turn right* along the footpath with a garden fence on your left and follow the Main Walk directions at the double asterisk **);
- **for the westerly extension via Witchford** continue in the same direction along the road and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Westerly Extension via Witchford**.

For the Main Walk *turn left* along the road's pavement and in 80m *turn right* along a signposted byway (Holt Fen Bridge 1, Stretham 2) with trees on the left, initially on tarmac, then on gravel. You get first views on the half right ahead of a church spire in a

'hill top' village, this is the lunch destination **Stretham**. In 500m *turn left* with a low byway marker post, by a rusty metal field gate blocking the route ahead (with a large 'Private Road' sign on it), now with trees on the left. In 300m you *turn right* with the car wide track (**Holt Fen Drove** on the OS map), now with trees on the right and a field on the left with the raised railway line beyond it. In 600m, [!] about 100m before the track curves to the left, *turn right* along an unmarked car wide grassy track (a public footpath) between large arable fields (**Gold's Mere** on the OS map). [The continuation of the byway curves to the Holt Fen (railway) Bridge and eventually to **the confluence of the Cam and Great Ouse** rivers. The longer variation joins from that direction.]

*) In 250m *turn left* at a T-junction with a car wide track (you have walked along it already a few minutes ago). In 800m you *turn right* with the track by **Plantation Farm** and *turn half left* through the concrete farmyard towards a metal gate to the left of a metal barrier 50m away on the other side. Walk through the gate and follow a concrete lane towards **Stretham** village, with a new housing estate away to the left. In 450m you walk through a double wooden field gate by some houses on the right and in 50m ignore a right turning footpath and in 40m **Oak Drive** on the right. In 30m *turn left* at a T-junction with **Brook Lane**. In 90m *turn right* along a car wide gravel-then-tarmac lane between houses and in 50m *turn left* along **Read's Street**. In 30m *turn right* along a narrow tarmac path (**Chapel Lane**) to continue in 40m in a cul-de-sac with a converted chapel on the left. In 50m *turn right* along **Chapel Street**. In 140m you reach the village centre, with **The Red Lion** pub on your left, **St. James's Church** further to the left across **High Street** (and a **bus stop for services to Ely** along it on the opposite side), and the **village store** on your right.

After lunch continue in the previous – northerly – direction along **High Street** and in 90m, with views of a **windmill** at the village end, *turn right* along **Top Street**. In 170m *turn left* along **Read's Street/Wood Lane** at a T-junction and in 80m *turn right* with **Wood Lane**, ignoring Berry Close continuing in the same direction. In 80m ignore Berry Green (road) on the left and in 20m *turn left* at the corner of the last garden fence on the left through a gap to the left of a double metal field gate along a signposted footpath (Little Thetford $\frac{1}{2}$, Ely $3\frac{3}{4}$), with the Cathedral now visible dead ahead. In 330m, by a water pumping house on the left, you *turn right* along a car wide grassy margin between arable fields. This is the **Burying Way**, a route used to carry bodies from Little Thetford to Stretham for burial, which you'll follow all the way to Little Thetford. In 220m a catchwater drain joins from the left at a right angle, and in another 230m, just before crossing another catchwater over a land bridge, [!] *turn left* along a car wide track, with the **Thetford Catchwater** now on your right.

The track curves right and in 420m, where another car wide track leads on the left to a large house by the **A10 (Quarterway House)** on the OS map), you continue in the same direction over a metal stile with a byway marker to the left of a metal barrier. In 750m continue in the same direction at a garden fence corner on the left, ignoring a farm track forking right into a field. In 110m the track continues as a tarmac lane on the fringes of **Little Thetford** and in 140m, just after passing a 'Burying Way' road sign on the left and before the lane curves right, [!] *turn left* along a short tarmac driveway. In 25m *turn right* along a more than car wide grassy strip between trees, ignoring another grassy track in the same direction. In 200m you reach a road at a T-junction by a green on your left. The shortcut joins from the right along the road. Cross the road and *turn left* along it. In 40m a signposted footpath turns right (Cawdle Fen Walk, Ely $2\frac{1}{2}$).

Here you have a choice:

For the westerly extension loop via Witchford you continue in the same direction along the road and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Westerly Extension via Witchford**.

For the Main Walk, returning to Ely, you *turn right* along the footpath with a garden fence on your left.

****)** In 190m you emerge from trees on a sports field and *turn right* along its boundary. In 30m, *turn left* with the boundary and in 110m *turn left* in the corner of the sports field. In 130m *turn right* over a two-railed wooden bridge with a footpath marker to cross an arable field along a usually well-cleared path. In 130m leave the field over a two-railed wooden bridge over a ditch and continue in the same direction through another field, which you leave in 140m over a two-railed wooden bridge and through a metal kissing gate to follow a clear path through a few gates past a large farm on the left (**Redroofs** on the OS map). In 170m you reach a car wide gravel farm track at a T-junction. The Extension via Witchford joins from the left. Cross the track and continue in the same direction across an arable field (due N) towards a bridge to the right of a tree.

*****)** You will continue in the same direction all the way to Ely, first through a couple of fields and over a couple of plank bridges over ditches, then along a left-hand field boundary and in the far field corner go through a metal kissing gate and along a grassy path with a fence on the right. After another 60m you walk through a metal gate and across the concrete driveway to **Braham Farm** on your right (site of a medieval grange by a spring, where monks used to live). Continue along a grassy path and in 400m a marked byway joins from the left at a bend and you continue between trees. In 340m continue in the same direction with a public footpath between trees, where the byway turns to the right, and in 10m walk through a wooden field gate.

In 380m you cross the **A142** carefully and continue in the same direction a little to the right along a narrow path through trees (still the Cawdle Fen Walk, signed 'Ely 1'). In 40m you emerge in **Ely City Golf Course** with a ditch on the left to continue along it. In 50m *turn left* across a plank bridge with a marker post and along a hedge on your left and in 70m *turn right* with a metal footpath signpost. You are now walking between fairways, pass a few marker posts, and in 40m follow a drain on the right to in another 40m continue to the left of a row of trees with a marker post. In 40m *veer right* with markers on an electricity pole to continue between trees on the left and a hedge on the right and under an electricity line. In 310m you cross a stream on a wooden plank bridge and continue in the same direction along a gravel track. In 30m *veer right* with a marker post and continue to the right of the hedge and stream and follow the hedge.

In 120m you continue with a fairway on the left and a wooded belt on the right. In 130m cross a fairway (played from the right) by a marker post and in 70m, at a bend in a gravel lane, you **[!]** *turn left* to continue with a footpath signpost and a Cawdle Fen Walk marker through a gap into a small wooded area. In 25m *turn right* along a wide grassy path and in 30m continue in the same direction to the right of a raised fenced grassy area with elements of an obstacle course (40°). You pass a sports field (behind an earth bank) and some tennis courts on your left (now walking along a gravel path) and in another 130m *turn right* at a T-junction along a tarmac lane by **King's Junior (School)** red brick office building. In 70m you reach **Barton Road** at a T-junction.

The suggested route now winds its way through Ely to pass all sights and tea stops, **the direct route to the station** though *turns right* along this road to reach the right turn to the station in 600m. Cross the road and then a green to continue in the same direction towards the cathedral. In 70m, by **The Fountain** pub on the left, you *turn right* to cross a road this side of a mini-roundabout and *turn left* along the opposite pavement to continue in the previous direction. In 20m **[!]** *turn right* through the **Gateway** to King's School and Cathedral, signposted Maltings, Riverside, Babylon Gallery. In 30m you *turn left* with the tarmac driveway towards the cathedral, ignoring the continuation as a gravel path (which passes **Cherry Hill with its Motte & Bailey**).

In 100m pass the first of the **Monastic Buildings**, The Priory, on your left, then Canonry House on the right. In 60m, by the Cathedral back entrance, *turn right* along the cathedral and in 80m *curve left* with the gravel path. In 40m *curve left* again (30m away on the right is the back entrance to the recommended tea stop, **The Almonry Restaurant**, passed a little later) to reach **The Refectory Café's** outdoor seating area and the main entrance to **Ely Cathedral** on your left in 200m. From the cathedral cross the road running in front of it (**The Gallery**) and walk along the left-hand edge of a large grassy area, with the **Old Palace** on the left and **The Chantry** on the right. In 100m leave the grassy area and in 30m pass **The Old Fire Engine House** restaurant and gallery on the right, just before **St. Mary's Church** on your left. You'll find **Oliver Cromwell's House** (with the TIC) a little further on the left on **St. Mary's Road**.

From Cromwell's House (with the house in your back), cross **St. Mary's Road** and *turn right* along it, immediately **Poet's House Hotel & Restaurant**. *Curve to the right* with the road, and in 250m, just after passing **The King's Arms** on your left and at a junction by **The Minster Tavern** on the right and **The Lamb Inn** on the left, continue a little to the right along **High Street**, in 30m passing the **Streetcafé** on the right. In 40m **Chequer Lane** on the left gets you to the **Hereward** pub, and further along High Street you pass some chain cafés and restaurants as well as **Tea for Two**, **Julia's Tea Room** and **Tom's Cakes**. Finally, you pass the recommended tea stop **The Almonry Restaurant** on the right. A little later, at the junction with **Market Place** (and the **Lemon Tree Deli Café**) on the left, **you have a choice:**

For a short extension, mainly **through Ely Country Park** and the **River Great Ouse meadows** (adds 2.4 km), *turn left* along Market Place and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Extension in Ely**.

For the Main Walk continue past the junction with **Market Place** down the road, now called **Fore Hill**. Immediately on the right through an archway and along **Three Cups Walk**, in 30m you find the **3 At 3 Real Ale & Craft Beer Café**. Continue down Fore Hill, passing the **Daybreak Café**, **The Royal Standard** pub and the **Drayman's Son** micropub. In 140m *turn right* along **Broad Street** at a T-junction and in 50m *turn left* to continue down **Back Lane**. In 200m you emerge on the **quayside** by the **River Great Ouse**, with the award-winning **Peacock's Tearoom** 30m on your left and **Babylon Gallery** to the right of it. The Ely Extension joins from the left along the river. *Turn right* along the quayside.

****) In 90m pass **The Maltings** and an info panel on **Eels from Ely**, just before an example of a **Fen Sluice** (an artwork with an info panel) and with **Jubilee Gardens** on your right, then another info panel about **The Story of the Fens**, and in another 20m the **Riverside Bar & Kitchen**. You pass **Jubilee Gardens** and in 150m you'll find the recommended **The Cutter Inn**. In another 40m, where the river turns to the left, *veer right* away from the **Red Herring** bar and grill, to continue along **Annesdale** (lane). In 120m *turn left* along **Station Road** at a T-junction, cross the road at a set of lights, and in 170m *turn right* towards the station. There is the **Ely Food Station** in the station on platform 1 on the left, as well as a **Coffee Kiosk** and the **Loco Espresso** on the right.

London bound trains depart from the far platform 2.

Westerly Extension via Witchford **(add 7.5 km, 35m ascent/descent and 3.2 km tarmac or concrete)**

The name of the road changes to **The Wytches** and in 400m, just after passing a **bus stop for services to and from Ely**, you cross the **A10** carefully at **Thetford Corner** (on the OS map) to continue a little to the left along **Red Fen Road**. In 360m, 60m after a metal field gate and a drain on the right, *turn right* with a footpath signpost (Witchford 2 ½) to *bear left* in 20m along a raised bank along a drain (**Grunty Fen Catchwater** again) through the **Grunty Fen**, on a bearing of 295°. In 900m you cross a concrete driveway and pass a footpath marker post. In 1.2 km curve to the right with the raised path. In 500m the path turns left and in 80m it reaches a road at a T-junction (**Grunty Fen Road**). **[!]** Ignore a signposted footpath in the same direction to the left of the drain and **[!]** *turn right* along the road for 35m, to then *turn left* across the road and along a signposted footpath (Witchford ½) through a metal kissing gate to go along the right-hand side of a new community orchard (**The Old Recreation Ground**).

In 125m *turn right* by an info panel through a wooden gate along a Permissive Path *veering left* through an adjacent community plantation with benches along a clear path. In 100m walk through a wooden gate to the right of a metal field gate and *turn right* along a broad grassy strip between hedges (a public footpath). In 220m go through a metal kissing gate and *turn left* at a T-junction with another grassy path with a footpath marker post, now with a ditch on the right. In 60m walk across a railed plank bridge over the ditch, in 10m through a metal gate and in 25m *turn right* through a metal gate and across a two-railed plank bridge to continue along a fenced path with trees on the left towards **Witchford**. In 220m you walk through a wooden gate to emerge onto the main road through the village and *turn right* along the opposite pavement to find **The Village Inn** in 75m on your left.

From the pub you continue in the same direction, i.e.: with the pub in your back, *turn left* along **Main Street** (en route passing a **bus stop for services to Ely** as well as **St. Andrew Church**). In 340m **Grunty Fen Road** joins from the right, as you continue in the same direction, and in 190m you pass **Bedwell Hey Lane** on your right. 60m further along you *turn right* (through a metal gate) onto a signposted footpath between a hedge and a fence. In 35m emerge into a playing field and *veer a little to the left* to head for the far corner (150°). In 170m in the corner *turn right* through a gap to the right of a double wooden field gate and *turn left* with a footpath marker at a T-junction along the tarmac **Bedwell Hey Lane**. In 30m you walk through a wooden gate to the left of a double metal field gate with a bridleway marker.

In 380m, with a **Business Park** on your left (on the site, and using some buildings, of the WWII **RAF Witchford** Airbase), *turn right*, between metal wire fences initially, following the former perimeter track of the airfield. In 50m you walk through a wooden gate to the left of a double metal field gate and continue between fields. In 100m *bear left* with the track and in 60m cross a farm track (one of the former runways) to initially continue in the same direction with a bridleway marker post. The track curves to the left and you now have views on the half right in the distance to some rolling hillocks. The land that slopes away on your right was in wartime used for bomb storage. In 250m another concreted track joins from the left (another one of the former runways) and you have views on the left to **Ely Cathedral**. In 300m **[!]** *fork right* with a bridleway marker post (120°), now following **Bedwell Hey Lane** all the way to the A10.

In more detail: in 380m, just after a small vineyard on the right, continue in the same direction across a small grassy triangle and then along a car wide gravel track, where the concrete driveway turns right, and in another 200m, by a house on the left (**Ely Fields Farm**), you continue in the same direction with a hedge on your left, past another tarmac driveway and then a house on the right. Continue in the same direction

for 800m, ignoring a left forking grassy path along the way, and cross the **A10** at a T-junction to turn left along its opposite pavement and in 40m *turn right* along a shingle car wide track. In 180m (just past some farm buildings on your right-hand side), you intersect an unmarked footpath (with a metal kissing gate off to your right). The path from the right is the Main Walk. [!] *Turn left* across an arable field (due N) towards a bridge to the right of a tree, and pick up the directions in the Main Walk text at the triple asterisk ***).

Extension in Ely

(add 2.4 km, mostly in Ely Country Park and through the Great Ouse meadows)

In 50m at the top of the market area you *turn right* along a road (still called Market Place). In 20m the road bears left and continues gently downhill as **The Vineyards**. Ignore all ways off and in 350m, where the road turns up to the left, *turn right* along a tarmac path (**Vineyard Way**) towards some houses. In 25m ignore some steps down to your right and in 15m *turn left* with the path past the houses. In 40m *turn right* down towards a road, where in 30m you *turn left* along its pavement. In 50m *turn right* across the road and continue by a two-way footpath signpost (**The Hereward Way**) through a gap to the left of a wooden field gate and along a gravel path into **Ely Country Park**. The path (**Springhead Lane** on the OS map) turns left in 65m and in another 20m you ignore a right turn to continue between trees. Ignore a couple of wooden kissing gates on the right and several narrow paths on the left and in 550m walk through a metal kissing gate to *turn left* along gravel and join the tarmac **Kiln Lane** in 40m. *Turn right* along the road through a level crossing of the railway line.

In 150m, just before some industrial buildings on the right, you have a choice:

For a recommended 600m each way out-and-back across Cuckoo Bridge and across the River Ely (**with superb views back of the Cathedral**), continue in the same direction, in 200m cross Cuckoo Bridge over the outflow of the **Roswell Pits Lakes Nature Reserve** and in another 350m a footbridge over the Great Ouse to a road (Queen Adelaide Way). From there re-trace your steps to this point.

For the route back to Ely *turn right* along a narrow tarmac path with a **Fen Rivers Way** signpost. In 90m you go through a metal kissing gate and *turn right* to follow a gravel path through the meadows of the **River Great Ouse**, with unrestricted views on the other side of the river (apart from a two-storey boating club house). In 900m walk through another metal kissing gate and follow a tarmac path under the railway line. *Turn left* on the other side, briefly along a road, and *fork left* to stay close to the river, with a green on the right. In 180m you pass the first house on the right and in 20m **Babylon Gallery** and then *turn right* just before a bridge across to a marina to emerge in an open area along the quayside and a road running down from the right, with the award-winning **Peacock's Tearoom** on your right. You walk past the tearoom and *turn left* along the quayside, in 20m passing **Back Lane** joining down from the right.

This is the Main Walk route. Continue along the quayside and pick up the directions in the Main Walk text at the quadruple asterisk ****).