



Huntingdon Circular walk

Easy walk beside the Great Ouse river to the attractive village of Houghton and its restored water mill, returning through water meadows and a nature reserve.

Length	<p>Main Walk: 18½ km (11.5 miles). Four hours 5 minutes walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 9 hours.</p> <p>Short Walk: 15 km (9.3 miles). Three hours 15 minutes walking time.</p> <p>Long Walk, via St Ives: 24 km (14.9 miles). Five hours 30 minutes walking time.</p>
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OS Map	Explorer 225. Huntingdon, map reference TL234716, is in Cambridgeshire, 24 km NW of Cambridge.
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Toughness	2 out of 10 (3 for the Long Walk).
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Features	<p>This is an easy walk from the historic town of Huntingdon to the attractive twin villages of Houghton and Wyton. Much of the walk is close to or actually alongside the River Great Ouse, and at Houghton you can visit the last working water mill on the river. Houghton Mill is operated by the National Trust and is open Sat–Wed from mid-March to the end of October (daily in August), with milling demonstrations on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays; admission (2018) is £5.45.</p>
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Oliver Cromwell was a pupil in Huntingdon's old grammar school (as was Samuel Pepys). The building now houses the [Cromwell Museum](#) (free entry); it is open daily (except Mondays) but note that its opening hours are limited, especially in winter.

The **Long Walk** option (see below) goes via the neighbouring villages of **Hemingford Abbots** and **Hemingford Grey** to the interesting town of **St Ives**. In Hemingford Grey you can visit [The Manor Garden](#), designed and planted by the author Lucy Boston and recreated as Green Knowe in her books for children. It is open 11am-5pm (or dusk); admission (2018) is £5.

St Ives has been an important market town since Anglo-Saxon times, when it was the last site where the River Great Ouse could be forded before it reached the sea, 80 km away. The 15thC town bridge has several unusual features, most notably the survival of its late-medieval **Bridge Chapel**. The town's **Norris Museum** (free entry) “tells the story of Huntingdonshire from earliest times to the present day”; it is open daily (except Sundays in winter) until 4pm.

A relatively high proportion of this walk is on tarmac paths and lanes, with the whole route never more than 20 metres above sea level (the area is popular with cyclists). Water meadows are obviously prone to flooding and so this walk may not be feasible in the winter months, or after very heavy rain.

Walk Options

You can save about 1¼ km by taking a short cut through Houghton Meadows. More simply, the **Short Walk** omits the entire loop around the meadows, saving 3½ km.

Conversely, you can extend the walk by 6 km with a longer central loop. After Houghton the **Long Walk** goes through two pretty villages which are only glimpsed from the other side of the river on the Main Walk; it continues on an attractive riverside path before crossing the town bridge into **St Ives**. The route back to Houghton is on the other side of the river, mostly along a flat level path but with a contrasting stretch through a strip of woodland on a steep bank above the river.

Towards the end of any of the walk options you can take a more direct route along roads into Huntingdon town centre, although this would miss out an attractive part of the walk.

Transport

Huntingdon is served by half-hourly Thameslink trains through central London (hourly on Sundays), taking about 1¼ hours from London Bridge and one hour from St Pancras.

There are several bus routes from St Ives to central Huntingdon, with some services continuing to the station. The most frequent is **Stagecoach Busway B** which runs every fifteen minutes (hourly Sun & BH) along the A1123 to the north of Houghton. **Dews Coaches** runs an infrequent local service (45A, Mon–Fri) via Houghton & Wyton but there are no useful bus services in the Hemingfords.

If driving, the station car park at Huntingdon costs £3.50 after 10am Mon–Fri, £2.70 for a weekend ticket (2018).

Suggested Train

Take the train nearest to **10:15** from **St Pancras** to **Huntingdon**. If you are doing the Long Walk and want to spend some time in Houghton Mill or one of the other attractions (and are planning to have lunch at one of the later pubs), leave an hour earlier. To do the Short Walk as an afternoon walk (just stopping for tea at Houghton Mill), you could leave one or two hours later.

Lunch

The suggested lunch stop is the **Three Jolly Butchers** (01480-463228) in Wyton, after 6½ km. This has a large garden and serves good home-cooked food. A little further on, the **Three Horseshoes Inn** (01480-462410) in Houghton's village square is a good alternative.

On the **Long Walk** there are two more options worth considering, allowing you to complete more of the walk before stopping. A third of the way round (after 8½ km) the **Axe & Compass** (01480-463605) in Hemingford Abbots is a friendly village pub with a large beer garden, serving good home-cooked food (not Mondays) until at least 2.30pm. The most up-market choice would be the National Pub of the Year 2013, **The Cock** (01480-463609) in Hemingford Grey (1 km further on), serving excellent food until 2.30pm.

If you take an earlier train you could stop for lunch halfway round the walk in St Ives, but none of the places there have been checked.

Tea

In summer the **Houghton Mill tearoom** (01480-301494) is a convenient place to stop for tea, with its wholemeal scones being made from flour ground at the mill; it is open daily to 5pm from mid-March to September, Wed/Sat/Sun only in winter. There is also an excellent alternative which is worth the short detour back to the village square: the tiny **Houghton Tearoom & Cakeshop** (01480-214838) is open Wed–Fri & Sun to 5pm.

On the **Long Walk** a good place to break for refreshment would be the **River Terrace Cafe** (01480-492694), in a perfect location right by St Ives bridge.

The suggested watering-hole at the end of the walk is the **George Hotel** (01480-432444) in George Street. This old coaching inn has a comfortable bar and a large open courtyard with a gallery (used for staging Shakespeare's plays). There are several other pubs and cafés in Huntingdon's town centre, plus a small buffet at the station.

Help Us!

After the walk, we would love to get your [feedback](#)

Photos

Upload your photos to the [SWC Group on Flickr](#), and [videos to YouTube](#). This walk's tags are:



By Car

Start PE29 3BP

Help

National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

Version

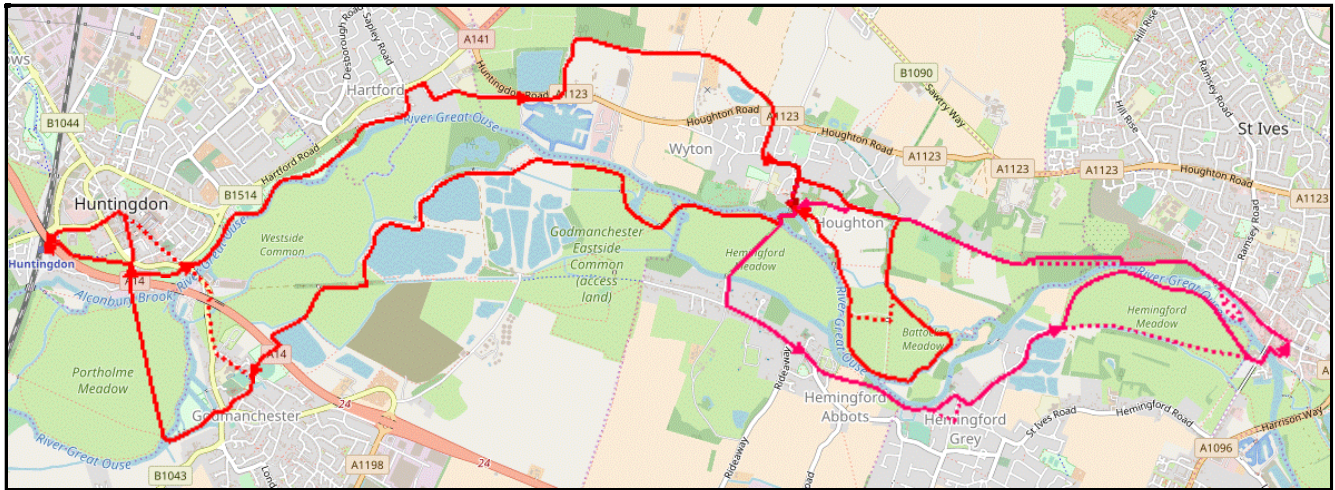
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Walk Directions

Walk Map



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Walk Options

- M. **Main Walk** (18½ km)
 - a. **Short Walk, omitting Houghton Meadows** (15 km)
 - b. **Long Walk, extended via St Ives** (24 km)

Walk Directions

1. Huntingdon Station to Old Bridge (1 km)

Arriving from London, cross the footbridge to leave the station via the ticket office on the far side. Do not turn left up the station approach road, but instead **bear half-left** up a tarmac path to the right of an exit road from the car park (past No Entry signs). Go under the elevated A14 and out through a kissing gate onto an open area grazed by cattle, **Mill Common**.

Follow a tarmac path heading **E** across the common, with the A14 off to your right. Just before reaching a metal kissing gate, **veer right** onto a gravel path. This soon becomes a grassy path across another part of the common, still heading **E**.

Leave the common through a wooden kissing gate and turn right onto a minor road. At the end of Mill Common car park cross the road and go up a lane (Castle Hill). At the top of the car park **veer left** onto a passageway between a fence and a hedge and continue on a tarmac path to the left of another open area, **Castle Hills**¹.

At the far end of Castle Hills a small detour up to the prominent beacon on your right would take you to an information panel about the area's history.

The path leads to the town's ring road. Bear right and follow it to a junction by the Old Bridge hotel.

2. Old Bridge to Huntingdon Road (3 km)

Cross the junction at the traffic lights into Riverside Park and take the tarmac path down to the water's edge in front of Bridgefoot House, with a fine view of the medieval bridge² and Riverside Mill (now converted into apartments) opposite. Turn left to head **NE** along the riverside path; you will be following this all the way through the park.

In 400m you have to skirt around a children's playground. Continue between the playground and a large car park to pass to the right of Huntingdon Boat Club. In a further 1 km the path goes into some trees and emerges on a lane between houses. Continue in the same direction, passing a small riverside car park on your right. Later, ignore a footpath off to the left and keep ahead towards **All Saints church**³, Hartford.

Go through the churchyard and out onto a lane which leads away from the river. Continue up to the B1514 and turn right, with the Barley Mow pub opposite. After 100m **turn right** into The Grove and follow this gravel road past houses. In 150m bend left with the road in front of the entrance to Greyfriars and continue for another 200m to a T-junction with a bus and cycleway. Turn right and follow this to the A1123 (Huntingdon Road).

3. Huntingdon Road to Wyton (2½ km)

Veer right onto a tarmac path running parallel to the A1123, screened by a row of trees. At the entrance to Hartford Marina, turn left and carefully cross over the main road. Continue along the pavement for a short distance and then **turn left** onto a broad gravel track, signposted as a public bridleway. There is a large flooded gravel pit behind trees on your left. After passing some large houses the bridleway narrows to a grassy path for a while, then turns right in front of overhead power lines and widens again.

Continue **E** along this broad grassy path, later with large fields on both sides. The path joins an unsurfaced track and then a tarmac lane and in each case you carry straight on. Where the tarmac lane curves away to the right, however, **keep ahead** on a grassy path, with a water tower visible on the horizon on your left.

The path gradually curves to the right, getting closer to the main road you left earlier. Eventually it bends right to meet it. Cross over carefully and take the tarmac path on the other side (slightly to your left), which leads into a modern housing estate. Go all the way down a residential street and turn left at its T-junction with Huntingdon Road. The suggested lunchtime pub on the Main Walk, the **Three Jolly Butchers**, is directly opposite.

If you are doing the Main Walk (with the loop around Houghton Meadows), go to §9.

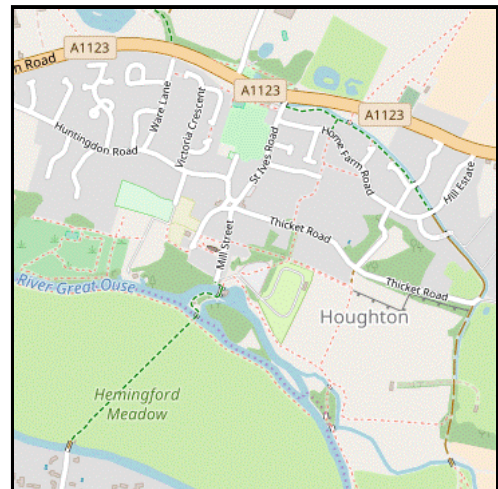
4. Wyton to Houghton Mill direct (½ km)

On leaving the pub, turn right to continue along the road into the adjacent village of Houghton. The road bends right and leads into its main square (The Green⁴) with an unusual thatched clock tower. Go diagonally across the square, passing the **Three Horseshoes Inn** on your left and heading towards the statue of **Potto Brown**⁵; behind it is the **Houghton Tearoom & Cakeshop**.

For both the **Long** and **Short Walk** options **bear right** in front of the statue into Mill Street, heading **S** and joining the **Pathfinder Way**⁶. After passing **St Mary's church**⁷ on your right the road turns left towards the National Trust car park and tearoom, but **keep ahead** for a nice view of Houghton Mill across the water.

Go up to the path leading into the mill, joining the **Ouse Valley Way**⁸ (OVW).

If you are doing the Short Walk (returning directly to Huntingdon), go to §10.



5. Houghton Mill to Hemingford Abbots (1½ km)

Take the path past the entrance to the mill in a covered passageway. The path goes over Houghton Mill Sluice and turns right, passing an information panel for the OVW. Follow the tarmac path round to Houghton Lock and cross the footbridge there. On the other side there is a four-way signpost and a tarmac path across the meadow.

For the **Long Walk** via St Ives **keep ahead** on the tarmac path, leaving the OVW. In 500m you cross a branch of the river on Black Bridge and continue on a lane. In 200m this comes to a T-junction where you turn left, leaving the Pathfinder Way.

Go along this road (Common Lane) into Hemingford Abbots, passing a number of attractive old cottages. In 500m keep left at a road junction to continue on High Street. You soon come to the next possible lunch stop, the **Axe & Compass** pub, on your left.

6. Hemingford Abbots to Hemingford Grey Meadow (2 km)

*A short detour from the pub along Church Lane would let you visit **St Margaret's church**⁹ before continuing the walk.*

To resume the walk from the pub, continue along High Street for 150m, heading **SE**. After passing Manor Lane and a long half-timbered thatched cottage on your left, **turn left** onto a public footpath, signposted to the river and Hemingford Grey. After passing between houses go through a wooden gate and across a meadow.

On the far side of the meadow go through two more gates onto a raised path alongside the river. As you continue along a short towpath into Hemingford Grey you pass an inconspicuous wooden gate on your right, the back entrance to **Hemingford Manor Garden**¹⁰. The path leads into the end of a lane (High Street).

*Take the alternative route if you want to visit the up-market pub in this village, **The Cock**.*

a. Main route

Veer left off the lane to continue on a signposted footpath alongside the river. At the end of this short path bear right into Church Street, perhaps after a quick visit to **St James' church**¹¹. In 50m the alternative route joins from Church Lane on the right.

b. Alternative route

Bear right and go along High Street for 175m. **The Cock** is on the left, at the junction with Church Lane (which is the continuation of the walk).

After visiting the pub go all the way along Church Lane and turn right onto Church Street to rejoin the main route.

75m past the junction with Church Lane, **turn left** onto an enclosed footpath signposted to St Ives. In 300m go straight across a minor road onto Meadow Lane opposite, soon with occasional glimpses of lakes behind the trees on your right. At the end of this lane there are several metal fieldgates: **go straight ahead** past the middle gate, then through a metal kissing gate into a corner of Hemingford Grey Meadow.

7. Hemingford Grey Meadow to St Ives (2 km)

You could cross this large meadow on the public footpath, initially along its right-hand side and then bearing left towards the Dolphin Hotel, but the suggested route is to go around its left-hand side on a permissive path alongside the river: this slightly longer route provides a fine view of the town.

For the suggested route **turn left** to head **N** along the edge of the meadow, later curving to the right to continue beside the river. **St Ives**¹² is up ahead on the other side of the river and you can see two of the town's tall church spires, as well as a long span of low brick arches heading off to the right; as you get closer you can see the town's old bridge, just beyond the far left-hand corner of the meadow.

After you have passed the first church spire and are midway between the two, the path splits. You could continue alongside the river for a closer view of the town bridge, but for a more direct route **fork right**, aiming for the right-hand end of a low modern building. On the far side of the meadow pass to the right of a small marina in front of this building.

Go through a broad passageway under part of the building (the Dolphin Hotel) and continue up to the road ahead, at the left-hand end of the low brick arches. Turn left onto the road (Bridge Street) and cross over the town bridge, passing the famous **Bridge Chapel**¹³ in the middle.



Unless you are stopping at the **River Terrace Cafe** *turn right* onto The Quay, with a fine view of the bridge and the seven-storey **Old Mill**¹⁴ a little way down the river. At the end of the quay a short detour ahead would take you to one of the town's pubs, the **Oliver Cromwell**, but to continue the walk *turn left* into Free Church Lane. This alleyway goes past the **United Reformed Church** (one of the spires seen on the approach to the town) and leads into **Market Hill**, with its prominent statue of Cromwell.

The walk turns left for the return leg to Houghton and Huntingdon, but the town's bus station is off to the right (just past the end of Market Hill) if you want to abandon the walk at this point.

8. St Ives to Houghton Mill (3½ km)

Head **NW** out of Market Hill on a semi-pedestrianised street, soon passing Bridge Street on the left and the **Royal Oak** pub on the right: you are now back on the well-waymarked Ouse Valley Way, which you will be following (more or less) all the way to Godmanchester. Keep ahead where the street widens, passing a memorial to Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. In a further 175m you pass the **Norris Museum** on your left, at the start of a little open space next to a backwater called **The Waits**.

At the end of The Waits, where the road turns right, *keep ahead* on a broad tarmac path to reach **All Saints** church¹⁵, the other spire seen earlier. Go past the church to find the continuation of the OVW by a white-painted footbridge leading onto **Holt Island**¹⁶.

A detour around the island is recommended if the nature reserve is open. There is a circular route on boardwalks and grassy paths, with information panels and a fine view of the town from the far end.

To resume the walk, go past the footbridge onto a tarmac path. In 300m *fork left* at a path junction. The tree-lined path now gradually approaches the main branch of the river and you might recognise your outward route on the opposite bank. Look out for an information panel about **The Thicket** on your right, 500m after the path junction.

If the woodland path through this nature reserve looks too muddy you could simply stay on the OVW.

For the suggested route *turn right* onto a path climbing into the wood, taking either fork where it splits. Where the two paths recombine *turn left* (off the left-hand path) onto a fairly level path parallel with the OVW at the bottom of the wood. Follow this woodland path for 500m, crossing a stream on a wooden bridge along the way and passing the occasional bench. At the end of the wood veer left downhill and turn right at the bottom to rejoin the tarmac path.

The OVW soon becomes a surfaced lane (Thicket Road). In the next 1 km there are some tempting gates on the left leading into meadows which you could explore, but no useful alternative routes. Where the lane swings left and right at a staggered junction, ignore ways off to continue along the OVW for a further 300m, soon passing some magnificent trees in parkland on your right.

Opposite the entrance to this parkland (and as the lane bends right) *turn left* onto a signposted footpath, alongside a wooden fence. At the end of this fence *turn right* onto an enclosed path running along the back of the houses on Thicket Road. In 200m *go through a wooden kissing gate on the left* and follow a grassy path past a caravan site, through a belt of trees and diagonally across a field (used as an overflow car park by the National Trust) to the **Houghton Mill tearoom** on the far side.

If this tearoom is closed or you want to try an alternative place before the long stretch to Huntingdon town centre (7½ km away), follow the detour below.

- Detour to the village square (+400m)

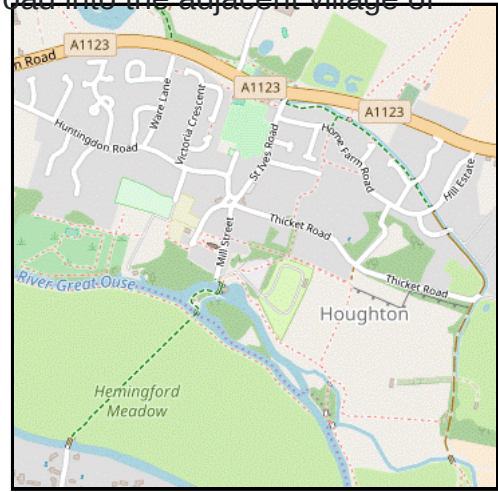
Go past the entrance to Houghton Mill into Mill Street, which turns sharply right and goes past St Mary's church. Two places you passed earlier are at the end of this lane: the **Houghton Tearoom & Cakeshop** is the last house on the right and the **Three Horseshoes Inn** is in the village square. Afterwards, return the same way to Houghton Mill.

Continue the directions at §10.

9. Wyton to Houghton Mill via water meadows (4 km)

On leaving the pub, turn right to continue along the road into the adjacent village of Houghton. The road bends right and leads into its main square (The Green⁴) with an unusual thatched clock tower. Go diagonally across the square, passing the **Three Horseshoes Inn** on your left and heading towards the statue of **Potto Brown**⁵; behind it is the **Houghton Tearoom & Cakeshop**.

For the **Main Walk** via Houghton Meadows **bear left** in front of the statue into Thicket Road, heading **E**. In 150m ignore footpaths on both sides as you pass the old Manor House on your right, then the Miller's House on your left. 200m later, where the road curves left, ignore another footpath off to the right. In a further 300m, as the road bends left, **turn right** onto a broad track (Sandy Lane).



Follow this unsurfaced lane **S** past the entrance to some old waterworks and then over a low embankment, the trackbed of an old railway line¹⁷. The lane curves left and crosses a wide bridge over a branch of the River Great Ouse. Go through a wooden kissing gate into Houghton Meadows.

If you want to take a short cut through the meadows, head south with the hedge on your right. In 200m, just after a wide gap in the hedge, turn right to go across a footbridge. Head west, keeping another hedge on your right, with the spire of Hemingford Abbots church⁹ ahead on your left. In 300m you reach the main river and turn right. Continue the directions at [•] below.

For the main route, head **SE** across the meadow, initially towards the tower of Hemingford Grey church¹¹ about 750m away. Where the river meanders away to your left continue in the same direction across the meadow, to meet it again after 300m.

To make the walk as long as possible you could keep left at this point and continue all the way up to the confluence of this stream and another branch of the River Great Ouse, but there is not a great deal to be gained by this detour.

If you simply maintain direction you come to another branch of the river in a further 200m. To start your return journey **turn right** along the river bank, initially heading **SW** and later **W**. In 500m you cross a stile and go past Six Gates Weir, where the main branch of the River Great Ouse joins. The riverside path continues to curve right and by the time you reach a hedge after another 500m you are heading **N**.

[•] Go over a footbridge here and continue alongside the river. In 250m cross a bridge at Trout Stream Weir and go past some rotting timber supports, all that remains of an old railway bridge across the river. Go across another footbridge at Stone Gull Weir and bear left (there is an information panel on the right about the restoration work).

After crossing a green-painted bridge over another backwater **turn left**, staying close to the stream. After one more footbridge you go through a wooden kissing gate by a NT sign for Houghton Mill, passing a caravan site on your right and then the large millpond on your left. Continue alongside the pond to the **Houghton Mill tearoom**.

If this tearoom is closed or you want to try an alternative place before the long stretch to Huntingdon town centre (7½ km away), follow the detour below.

- **Detour to the village square (+400m)**

Go past the entrance to Houghton Mill into Mill Street, which turns sharply right and goes past St Mary's church. Two places you passed earlier are at the end of this lane: the **Houghton Tearoom & Cakeshop** is the last house on the right and the **Three Horseshoes Inn** is in the village square. Afterwards, return the same way to Houghton Mill.

Go up to the path leading into the mill, joining the **Ouse Valley Way**⁸ (OVW).

10. Houghton Mill to Godmanchester (5 km)

Take the path past the entrance to the mill in a covered passageway. The path goes over Houghton Mill Sluice and turns right, passing an information panel for the OVW. Follow the tarmac path round to Houghton Lock and cross the footbridge there. On the other side there is a four-way signpost and a tarmac path across the meadow.

For the route back to Huntingdon do not take the tarmac path but **turn right** to head **W** alongside the river. In 600m, after crossing Houghton Four Gate Sluice, **bear left** across the meadow on a grassy path towards a bridge across another branch of the river. On the other side **turn right** to go alongside the water. In 250m, where the river curves off to the right, keep ahead across the grass towards a kissing gate in the hedge ahead. Go through the hedge and keep ahead across the meadow towards another hedge, with the main river behind it.

Veer left in front of the hedge to walk along the edge of the meadow (the overgrown path on the other side of the hedge is not recommended). In 500m, having negotiated a few field boundaries along the way, you pass the entrance to Hartford Marina on the far side of the river. Follow the grassy path as it curves gently left towards a metal kissing gate on the far side of the meadow. Cross the footbridge here, go through another kissing gate and follow the path to the right.

After making your way through a rather overgrown area cross another footbridge into **Godmanchester Nature Reserve**¹⁸, with the entrance to another (private) reserve off to your right. Keep ahead through a kissing gate to go along a potentially muddy area of churned-up ground to the left of an avenue of poplars. There is a backwater on your right and the first of several large flooded gravel pits comes into view on your left; later the spire of Godmanchester church is visible 2 km ahead.

Continue along a clear grassy path through the reserve. After going through the second of two metal kissing gates you come to another flooded pit and **turn right** to walk around its edge. In 500m the path crosses a plank bridge over a ditch and goes through another kissing gate, leaving the reserve. Turn half-left to head **S** across a field and go up a low embankment on the far side, the trackbed of the old railway line¹⁷ passed earlier on the Main Walk.

Turn right and go along the raised path for 300m, then **turn left** as indicated. Cross a bridge flanked by two kissing gates to go along the left-hand edge of a field. After another gate and bridge **fork right** to head towards the elevated A14, with yet another large flooded pit on your left. As you reach the main road, follow the path as it veers left and right to go underneath it. On the other side keep ahead across the grass, passing a cricket pitch on your left and then houses on your right, to reach a tarmac path.

11. Godmanchester to Mill Common (2 km)

If you want to take a short cut along roads into Huntingdon, turn right onto this path and keep ahead when you reach a minor road. At a T-junction with the B1043, turn right and follow this road back under the A14 and round to the left. Cross the River Great Ouse on a footbridge alongside the road and go straight ahead at the busy junction with the town's ring road (crossing the route you took on the way out). This quiet road leads directly to the town centre via the pedestrianised High Street. Complete the directions at [•] in §12a.

For the recommended route (which is much nicer), turn left on the path and almost immediately fork right towards **St Mary's** church¹⁹. Enter the churchyard and walk along the tarmac path on its left-hand side, passing Mary Ann Weems' gravestone after 20m. Leave the churchyard by its main gate and go down Chadley Lane to a road junction.

Turn right and carefully cross the main road at the mini-roundabout. Cross the small courtyard opposite (with its historic Town Council buildings) and go over the white-painted **Chinese Bridge** on the far side. On the other side of this attractive bridge, turn left and follow the path alongside a wide stretch of water. The path crosses Godmanchester Main Sluice and then two weirs. At Godmanchester Lock, go over a footbridge and through a gate into **Portholme Meadow**.

You will be leaving this large meadow 1 km away to the right, near the left-hand end of a row of modern houses (at the time of writing the clearest route was to keep ahead for about 100m and then turn right – finally leaving the OVW – onto a broad grassy path

heading **N**, but these paths are not a permanent feature). On the far side of the meadow cross Alconbury Brook on a car-wide concrete bridge and keep ahead on a road. After going under the elevated A14 Mill Common is on your left and a car park on the right.

12. Mill Common to Huntingdon Station (1 or ½ km)

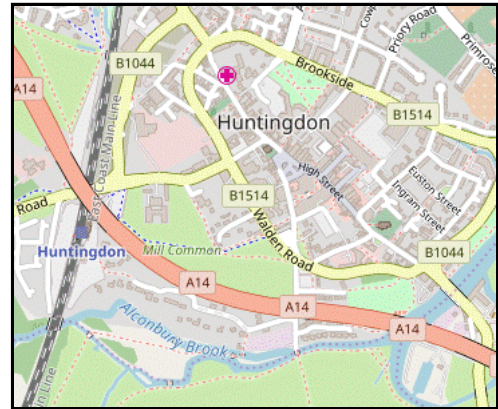
You could simply retrace your outward route across Mill Common, but the suggested route via the historic town centre is more interesting and not much longer.

a. Main route (1 km)

Go up to the junction with the ring road. Cross this busy road carefully and go along Princes Street, passing the bus station on your left and the town sign (of Cromwell) on your right. You could go through a shopping precinct on the right to the High Street, but the shortest route is to continue along this road to the main square, Market Hill.

[•] As you enter the square the Town Hall is behind you and the **Cromwell Museum** is in the old building to the right of **All Saints** church²⁰. The suggested refreshment place in the town centre (the **George Hotel**) is behind the church, in George Street; either go between the church and the museum and turn left, or cut through the small churchyard.

To complete the walk head **W** along George Street to its junction with the ring road. Cross over at the traffic lights and keep ahead on the B1514. In 300m, just before this road goes under the A14, **turn left** down the approach road to Huntingdon Station. Trains for London leave from Platform 2, on the near side.



b. Direct route (½ km)

Just before reaching the ring road, **turn left** through a wooden kissing gate and follow the path all the way across Mill Common. Leave through another kissing gate, go down the side of the car park and under the A14 to reach the station. Trains for London leave from Platform 2, on the near side.

Walk Notes

1. **Castle Hills** is the site of the town's Norman castle, built in 1068. It was destroyed in 1174 after one of the rebellions by Henry I's sons.
2. The original **Old Bridge** on this site was built in 1332. It is said that the two sets of builders, working from each bank, did not get their directions quite right and as a result the bridge has a kink in the middle, but (if true) this is not immediately obvious.
3. **All Saints, Hartford** dates from 1180 and has retained its 12thC font.
4. Houghton's village square is called **The Green** and old photographs on display in Houghton Mill show that this was indeed a village green in the past. There is a Victorian Gothic water pump beneath the clock tower.
5. **Potto Brown** (1797-1871) was known as the "Village Philanthropist". The owner of Houghton Mill, he founded the village school and built a nonconformist chapel.
6. The **Pathfinder Way** runs for 74 km through Cambridgeshire, linking airfields used by the Pathfinder squadrons in World War I.
7. **St Mary the Virgin, Houghton** dates from the 13thC, with a fine 14thC spire. Just outside the south porch, Thomas Garner's gravestone carries a version of the famous blacksmith's epitaph *My sledge and hammers lie declined...*, one of several in English churchyards.
8. The **Ouse Valley Way** runs for 240 km from the source of the River Great Ouse in Northamptonshire to The Wash at King's Lynn.
9. **St Margaret of Antioch, Hemingford Abbots** dates from 1190 and still has some of its early features, but much of it was rebuilt in later centuries. It has a particularly impressive tower and octagonal spire.
10. The four-acre **Hemingford Manor Garden** is a mix of herbaceous borders, formal lawns and topiary, with a renowned collection of old roses. The 12thC house is one of several which claims to be Britain's oldest continuously inhabited house.

11. **St James, Hemingford Grey** is thought to date from the 12thC. The eight finials on top of the oddly-truncated tower were put there after the 1741 hurricane blew down the spire, which is supposedly somewhere at the bottom of the river.
12. **St Ives** (along with most other Cambridgeshire towns) did not impress the poet **Rupert Brooke**, if one believes these lines in *The Old Vicarage, Grantchester* (1912): *Strong men have blanched, and shot their wives / Rather than send them to St Ives.*
13. The **Bridge Chapel** was used to collect tolls from travellers as well as for church services. They were quite common in the Middle Ages but only four have survived in Britain: the others are at Bradford-on-Avon, Wakefield and Rotherham. The bridge's two southern arches are more rounded than the others because they were rebuilt in a different style many years after the Civil War, when Cromwell's army had destroyed part of the bridge to hamper the King's troops.
14. The **Old Mill** was built in 1854 as a steam-powered corn mill. The building has now been converted into flats but in the 20thC it was used for business premises; in 1972 the first pocket calculator was designed there by Sir Clive Sinclair.
15. **All Saints, St Ives** has been rebuilt many times, with the present church mostly dating from the late 15thC. Its spire was blown down in the 1741 hurricane and its replacement was also destroyed when a student pilot crashed into it in 1918.
16. **Holt Island** was planted with osiers (a kind of willow) until basket-making became uneconomic. It was donated to the town in 1934 and most of it is now a nature reserve.
17. The **railway line** between Huntingdon and St Ives closed in 1962.
18. **Godmanchester Nature Reserve** was created from the worked-out gravel pits in the area. The nearby **Peter Prince Memorial Nature Reserve** is named after a scientist who worked on the British Antarctic Survey.
19. **St Mary the Virgin, Godmanchester** dates from the 13thC, although there was an earlier Saxon church here. In the churchyard, the inscription on Mary Ann Weems' gravestone "As a Warning to the Young of both Sexes" recounts the tale of her murder in 1819 and its aftermath.
20. **All Saints, Huntingdon** dates from the 15thC, although there have been two or three earlier churches on the site.

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