

Digital Editions

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Guide to Rural England

CAMBRIDGESHIRE



WHERE TO GO | WHAT TO SEE | WHAT TO DO
WHERE TO STAY | WHERE TO EAT | WHERE TO BUY

Fully illustrated with detailed directions and maps

LOCATOR MAP



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Cambridgeshire

Extending over much of the county from the Wash, the flat fields of the Fens are like a breath of fresh air, far removed from the hustle and bustle of modern life. These fields contain some of the richest soil in England, and villages such as Fordham and small towns like Ely rise out of the landscape on low hills. Before the Fens were drained, this was a land of mist, marshes and bogs, of small islands inhabited by independent folk, their livelihood the fish and waterfowl of this eerie, watery place. The region is full of legends of web-footed people, ghosts and witchcraft. Today's landscape is the result of human ingenuity, with its constant desire to tame the wilderness and create farmland. This fascinating story spans the centuries from the earliest Roman and Anglo-Saxon times, when the first embankments and drains were constructed to lessen the frequency of flooding. Throughout the Middle Ages large areas were reclaimed, with much of the work being undertaken by the monasteries. The first straight cut bypassed the Great Ouse, allowing the water to run out to sea more quickly. After the Civil War, the New Bedford River was cut parallel to the first. These two still provide the basic drainage for much of Fenland. The significant influence of the Dutch lives on in some of the architecture and place names of the Fens. Over the years it became necessary to pump rainwater from the fields up into the rivers and, as in the Netherlands, windmills took on this task. They could not always cope with the height of the lift required, but fortunately the steam engine came along, to be replaced eventually by the electric pumps that can raise thousands of gallons of water a second to protect the land from the ever-present threat of rain and tide. The Fens offer unlimited opportunities for exploring on foot, by car, bicycle or by boat. Anglers are well catered for, and visitors with an interest in wildlife will be in their element.

Southeastern Cambridgeshire covers the area around the city of Cambridge and is rich in history, with a host of archaeological sites and monuments to visit, as well as many important museums. The area is fairly flat, so it makes for great walking and cycling tours, and offers a surprising variety of landscapes. The Romans planted vines here and, to this day, the region is one of the main producers of British wines. At the heart of it all is Cambridge itself, one of the leading academic centres in the world and a city that deserves plenty of time to explore - on foot, by bicycle or by the gentler, more romantic option of a punt.

The old county of Huntingdonshire is the heartland of the rural heritage of Cambridgeshire. Here, the home of Oliver Cromwell beckons with a wealth of history and pleasing landscapes. Many motorists follow the Cromwell Trail, which guides tourists around the legacy of buildings and places in the area associated with the man. The natural start of the Trail is Huntingdon itself, where Cromwell was born the son of a country gentleman. Other main stopping places are covered in this chapter.

The Ouse Valley Way (26 miles long) follows the course of the Great Ouse through pretty villages and a variety of natural attractions. A gentle cruise along this area can fill a lazy day to perfection, but for those who prefer something more energetic on the water there are excellent, versatile facilities at Grafham Water. The Nene-Ouse Navigation Link, part of the Fenland Waterway, provides the opportunity for a relaxed look at a lovely part of the region. It travels from Stanground Lock near Peterborough to a lock at the small village of Salters Lode in the east, and the 28-mile journey passes through several Fenland towns and a rich variety of wildlife habitats.

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Ely

Cathedral Oliver Cromwell's House
 Ely Museum The Stained Glass Museum

Ely is the jewel in the crown of the Fens, in whose history the majestic **Cathedral** and the Fens themselves have played major roles. The Fens' influence is apparent even in the name: Ely was once known as Elge or Elig ('eel island') because of the large number of eels that lived in the surrounding fenland. Ely owes its existence to St Etheldreda, Queen of Northumbria, who in AD673 founded a monastery on the 'Isle of Ely', where she remained as abbess until her death in AD679. It was not until 1081 that work started on the present Cathedral, and in 1189 this remarkable example of Romanesque architecture was completed. The most outstanding feature in terms of both scale and beauty is the Octagon, built to replace the original Norman tower, which collapsed in 1322.

Alan of Walsingham was the inspired architect of this massive work, which took 30 years to complete and whose framework

weighs an estimated 400 tons. Many other notable components include the 14th century Lady Chapel, the largest in England, the Prior's Door, the painted nave ceiling and St Ovin's cross, the only piece of Saxon stonework in the building.

The Cathedral is set within the walls of the monastery, and many of the ancient buildings still stand as a tribute to the incredible skill and craftsmanship of their designers and builders. Particularly worth visiting among these are the monastic buildings in the College, the Great Hall and Queens Hall.

Just beside the Cathedral is the Almonry, in whose 12th century vaulted undercroft visitors can take coffee, lunch or tea - outside in the garden if the weather permits. Two other attractions that should not be missed are a place where visitors can make their own rubbings from replica brasses, and **The Stained Glass Museum** (see panel below). The latter, housed in the south Triforium of the Cathedral, is the only museum of stained glass in the country and contains over 100 original panels from every period, tracing the

The Stained Glass Museum

The South Triforium, Ely Cathedral, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4DL
Tel: 01353 660347 Fax: 01353 665025
website: www.stainedglassmuseum.com

This unique museum offers an insight into the long story of stained glass. For at least 1,300 years the art has been practised in Britain. The Main Gallery is located on the upper level of the Cathedral accessed by a spiral staircase. It contains displays of stained glass windows, ranging over eight centuries, in specially illuminated cases. A touch-screen virtual visit is available on the ground floor.

There is a range of gifts, cards and books relating to stained glass and also work by local glass artists in the museum shop. Friends of the Museum support the work done here in various ways, and also have a wide programme of events and visits to do with stained glass and art in a wider context.





The Old Palace, Ely

Information Centre is itself a tourist attraction, since it is part of a pretty black-and-white timbered building that was once **Oliver Cromwell's House**. It is the only remaining house, apart from Hampton Court, where Oliver Cromwell and his family are known to have lived; parts of it date back to the 13th century, and its varied history includes periods when it was used as a public house and, more recently, a vicarage. 2008 marks the 350th

complete history of stained glass.

The Old Palace, the official residence of the Bishops of Ely until 1940, is now a hospice. It is fronted by two towers, and notable features inside include the Georgian sitting room and the Bishop's private chapel. In the garden is a giant plane tree - claimed to be the oldest in Europe. The Tourist

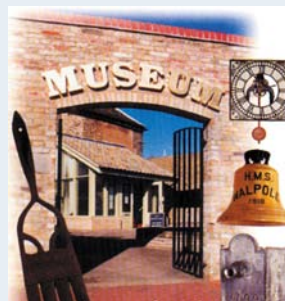
anniversary of Oliver Cromwell's death, the house has been refurbished and a number of special events were planned throughout the year. There are eight period rooms, including a re-creation of the room where he died, a permanent Civil War exhibition and a presentation on the life and times of Cromwell. The last room on a tour of the

Ely Museum at the Old Gaol

*The Old Gaol, Market Street, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4LS
Tel: 01353 666655*

Ely Museum is housed in one of the oldest buildings in Ely, dating from the 13th century. It has been a private house, a tavern, a registry office and the Bishops' Gaol. Sensitive renovation in 1997, much of the building's history can still be seen, including prisoners' graffiti, hidden doorways and original planking on the walls. The displays include fossils from marine dinosaurs, prehistoric tools and weapons, Roman pottery and Anglo Saxon jewellery. An archive film shows methods of farming in the past, and the Debtors and Condemned Cells show visitors what the Bishops' Gaol was really like.

Ely Museum has a level front entrance, an adapted toilet and a stairlift to the upper floor. There are chairs throughout the Museum for visitors. Quiz sheets are free to children, there is a Teacher's Resource Pack, and many objects that can be touched. Guided tours are available by appointment. There are visitors' toilets and a nappy changing unit. The gift shop sells many items from the Robert Opie range as well as local history publications, and work by local artists and crafts people. Special events and exhibitions are held throughout the year, including finds identification afternoons, living history days and a programme of talks.



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house is the Tithe Office, where visitors can watch a presentation telling the 'Story of the Fens'.

The Old Gaol, in Market Street, houses **Ely Museum** (see panel opposite), with nine galleries telling the Ely story from the Ice Age to modern times. The tableaux of the condemned and debtors' cells are particularly fascinating and poignant.

Ely is not just the past, and its fine architecture and sense of history blend well with the bustle of the streets and shops and the riverside. That bustle is at its most fervent on Thursdays, when the largest general market in the area is held. Every Saturday there's a craft and collectables market, and on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month Ely hosts a Farmers' Market.

At Babylon Gallery on Ely's Waterside, in a converted 18th-century brewery warehouse, visitors will find an exciting collection of contemporary arts and crafts, in a programme of changing local and international exhibitions.

Around Ely

PRICKWILLOW

4 miles NE of Ely on the B1382

Museum

On the village's main street is the **Prickwillow Drainage Engine Museum**, which houses a unique collection of large engines associated with the drainage of the Fens. The site had been in continuous use as a pumping station since 1831, and apart from the engines there are displays charting the history of Fens drainage, the effects on land levels and the workings of the modern drainage system.

LITTLEPORT

6 miles N of Ely on the A10

St George's Church

St George's Church, with its very tall 15th-century tower, is a notable landmark here in Littleport. Of particular interest are two stained-glass windows depicting St George slaying the dragon. Littleport was the scene of riots in 1861, when labourers from Ely and Littleport, faced with unemployment or low wages and soaring food prices, attacked houses and people in this area, causing several deaths. Five of the rioters were hanged then buried in a common grave at St Mary's Church. A plaque commemorating the event is attached to a wall at the back of the church.

LITTLE DOWNHAM

3 miles N of Ely off the A10

Little Downham's Church of St Leonard shows the change from Norman to Gothic in church building at the turn of the 13th century. The oldest parts are the Norman tower and the elaborately carved south door. Interior treasures include what is probably the largest royal coat of arms in the country. At the other end of the village are the remains (mainly the gatehouse and kitchen) of a 15th-century palace built by a Bishop of Ely. The property is in private hands and part of it is an antiques centre.

COVENEY

3 miles W of Ely off the A10

Church of St Peter-ad-Vincula

A Fenland hamlet on the Bedford Level just above West Fen, Coveney's **Church of St Peter-ad-Vincula** has several interesting features, including a colourful German screen dating from around 1500 and a painted

Wardy Hill

Distance: 5.5 miles (8.8 kilometres)

Typical time: 120 mins

Height gain: 0 metres

Map: Explorer 228

Walk: www.walkingworld.com ID:1170

Contributor: Joy & Charles Boldero

ACCESS INFORMATION:

For information about bus routes ring 0870 608 2608. There is parking on the very wide grass verge at By-way sign on the edge of Wardy Hill village, by Beumont Farm fence line. Wardy Hill is situated on a minor road off the A142 4 miles west of Ely.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Wardy Hill is set on an island above the fens, on what is known as the Isle of Ely. Wardy Hill means 'lookout'. In centuries past this was to watch for cattle raiders coming across the fens. It is thought it was a Bronze Age settlement as shields and swords have been found here.

The New Bedford River, or Hundred-Foot Drain as it is also called, was built after the Old Bedford River, built by the Dutchman Vermuyden in the 1600s, was found to be inadequate. The land between the two rivers is a flood plain and part of the RSPB famous Welney Washes. To the left on the horizon Ely Cathedral can be seen.

The Three Pickerels pub at Mepal has an excellent menu. It is closed on Monday lunch times. Open all day on Sundays.

DESCRIPTION:

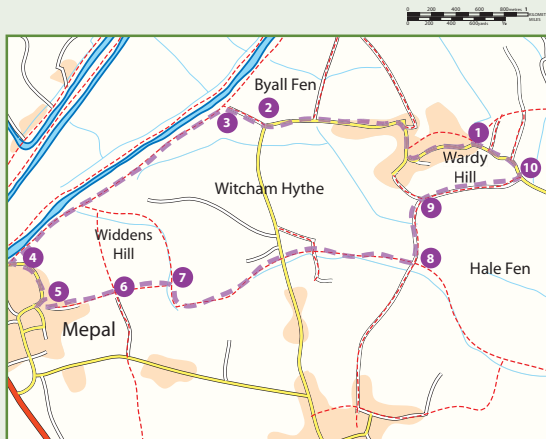
This walk runs beside the New Bedford River to Mepal, then returns by tracks and footpaths that can be muddy after heavy rain and country lanes.

FEATURES:

River, Pub, Toilets, Wildlife, Birds, Flowers, Great Views, Butterflies.

WALK DIRECTIONS:

- 1 | Go westwards through the village, ignoring all footpaths off the country lane. Continue along Jerusalem Drove to left-hand bend.
- 2 | At bridleway sign go right along track passing Toll Cottage. Climb stile and cross to next one and climb it, going up the bank.
- 3 | Turn left along river bank. Much further along go down bank to metal gate and climb stile. Continue along the track. Climb stile.
- 4 | Turn right along road in Mepal, then almost immediately left to pub. Retrace steps to junction and turn right along pavement.
- 5 | Cross road by right-hand bend and turn left along New Road. At end, go around gate and cross field. Climb stile, cross second field, climb stile.
- 6 | Turn left along track, then almost immediately right. Cross field and slippery bridge.
- 7 | Turn right along track. Cross road and continue along the track opposite. Cross track and continue straight along track. At fork either path can be used.
- 8 | Turn left at cross tracks.
- 9 | At T junction of tracks turn right.
- 10 | Turn left along country lane back to start of walk.



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Danish pulpit. Unusual figures on the bench ends and a fine brass chandelier add to the opulent feel of this atmospheric little church.

SUTTON

6 miles W of Ely off the A142

A very splendid 'peppercot' tower with octagons, pinnacles and spire tops marks out Sutton's grand church of St Andrew. Inside, take time to look at the 15th-century font and a fine modern stained-glass window.

The reconstruction of the church was largely the work of two Bishops of Ely, whose arms appear on the roof bosses. One of the Bishops was Thomas Arundel, appointed at the age of 21.

A mile further west, there's a great family attraction in the Mepal Outdoor Centre, an outdoor leisure centre with a children's playpark, an adventure play area and boat hire.

HADDENHAM

5 miles SW of Ely on the A1123

Great Mill

More industrial splendour: Haddenham **Great Mill**, built in 1803 for a certain Daniel Cockle, is a glorious sight, and one definitely not to be missed. It has four sails and three sets of grinding stones, one of which is working. The mill last worked commercially in 1946 and was restored between 1992 and 1998. Open on the first Sunday of each month and by appointment.

Other places of interest in and around Haddenham, which lies on the highest ridge (120ft) in the Isle of Ely, include Holy Trinity Church and Porch House, a typical Elizabethan long house.

STRETHAM

5 miles S of Ely off A10/A1123

Stretham Old Engine

The **Stretham Old Engine**, a fine example of a land-drainage steam engine, is housed in a restored, tall-chimneyed brick engine house. Dating from 1831, it is one of 90 steam pumping engines installed throughout the Fens to replace some 800 windmills. It is the last to survive, having worked until 1925 and still under restoration. During the great floods of 1919 it really earned its keep by working non-stop for 47 days and nights.

This unique insight into Fenland history and industrial archaeology is open to the public on summer weekends, and on certain dates the engine and its wooden scoop-wheel are rotated (by electricity, alas!). The adjacent Stoker's Cottage contains four plainly appointed rooms with period furniture and old photographs of fen drainage down the years.

Downfield Windmill, six miles southeast of Ely on the A142 bypass, was built in 1726 as a smock mill, destroyed by gales and rebuilt in 1890 as an octagonal tower mill. It still grinds corn and produces a range of flours and breads for sale (open Sundays and Bank Holidays).



Stretham Old Engine, Ely

WICKEN*9 miles S of Ely off the A1123*

 St Lawrence's Church  Wicken Fen

Owned by the National Trust, **Wicken Fen** (see panel above) is the oldest nature reserve in the country, celebrating its centenary in 1999. Its 600 acres of wetland habitats are famous for their rich plant, insect and bird life, and a delight for both naturalists and ramblers. Features include boardwalk, adventurer's and nature trails, hides and watchtowers, wild ponies, a cottage with 1930s furnishings, a working wind pump (the oldest in the country), a visitor centre and a shop. Open daily, dawn to dusk.

St Lawrence's Church is well worth a visit, small and secluded among trees. In the churchyard are buried several members of the Cromwell family, including Henry and his grandson Oliver (not the Roundhead leader). One of Roundhead Cromwell's many nicknames was 'Lord of the Fens': he defended the rights of the Fenmen against those who wanted to drain the land without providing adequate compensation.

Wicken Windmill is a fine and impressive smock windmill restored back to working

order. One of only four smock windmills making flour in the UK, it is open the first weekend of every month and every Bank Holiday (except Christmas and Good Friday) from 11am until 5pm, and also over the National Mills Weekend, the second week in May.

ISLEHAM*10 miles SE of Ely off the B1104*

The remains of a Benedictine priory with a lovely Norman chapel under the care of English Heritage, are a great draw here in Isleham. Also well worth a visit is the Church of St Andrew, a 14th-century cruciform building entered by a very fine lychgate. The 17th-century eagle lectern is the original of a similar lectern in Ely Cathedral.

SNAILWELL*12 miles SE of Ely off the A142*

Snailwell's pretty, mainly 14th-century Church of St Peter on the banks of the River Snail boasts a 13th-century chancel, a hammerbeam and tie beam nave roof, a 600-year-old font, pews with poppy heads and two medieval oak screens. The Norman round tower is unusual for Cambridgeshire.

TYLERS FARM SHOP

*Hall Farm, 71 Church Road, Wicken, nr Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 6XT
Tel/Fax: 01353 721029*

Bob and Christine Tyler have owned and run **Tylers Farm Shop** for more than 20 years, building a far-reaching reputation for quality and service. Their bright, spotless shop is filled with top-notch local produce, from cuts and joints of pork, beef and lamb, hand-made sausages and burgers, bacon, cooked and cured meats, pork pies, poultry, eggs, milk, butter, cheese, bread, biscuits, preserves, honey and locally-milled flour, sold in three varieties. Barbecue packs are available to order. The shop, which stands opposite St Lawrence's Church, is open from 9am to 5.30pm Wednesday to Friday, 8am to 1pm on Saturday.



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Cambridge

 The Colleges  University Library
 The Churches  Bridge of Sighs
 Mathematical Bridge  Fitzwilliam Museum
 Museum of Zoology
 Museums of Archaeology & Anthropology
 Museum of Technology  Whipple Museum
 Museum of Earth Sciences
 Scott Polar Research Institute
 Cambridge & County Folk Museum
 University Botanic Gardens  Kettle's Yard

There are nearly 30 Cambridges spread around the globe, but this, the original, is the one that the whole world knows as one of the leading university cities. Cambridge was an important town many centuries before the scholars arrived, standing at the point where

forest met fen, at the lowest fording point of the river. The Romans took over a site previously settled by an Iron Age Belgic tribe, to be followed in turn by the Saxons and the Normans.

Soon after the Norman Conquest, William I built a wooden motte-and-bailey castle; Edward I built a stone replacement: a mound still marks the spot. The town flourished as a market and river trading centre, and in 1209 a group of students fleeing the Oxford riots arrived.

The first of the **Colleges** was Peterhouse, founded by the Bishop of Ely in 1284, followed in the next century by Clare, Pembroke, Gonville & Caius, Trinity Hall and Corpus Christi. The total is now more than 30; the most distinctive of the modern colleges is Robinson College, built in striking post-modern style in 1977; it has the look of

GWEN RAVERAT, CAMBRIDGE & THE DARWINS

*Broughton House, 98 King Street, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB1 1LN
Tel: 01223 314960
e-mail: bhgallery@btconnect.com
website: www.broughtonhousegallery.co.uk*

Gwen Raverat, granddaughter of Charles Darwin, friend of Rupert Brooke, Virginia Woolf and others of the Bloomsbury Group, wrote the classic *Period Piece*, a memoir of a Cambridge childhood, set in her home Newnham Grange, now part of Darwin College. She had become the leading wood engraver of her generation. Her work varied from freestanding prints of Cambridge and France, to illustrations to books such as *The Cambridge Book of Poetry for Children*.

The archive of all the prints made by her during her lifetime (mostly for sale), plus all the books written about her (also for sale), and greeting card reproductions of some of her work are housed in **Broughton House** in King Street. Give us a ring or e-mail us to come and browse and enjoy our walled garden. Wheelchairs and children welcome. Pay and Display parking.

*Fishing at Grantchester (1930)**The Olive Pickers (1922)*

a fortress, its concrete structure covered with a 'skin' of a million and a quarter hand-made red Dorset bricks. It was the gift of the self-made millionaire engineer and racehorse owner David Robinson. All the colleges are well worth a visit, but places that simply must not be missed include King's College Chapel with its breathtaking fan vaulting, glorious stained glass and Peter Paul Rubens' Adoration of the Magi; Pepys Library, including his diaries, in Magdalene College; and Trinity's wonderful Great Court. A trip by punt along the 'Backs' of the Cam brings a unique view of many of the colleges and passes under six bridges, including the **Bridge of Sighs** (St John's) and the extraordinary wooden **Mathematical Bridge** at Queens.

Cambridge has nurtured more Nobel Prize winners than most countries - 32 from Trinity

alone - and the list of celebrated alumni covers every sphere of human endeavour and achievement: Byron, Tennyson, Milton and Wordsworth; Marlowe and Bacon; Samuel Pepys; Sir Isaac Newton and Charles Darwin; Charles Babbage, Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein; actors Sir Ian McKellen, Sir Derek Jacobi and Stephen Fry; Lord Burghley; Harold Abrahams, who ran for England in the Olympics; and Burgess, Maclean, Philby and Blunt, who spied for Russia. The 'Cambridge Mafia' was the title given to a group of senior Conservatives at Cambridge together in the early 1960. Their number included Ken Clarke, John Gummer, Norman Lamont, Peter Lilley and Michael Howard, all in John Major's 1992 cabinet, Norman Fowler and Leon Brittan. Pembroke College, the third oldest, produced an impressive array of comedy stars and writers,

SANDRA JANE

46-48 King Street, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB1 1LN
Tel: 01223 323211 Fax: 01223 507095

e-mail: contact@sandrajane.co.uk website: www.sandrajane.co.uk

Sandra Jane is a high-quality interior design store in the heart of Cambridge. Large windows in the Grade II listed building give a glimpse of the array of decorative and practical items for the home on display over its two floors. Opened by Sandy Turkentine in 1998, the family-run business is filled with things that make a house a home, and a home individual and special.

The stock includes fabrics, wallpaper and trimmings from over 40 top designers, sample books, cushions, throws, furniture (inside and outside), curtain poles and tracks, mirrors and lighting ranging from small bedside lamps to floor-standing lamps and chandeliers. There's

also a great selection of jewellery, along with clothes, pottery, vases and smaller items as diverse as photo frames, reading glasses and bath oils.

The goods come from well-known brands as well as lesser-known sources from all over the world, and the stock is constantly changing. Services offered at Sandra Jane include curtain- and blind-making and wedding lists. Store hours are 9.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday.



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Kettle's Yard House

Castle Street, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB3 0AQ
Tel: 01223 352124

website: www.kettlesyard.co.uk

e-mail: mail@kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk



For 16 years, **Kettle's Yard** was the home of Jim Ede, a former curator at the Tate Gallery, London, and his wife, Helen. It houses Ede's collection of art, mostly of the first half of the 20th century. The collection includes paintings by Ben and Winifred Nicholson, Alfred Wallis, Christopher Wood, David Jones, Joan Miro and many others, along with sculptures by artists including Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Constantin Brancusi, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth.

Paintings and sculptures are interlaced with furniture, glass, ceramics and natural objects. Ede's vision of Kettle's Yard was of a place that was not "an art gallery or museum, nor ... simply a collection of works of art reflecting my taste or the taste of a given period. It is, rather, a continuing way of life from these last fifty years, in which stray objects, stones, glass, pictures, sculpture, in light and in space, have been used to make manifest the underlying stability ..."

Each afternoon (apart from Mondays) visitors can ring the bell and ask to look around.

including Peter Cook, Eric Idle, Clive James, Bill Oddie and Tim Brooke-Taylor. The best way to see the Colleges is on an official TourCambridge guided tour (book on 0871 226 8006 or at the TIC). There are also open-top bus tours round the city and 'chauffeured' punt tours on the River Cam.

The Colleges apart, Cambridge is packed with interest for the visitor, with a wealth of grand buildings both religious and secular, and some of the country's leading museums, many of them run by the University. The **Fitzwilliam Museum** is renowned for its art collection, which includes works by Titian, Rembrandt, Gainsborough, Hogarth, Turner, Renoir, Picasso and Cezanne, and for its antiquities from Egypt, Greece and Rome. **Kettle's Yard** (see panel above) has a permanent display of 20th-century art in a house maintained just as it was when the Ede family donated it, with the collection, to the University in 1967. The **Museum of**

Classical Archaeology has 500 plaster casts of Greek and Roman statues, and the **University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology** covers worldwide prehistoric archaeology with special displays relating to Oceania and to the Cambridge area. The **Museum of Technology**, housed in a Victorian sewage pumping station, features an impressive collection of steam, gas and electric pumping engines and examples great and small of local industrial technology. Anyone with an interest in fossils should make tracks to the **Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences**, while in the same street (Downing) the **Museum of Zoology** offers a comprehensive and spectacular survey of the animal kingdom. The **Whipple Museum of the History of Science** tells about science through instruments; the **Scott Polar Research Institute** has fascinating, often poignant exhibits relating to Arctic and Antarctic exploration; and the **University**



Punting on River Cam, Cambridge

Botanic Garden (see panel below) boasts a plant collection (more than 8,000 species) that rivals those of Kew Gardens and Edinburgh. The 40-acre site includes the National Collections of species tulips, fritillaries and hardy geraniums.

The work and life of the people of Cambridge and the surrounding area are the subjects of the **Cambridge and County Folk Museum**, housed in a 16th century building that for 300 years was the White Horse Inn. It traces the everyday lives of the local people from 1700 onwards, with sections devoted to crafts and trades, town & gown, witchbottles, skating, and eels.

Cambridge University Botanic Garden

Cory Lodge, Bateman Street, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB2 1JF
Tel: 01223 336265

website: www.botanic.cam.ac.uk

Opened in 1846 by Professor John Henslow, Charles Darwin's teacher and mentor, this heritage-listed **Botanic Garden** displays over 8,000 plant species, including important collections of species tulips, geraniums, lavenders and fritillaries, as well as the finest arboretum in the East of England.

The majestic Main Walk of towering evergreens forms the backbone of the superb 19th century Garden that also boasts the flamboyant Glasshouses of tropical and desert plants, and the Rock Garden, which displays the alpine plants of every continent geographically and affords a wonderful vantage point over the Lake. The Woodland Garden is a stunning mix of mature trees and rich herbaceous underplanting, whilst the extraordinary, unique Systematic Beds, designed in 1845, display over 95 families of hardy herbaceous plants.

The 20th century Garden reflects the horticultural and scientific developments of the time: the British Wild Plants collection is unparalleled; the Dry Garden is an on-going experiment to create a gorgeous garden that can survive the dry Cambridge climate without any watering; the Genetics Garden tells the story of the sweet pea experiments undertaken here by William Bateson in the 1900s, which led to the modern science of genetics; the ancestry of the modern rose is unravelled in the Rose Garden and the Winter Garden is an inspirational lesson in achieving colour, beauty and scent in the winter months.



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Tel: 01223 363372



4 floors, parking in front of shop

9 Norfolk Street, Cambridge CB1 2LD
Tel: 01223 307676

website: www.arkcambridge.co.uk

Our shops are open 7 days a week plus Bank Holidays

One of the city's greatest treasures is the **University Library**, one of the world's great research libraries with six million books, one million maps and 350,000 manuscripts.

Cambridge also has many fine **Churches**, some of them used by the colleges before they built their own chapels. Among the most notable are St Mary the Less, originally dedicated to St Peter (from which nearby Peterhouse College gets its name); St Benet's (its 11th-century tower is the oldest in the county); St Mary the Great, the 'University Church', a marvellous example of Late Perpendicular Gothic; Our Lady & the English Martyrs; Holy Trinity, known for its connections with the Evangelical movement, and St Peter Castle Hill. This last is one of the smallest churches in the country, with a nave measuring just 25 feet by 16 feet. Originally much larger, the church was largely

demolished in 1781 and rebuilt in its present diminished state using the old materials, including flint rubble and Roman bricks. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, always known as the Round Church, is one of only five surviving circular churches in England.

Around Cambridge

GIRTON

3 miles NW of Cambridge off the A14

The first Cambridge college for women was founded in 1869 in Hitchin, by Emily Davies. It moved here to Girton in 1873, to be 'near enough for male lecturers to visit but far enough away to discourage male students from doing the same'. The problem went away when Girton became a mixed College in 1983.

DAISY CHAIN

2 High Street, Histon, Cambridgeshire CB24 9LG

Tel: 01223 232121

e-mail: gifts@daisychainhiston.co.uk

website: www.daisychainhiston.co.uk

Daisy Chain is a delightful shop selling a tempting array of gifts, cards, jewellery and accessories that are very much out of the ordinary. The spacious shop is perfect for browsing among the innovative range of products - selected to suit every budget and occasion. Other products include household accessories, children's clothing, baby gifts and personalised items. This wonderful variety is regularly updated and stock is purchased in small quantities to maintain a diverse assortment. The owners invite you to get away from the stresses and strains of city shopping and wander around Daisy Chain's fascinating array of colours and aromas.



RAMPTON

6 miles NW of Cambridge off the B1049

Giant's Hill

A charming village in its own right, with a tree-fringed village green, Rampton is also the site of one of the many archaeological sites in the area. This is **Giant's Hill**, a motte castle with part of an earlier medieval settlement.

MILTON

3 miles N of Cambridge off the A10

Milton Country Park

Milton Country Park offers fine walking and exploring among acres of parkland, lakes and woods. There's a visitor centre, a picnic area and a place serving light refreshments.

WATERBEACH

6 miles NE of Cambridge on the A10

Denny Abbey Farmland Museum

Denny Abbey, easily accessible on the A10, is an English Heritage Grade I listed Abbey with ancient earthworks. On the same site, and run as a joint attraction, is the **Farmland Museum**. The history of Denny Abbey runs from the 12th century, when it was a Benedictine monastery. It was later home to

the Knights Templar, Franciscan nuns of the Poor Clares order and the Countess of Pembroke, and from the 16th century was a farmhouse. The old farm buildings have been splendidly renovated and converted to tell the story of village life and Cambridgeshire farming up to modern times. The museum is ideal for family outings, with plenty of hands-on activities for children and a play area, gift shop and weekend tearoom.

LODE

6 miles NE of Cambridge on the B1102

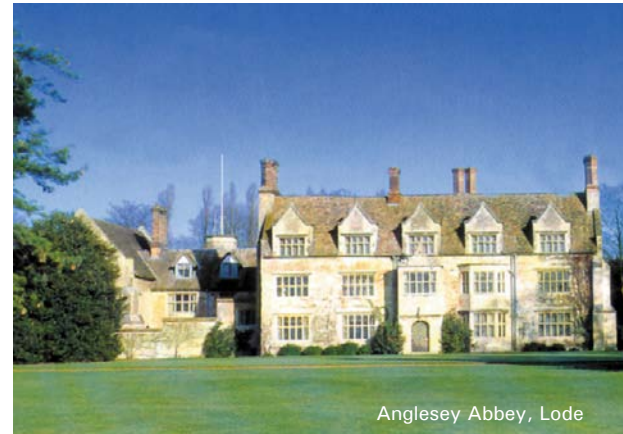
Anglesey Abbey

Anglesey Abbey dates from 1600 and was built on the site of an Augustinian priory, but the house and the 100-acre garden came together as a unit thanks to the vision of the 1st Lord Fairhaven. His mother was American, his father English, and when he left the Abbey to the National Trust in the 1960s he wanted the house and garden to be kept to 'represent an age and way of life that is quickly passing'. The garden, created in its present form from 1926, is a wonderful place for a stroll, with 98 acres of landscaped gardens including wide grassy walks, open lawns, a riverside walk and one of the finest collections of garden statuary in the country. Lode Mill is a working

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Anglesey Abbey, Lode

watermill that runs on the first and third Saturdays of each month. There's also a plant centre, shop and restaurant. In the house itself is Lord Fairhaven's magnificent collection of paintings (a seascape by Gainsborough, landscapes by Claude Lorraine), sumptuous furnishings, tapestries, Ming porcelain and clocks.

BOTTISHAM

5 miles E of Cambridge on the A1303

Holy Trinity Church

John Betjeman ventured that Bottisham's **Holy Trinity Church** was 'perhaps the best in the county', so time should certainly be made for a visit. Among the many interesting features are the 13th-century porch, an 18th-century monument to Sir Roger Jenyns and some exceptionally fine modern woodwork in Georgian style.

SWAFFHAM PRIOR

8 miles NE of Cambridge on the B1102

Swaffham Prior gives double value to the visitor, with two churches in the same churchyard and two fine old windmills. The

churches of St Mary and St Cyriac stand side by side, a remarkable and dramatic sight in the steeply rising churchyard. St Mary's became the parish church, but St Cyriac's has the ring of six bells in its handsome octagonal bell tower. One of the mills, a restored 1850s tower mill, still produces flour and can be visited by appointment.

At Swaffham Bulbeck, a

little way to the south, stands another church of St Mary, with a 13th-century tower and 14th-century arcades and chancel. Look for the fascinating carvings on the wooden benches and a 15th-century cedarwood chest decorated with biblical scenes.

REACH

8 miles NE of Cambridge off the A4280

The charming village of Reach is home to the oldest fair in England, which celebrated its 800th anniversary on 1st May, 2000.

BURWELL

10 miles NE of Cambridge on the B1102

Church of St Mary Museum Devil's Dyke

Burwell is a village of many attractions with a history going back to Saxon times. **Burwell Museum** reflects many aspects of a village on the edge of the Fens up to the middle of the 20th century: a general store, model farm, local industries and children's toys are among the displays.

Next to the museum is the famous Stephens Windmill, built in 1820 and extensively restored.

The man who designed parts of King's College Chapel, Reginald Ely, is thought to have been responsible for the beautiful **St Mary's Church**, which is built of locally quarried clunch stone and is one of the finest examples of the Perpendicular style. Notable internal features include a 15th-century font, a medieval wall painting of St Christopher, and roof carvings of elephants, while in the churchyard, a gravestone marks the terrible night in 1727 when 78 Burwell folk died in a barn fire while watching a travelling Punch & Judy show.

Behind the church are the remains of Burwell Castle, started in the 12th century but never properly completed.

The **Devil's Dyke** runs through Burwell on its path from Reach to Woodditton. This amazing dyke, 30 yards wide, was built, it is thought, to halt Danish invaders.

LINTON

10 miles SE of Cambridge on the B1052

 Bartlow Hills  Zoo

The village is best known for its zoo, but visitors will also find many handsome old buildings and the church of St Mary the Virgin, built mainly in Early English style.

A world of wildlife set in 16 acres of spectacular gardens, **Linton Zoo** is a major wildlife breeding centre and part of the inter-zoo breeding programme for endangered species. Collections include wild

cats, birds, snakes and insects. For children there is a play area and, in summer, pony rides and a bouncy castle.

Chilford Hall Vineyard, on the B1052 between Linton and Balsham, comprises 18 acres of vines, with tours and wine-tastings available. Some two miles further off the A1307, **Bartlow Hills** are the site of the largest Roman burial site to be unearthed in Europe.

DUXFORD

8 miles S of Cambridge off A505 by J10 of the M11

 Duxford Aviation Museum  St John's Church

Part of the Imperial War Museum, **Duxford Aviation Museum** is Europe's premier aviation heritage complex, with an outstanding collection of 200 historic aircraft, more than 60 of which are in airworthy condition. First World War bi-planes join with the Lancaster, Concorde, Gulf War jets and the SR-71 Blackbird spyplane in this extraordinary collection, which is located on a former key Battle of Britain airfield.



Imperial War Museum, Duxford

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GRANTCHESTER

2 miles SW of Cambridge off the A603

 Paradise Nature Reserve  The Orchard

A pleasant walk by the Cam, or a leisurely punt on it, brings visitors from the bustle of Cambridge to the famous village of Grantchester, where Rupert Brooke lived and Byron swam. The walk passes through **Paradise Nature Reserve**.

Rupert Brooke, who spent two happy years at Grantchester, immortalised afternoon tea at **The Orchard** and wrote of his love of the place in a poem while staying in Berlin.

*God! I will pack, and take a train,
And get me to England once again!
For England's the one land I know,
Where men with splendid hearts may go;
And Cambridgeshire, of all England,
The shire for men who understand;
And of that district I prefer
The lovely hamlet of Grantchester.*

And of the afternoon tea experience:

*Stands the church clock at ten to three
And is there honey still for tea?*

The Orchard, first planted in 1868, became a tea garden by chance in 1897 when a group of Cambridge students asked the owner, a Mrs Stevenson, if she could serve them tea under the trees in the orchard rather than on the front lawn. So started a great tradition that continues to this day. Brooke died at sea in 1915 on his way to the Dardanelles and is buried on the island of Scyros.

Time should also be allowed in Grantchester for a look at the Church of St Andrew and St Mary, in which the remains of a Norman church have been incorporated into the 1870s main structure.

The American Air Museum, where many of the aircraft are suspended as if in flight, is part of this terrific place, and the centrepiece of this part of the complex is a B-29A Suprefortress, the only example of its kind outside the United States. Major air shows take place several times a year, and among the permanent features are a reconstructed wartime operations room, a hands-on exhibition for children, and a dramatic land warfare hall with tanks, military vehicles and artillery. Everyone should take time to see this marvellous show - and it should be much more than a flying visit! But it can actually be just that, as Classic Wings offer visitors the chance to fly over Duxford in an elegant 1930s de Havilland Rapide. Next to the green, the Church of St John features many striking wall paintings and some exquisite carvings.

At nearby Hinxton, a few miles further south, is another mill: a 17th-century water mill that is grinding once more.

SHEPRETH

8 miles S of Cambridge off the A10

 Nature Reserve  Wildlife Park

 Docwra's Manor

A paradise for lovers of nature and gardens and a great starting point for country walks, **Shepreth L Moor Nature Reserve** is an L-shaped area of wet meadowland - now a rarity - that is home to birds and many rare plants. The nearby Shepreth **Wildlife Park** is a haven in natural surroundings to a wide variety of animals, which visitors can touch and feed. The 18th-century **Docwra's Manor** is a series of enclosed gardens with multifarious plants that is worth a visit at any time of year. Fowlmere, on the other side of the A10, is another important nature reserve, with hides and trails for the serious bird-watcher.

BARTON

3 miles SW of Cambridge off the A603

Looking south from this pleasant village you can see the impressive array of radio telescopes that are part of Cambridge University's Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory.

ARRINGTON

11 miles SW of Cambridge off the A603

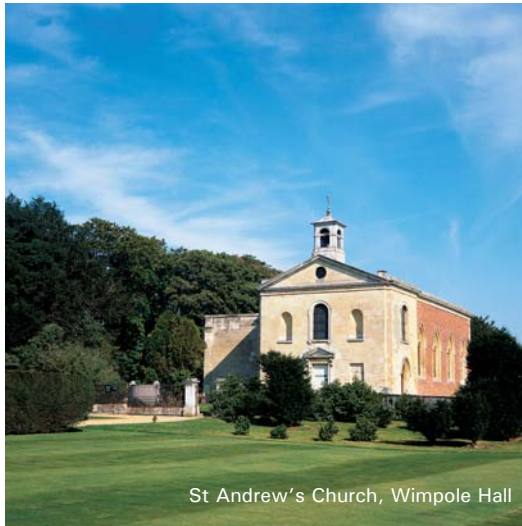
🏠 Wimpole Hall 🌳 Wimpole Home Farm

🌳 Wimpole Park

Arrington's 18th-century **Wimpole Hall**, bequeathed to the National Trust by Elsie Bambridge, a daughter of Rudyard Kipling, is probably the most spectacular country mansion in the whole county, and certainly the largest 18th-century country house in Cambridgeshire. The lovely interiors are the work of several celebrated architects, and there's a fine collection of furniture and pictures. The magnificent, formally laid-out grounds include a Victorian parterre, a rose garden and a walled garden.

Landsaped **Wimpole Park**, with hills, woodland, lakes and a Chinese bridge, provides miles of wonderful walking and is perfect for anything from a gentle stroll to a strenuous hike.

A brilliant attraction for all the family is **Wimpole Home Farm**, a working farm that is the largest rare breeds centre in East Anglia. The animals include Bagot goats, Tamworth pigs, Soay sheep and Longhorn cattle, and there's also a pets corner, mini pedal tractors and a horse-drawn wagon ride. Children will happily spend hours with the animals or in the adventure playground.



St Andrew's Church, Wimpole Hall

CAXTON

6 miles W of Cambridge off the A12198/A428

Caxton is home to Britain's oldest surviving post mill, and at Little Gransden, a couple of miles further southwest on the B1046, another venerable mill has been restored. A scheduled ancient monument, it dates from the early 17th century and was worked well into the early years of the 20th century.

MADINGLEY

4 miles W of Cambridge on the A428

🏠 American Cemetery

The **American Cemetery** is one of the loveliest, most peaceful and most moving places in the region, a place of pilgrimage for the families of the American servicemen who operated from the many wartime bases in the county. The cemetery commemorates 3,811 dead and 5,125 missing in action in the Second World War.

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Madingley Hall is a Tudor mansion set in a Capability Brown garden. It was leased in 1861 by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert for the use of their son the Prince of Wales during his brief spell as an undergraduate. The Hall was acquired by Cambridge University in 1948.

Huntingdon

🏠 Hinchingsbrooke House 🏛️ Cromwell Museum

🌳 Spring Common 🌳 Hinchingsbrooke Country Park

🏛️ All Saints Church 🏛️ St Mary's Church

The former county town of Huntingdonshire is an ancient place first settled by the Romans. It boasts many grand Georgian buildings, including the handsome three-storeyed Town Hall.

Oliver Cromwell was born in Huntingdon in 1599 and attended Huntingdon Grammar School. The schoolhouse was originally part of the Hospital of St John the Baptist, founded during the reign of Henry II by David, Earl of Huntingdon. Samuel Pepys was also a pupil here.

Cromwell was MP for Huntingdon in the Parliament of 1629, was made a JP in 1630 and moved to St Ives in the following year. Rising to power as an extremely able military commander in the Civil War, he raised troops from the region and made his headquarters in the Falcon Inn.

Appointed Lord Protector in 1653, Cromwell was ruler of the country until his death in 1658. The school he attended is now the **Cromwell Museum**, located on Huntingdon High Street, housing the only public collection relating specifically to him, with exhibits that reflect many aspects of his political, social and religious life. The

museum's exhibits include an extensive collection of Cromwell family portraits and personal objects, among them a hat and seal, contemporary coins and medals, an impressive Florentine cabinet - the gift of the Grand Duke of Tuscany - and a surgeon's chest made by Kolb of Augsburg. This fine collection helps visitors interpret the life and legacy of Cromwell and the Republican movement.

All Saints Church, opposite the Cromwell Museum, displays many architectural styles, from medieval to Victorian. One of the two surviving parish churches of Huntingdon, All Saints was considered to be the church of the Hinchingsbrooke part of the Cromwell family, though no memorials survive to attest to this. The Cromwell family burial vault is contained within the church, however, and it is here that Oliver's father Robert and his grandfather Sir Henry are buried. The church has a fine chancel roof, a very lovely organ chamber, a truly impressive stained-glass window and the font in which Cromwell was baptised - the old font from the destroyed St John's Church, discovered in a local garden in 1927.

Huntingdon's other church, **St Mary's**, dates from Norman times, but was almost completely rebuilt in the 1400s. It boasts a fine Perpendicular west tower, which partially collapsed in 1607. The damage was extensive, and the tower was not completely repaired until 1621. Oliver Cromwell's father, Robert, contributed to the cost of the repairs, as recorded on the stone plaque fixed to the east wall of the nave, north of the chancel arch.

Cowper House (No 29 High Street) has an impressive early 18th-century frontage. A plaque commemorates the fact that the poet William Cowper (pronounced 'Cooper') lived here between 1765 and 1767.

Among Huntingdon's many fine former

coaching inns is The George Hotel. Although badly damaged by fire in 1865, the north and west wings of the 17th-century courtyard remain intact, as does its very rare wooden gallery. The inn was one of the most famous of all the posting houses on the old Great North Run. It is reputed that Dick Turpin used one of the rooms here. The medieval courtyard, gallery and open staircase are the scene of annual productions of Shakespeare.

Along the south side of the Market Square, the Falcon Inn dates back in parts to the 1500s. Oliver Cromwell is said to have used this as his headquarters during the Civil War. In October 2008 Huntingdon celebrated 50 years of success for the motor company of Lola, which has won races in Formula One, Champ Cars and IndyCars. Many of the 4,000

cars produced by Lola joined a parade on October 12th.

About half a mile southwest of town stands **Hinchingbrooke House**, which today is a school but has its origins in the Middle Ages when it was a nunnery (ghostly nuns are said to haunt the building to this day). The remains of the Benedictine nunnery can still be seen. It was given to the Cromwell family by Henry VIII in 1538. Converted by the Cromwell family in the 16th century and later extended by the Earls of Sandwich, today's visitors can see examples of every period of English architecture from the 12th to early 20th centuries. King James I was a regular visitor, and Oliver Cromwell spent part of his childhood here. The 1st Earl of Sandwich was a central figure in the Civil War and subsequent Restoration, while the 4th Earl

JOHNSON'S OF OLD HURST

Church Farm, Church St, Old Hurst, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 3AF
Tel: 01487 824658

Johnson's of Old Hurst is a paradise of quality and service. At Johnson's they have been producing meat for over 100 years and their animals are still reared in the traditional manner. They have their own butchery on the farm and you can be assured that they are fanatical about the quality of preparation and trimming. You would need to go a long way to find anyone else with such an intimate knowledge of the meat they were preparing. Available are home and local farm reared beef, pork, lamb, poultry, game, venison and ostrich.

The farm makes for a great day out, many of the animals are on view to the public, there is an animal corner where children are encouraged to mix with the livestock, and as of autumn 2008, you can enjoy a traditional afternoon tea in the new tearoom and gardens.

What's more, this traditional farm is not afraid to pilot a truly unique venture in the UK, establishing a fully working crocodile farm. Andy Johnson has several crocodiles for breeding stock, including one that is 9ft long! Crocodile can be eaten as a meat steak or even spare ribs; 'It's white, low fat meat with the grain of fish. Some people say it is similar to chicken, but it's not, it tastes of crocodile,' says Andy. A new crocodile enclosure should be completed in 2009 and this will put the crocodiles on view for the public for the first time. Watch this space!



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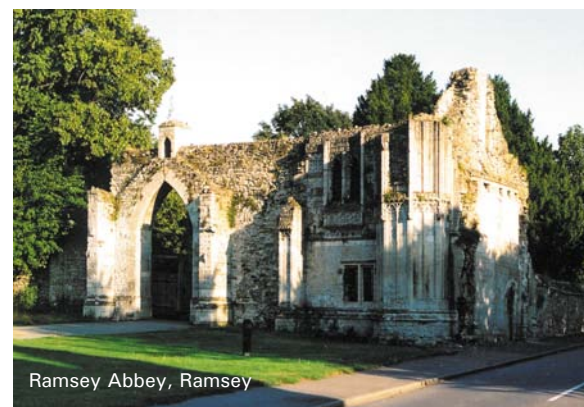


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(inventor of the lunchtime favourite that bears his name) was one of the most flamboyant politicians of the 18th century. The house is open for guided tours, including lovely cream teas served in the Tudor kitchens.

Hinchingbrooke Country Park covers 180 acres of grassy meadows, mature woodland, ponds and lakes. There is a wide variety of wildlife including woodpeckers, herons, kestrels, butterflies and foxes. The network of paths makes exploring the park easy, and battery-powered wheelchairs are provided for less able visitors. The Visitors' Centre serves refreshments at peak times.

Half a mile north, **Spring Common** offers another chance to enjoy some marvellous Cambridgeshire countryside. Covering 13 acres, its name comes from the natural spring that runs constantly and has long been a gathering place. The town developed around, rather than within, this area of rural tranquillity, which boasts a range of diverse habitats including marsh, grassland, scrub and streams. Plant life abounds, providing food and shelter for a variety of animals, amphibians, birds and invertebrates.



Ramsey Abbey, Ramsey

Around Huntingdon

HARTFORD

1/2 mile N of Huntingdon off the B1514

At just half a mile from Hartford Marina, this lovely village offers plenty of excellent riverside walks.

WARBOYS

7 miles NE of Huntingdon off the B1040

An interesting walk from Warboys to Ramsey takes in a wealth of history and pretty scenery. St Mary Magdalene's Church has a tall, very splendid tower.

RAMSEY

9 miles NE of Huntingdon on the B1040

Abbey Rural Museum

Church of St Thomas à Becket of Canterbury

A pleasant market town with a broad main street down which a river once ran, Ramsey is home to the medieval Ramsey Abbey, founded in AD969 by Earl Ailwyn as a Benedictine monastery. The **Abbey** became one of the most important in England in the 12th and 13th centuries, and as it prospered, so did

Ramsey, so that by the 13th century it had become a town with a weekly market and an annual three-day festival at the time of the feast of St Benedict. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, the Abbey and its lands were sold to Sir Richard Williams, great-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell. Most of the buildings were then

Ramsey Rural Museum

The Woodyard, Wood Lane, Ramsey, Huntingdon,
Cambridgeshire PE26 2XD
Tel: 01487 815715

The museum is housed in 17th-century farm buildings and is set in open countryside on the edge of a friendly market town. So why not step back in time and find out how life was lived in small fenland community.

Find out how your medicines would have been prepared in the chemists shop and how shoes would have been repaired in the clothes shop. How would you have managed in the war? Would you have liked to wear a gas mask? Step inside some Victorian Rooms and find out how mothers managed without running water or electricity.

What sort of job would your father have had? Perhaps he would have worked on a farm, cut peat or dug ditches. Would he have been a blacksmith or a thatcher?

Researching your family history? The local family history archive includes: monumental inscriptions, photographs, census returns, maps, births, deaths, marriages, documents and land deeds. Microfiche readers and a photocopying service are available



demolished, the stones being used to build Caius, King's and Trinity Colleges at Cambridge, the towers of Ramsey, Godmanchester and Holywell churches, the gate at Hinchingsbrooke House and several local properties. In 1938 the house was converted for use as a school, which it remains to this day.

To the northwest are the ruins of the once magnificent stone gatehouse of the late 15th century - only the porter's lodge remains, but inside can be seen an unusual, large carved effigy made of Purbeck marble and dating back to the 14th century. It is said to represent Earl Ailwyn, founder of the Abbey. The gatehouse, now in the care of the National Trust, can be visited daily from April to October.

The **Church of St Thomas à Becket of Canterbury** forms an impressive vista at the end of the High Street. Dating back to about 1180, it is thought to have been built as a hospital or guesthouse for the Abbey. It was converted to a church to accommodate the

many pilgrims who flocked to Ramsey in the 13th century. The church has what is reputed to be the finest nave in Huntingdonshire, dating back to the 12th century and consisting of seven bays. The church's other treasure is a 15th-century carved oak lectern, thought to have come from the Abbey.

Most of **Ramsey Rural Museum** (see panel above) is housed in an 18th-century farm building and several barns set in open countryside. Among the many fascinating things to see here are a Victorian home and school, a village store, and restored farm equipment, machinery, carts and wagons. The wealth of traditional implements used by local craftsmen such as the farrier, wheelwright, thatcher, dairyman, animal husbandman and cobbler offer an insight into bygone days.

The unusual Ramsey War Memorial is a listed Grade II memorial consisting of a fine bronze statue of St George slaying the dragon atop a tall, octagonal pillar crafted of Portland stone.

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UPWOOD

8 miles NE of Huntingdon off the B1040

Woodwalton Fen The Great Fen Project
Holme Fen National Nature Reserve

Upwood is a pleasant, scattered village in a very tranquil and picturesque setting.

Woodwalton Fen nature reserve, reached from Chapel Road, covers 208 hectares and comprises wildflower meadows, reed beds and woodland and hosts a vast range of wildlife, including almost half of Britain's dragonfly species. It is at the southern end of **The Great Fen Project**, which will connect with **Holme Fen National Nature Reserve** to create a 3,700 hectare wetland between Huntingdon and Peterborough. It will provide a haven for wildlife and a massive green space for people, creating new opportunities for recreation, education and business. Follow progress on the website: www.greatfen.org.uk.

SAWTRY

8 miles NW of Huntingdon on the A1

The main point of interest here has no point! All Saints Church, built in 1880, lacks both tower and steeple, and is topped instead by a bellcote. Inside the church are marvellous brasses and pieces from ancient Sawtry Abbey.

Just south of Sawtry, Aversley Wood is a conservation area with abundant birdlife and plants.

HAMERTON

9 miles NW of Huntingdon off the A1

Zoological Park

Hamerton **Zoological Park** has hundreds of animals from tortoises to tigers. Specially designed enclosures make for unrivalled views of the animals, and the park features meerkats,

marmosets and mongooses, lemurs, gibbons, possums and sloths, snakes and even creepy-crawlies such as cockroaches.

STILTON

12 miles NW of Huntingdon off the A1

Stilton has an interesting high street with many fine buildings, and is a good choice for the hungry or thirsty visitor, as it has been since the heyday of horse-drawn travel. Journeys were a little more dangerous then, and Dick Turpin is said to have hidden at the Bell Inn.

ELLINGTON

4 miles W of Huntingdon off the A14

Ellington is a quiet village just south of the A14 and about a mile north of Grafham Water. Both Cromwell and Pepys visited, having relatives living in the village, and it was in Ellington that Pepys' sister Paulina found a husband, much to the relief of the diarist, who had written: 'We must find her one, for she grows old and ugly.' All Saints Church is magnificent, like so many in the area, and among its many fine features are the 15th-century oak roof and the rich carvings in the nave and the aisles. The church and its tower were built independently.

WOOLLEY

5 miles W of Huntingdon off the A1/A14

This quiet and secluded hamlet attracts a broad spectrum of visitors including anglers, golfers, walkers and riders, drawn by its lush and picturesque beauty and rural tranquillity.

SPALDWICK

6 miles W of Huntingdon off the A14

A sizable village that was once the site of the Bishop of Lincoln's manor house, Spaldwick boasts the grand church of St James, which

dates from the 12th century and has seen restoration in most centuries, including the 20th, when the spire had to be partly rebuilt after being struck by lightning. Two miles further west, Catworth is another charming village, regularly voted Best Kept Village in Cambridgeshire and well worth exploring.

BARHAM

6 miles W of Huntingdon off the A1/A14

This delightful hamlet boasts 12 houses, 30 people and an ancient church with box pews, surrounded by undulating farmland. Nearby attractions include angling and sailing on Grafham Water, go-karting at Kimbolton and National Hunt racing at Huntingdon.

KEYSTON

12 miles W of Huntingdon off the A14

 Church of St John the Baptist

A delightful village with a pedigree that can be traced back to the days of the Vikings, Keyston has major attractions both sacred and secular: the **Church of St John the Baptist** is impressive in its almost cathedral-like proportions, with one of the most magnificent spires in the whole county, while The Pheasant is a well-known and very distinguished pub-restaurant.

BRAMPTON

2 miles SW of Huntingdon off the A1

Brampton is where Huntingdon Racecourse is situated. An average of 18 meetings (all jumping) are scheduled every year; in November, the Grade II Peterborough Chase is the feature race.

Brampton's less speculative attractions include the 13th-century church of St Mary, and Pepys House, the home of Samuel's uncle, who was a cousin of Lord Sandwich and who

got Samuel his job at the Admiralty.

GRAFHAM

5 miles SW of Huntingdon on the B661

  Grafham Water

Created in the mid-1960s as a reservoir, **Grafham Water** offers a wide range of outdoor activities for visitors of all ages, with 1,500 acres of beautiful countryside, including the lake itself. The 10-mile perimeter track is great for jogging or cycling, and there's excellent sailing, windsurfing and fly-fishing.

The area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and an ample nature reserve at the western edge is run jointly by Anglian Water and the Wildlife Trust. There are nature trails, information boards, a wildlife garden and a dragonfly pond. Many species of waterfowl stay here at various times of the year, and bird-watchers have the use of six hides, three of them accessible to wheelchairs. An exhibition centre has displays and video presentations of the reservoir's history, a gift shop and a café.

KIMBOLTON

8 miles SW of Huntingdon on the B645

 Castle

History aplenty here, and a lengthy pause is in order to look at all the interesting buildings. St Andrew's Church would head the list were it not for **Kimbolton Castle**, which, along with its gatehouse, dominates the village. Parts of the original Tudor building are still to be seen, but the appearance of the castle today owes much to the major remodelling carried out by Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor in the first decade of the 18th century. The gatehouse was added by Robert Adam in 1764. Henry VIII's first wife, Katherine of Aragon, spent the last 18 months of her life

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imprisoned here, where she died in 1536. The castle is now a school, but can be visited on certain days in the summer (don't miss the Pellegrini murals).

BUCKDEN

4 miles SW of Huntingdon on the A1

 Buckden Towers

This historic village was an important coaching stop on the old Great North Road. It is known particularly as the site of **Buckden Towers**, the great palace built for the Bishops of Lincoln. In the splendid grounds are the 15th-century gatehouse and the tower where Henry VIII imprisoned his first wife, Katherine of Aragon, in 1533 (open only on certain days of the year).

LITTLE PAXTON

8 Miles SW of Huntingdon off the A1

 Paxton Pits Nature Reserve

Fewer than three miles north of St Neots at Little Paxton, is **Paxton Pits Nature Reserve**. Created alongside gravel workings, the Reserve attracts thousands of water birds, which visitors can observe from hides.



Buckden Towers, Buckden

The wealth of wildlife means that the area is an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and ensures a plethora of colour and activity all year round. The site also features nature

Paxton Pits Nature Reserve

*High Street, Little Paxton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE10 6ET
Tel: 01480 406795*

At **Paxton Pits Nature Reserve** you can enjoy peaceful and gentle strolls as well as longer walks through 75 hectares of lakes, meadow, grassland, scrub and woodland. As well as the Heron and Meadow Trails, the River Trail, and some of the Permissive paths surrounding Paxton Pits are also waymarked. The permissive paths are not part of the reserve but the landowners have given permission for them to be used.



trails and a visitors' centre. It has thousands of visiting waterfowl, including one of the largest colonies of cormorants, and is particularly noted for its wintering wildfowl, nightingales in late spring and kingfishers. There are about four miles of walks, some suitable for wheelchairs. Spring and summer also bring a feast of wild flowers, butterflies and dragonflies.

Just north again is the Great Paxton church, originally a Saxon Minster.

ST NEOTS

10 miles SW of Huntingdon off the A1

-  Church of St Mary the Virgin  Museum
-  Market Square

St Neots dates back to the founding of a Saxon Priory, built on the outskirts of Eynesbury in AD974. Partially destroyed by the Danes in 1010, it was re-established as a Benedictine Priory in about 1081 by St Anselm, Abbot of Bec and later Archbishop of Canterbury. For the next two centuries the Priory flourished. Charters were granted by Henry I to hold fairs and markets. The first bridge over the Great Ouse, comprising 73 timber arches, was built in 1180. The name of the town comes from the Cornish saint whose remains were interred in the Priory some time before the Norman Conquest. With the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the Priory was demolished. In the early 17th century, the old bridge was replaced by a stone one. This was then the site of a battle between the Royalists and Roundheads in 1648 - an event sometimes re-enacted by Sealed Knot societies.



St Neots repays a visit on foot, since there are many interesting sites and old buildings tucked away. The famous **Market Square** is one of the largest and most ancient in the country. A market has been held here every Thursday since the 12th century. In the centre of the square is the Day Column, a cast-iron structure erected in 1822 by John Day, a local brewer, to enhance the square and to provide lighting. The magnificent parish **Church of St Mary the Virgin**, Eynesbury, is a very fine edifice, known locally as the Cathedral of Huntingdonshire. It is an outstanding example of Late Medieval architecture. The gracious interior complements the 130-foot Somerset-style tower, with a finely carved oak altar, excellent Victorian stained-glass and a Holdich organ, built in 1855. James Toller, known as the 'Eynesbury Giant', was reputed to be 8ft 6in tall when he died in 1818 at the age of 20. He was buried beneath the font to avoid the attention of body-snatchers.

St Neots Museum - opened in 1995 - tells the story of the town and the surrounding area. Housed in the former magistrates' court and police station, it still has the original cells. Eye-catching displays trace local history from prehistoric times to the present day. Open Tuesday to Saturday.

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BUSHMEAD

12 Miles SW of Huntingdon off the B660

The remains of Bushmead Abbey, once a thriving Augustinian community, are well worth a visit. The garden setting is delightful, and the surviving artefacts include some interesting stained-glass. Open weekends in July and August.

GODMANCHESTER

2 miles SE of Huntingdon off the A1

-  Island Hall  Wood Green Animal Shelter
-  Port Holme Meadow

Godmanchester is linked to Huntingdon by a 14th-century bridge across the River Ouse. It was a Roman settlement and one that continued in importance down the years, as the number of handsome buildings testifies. One such is **Island Hall**, a mid-18th-century mansion built for John Jackson, the Receiver General for Huntingdon; it contains many interesting pieces. This family home has lovely Georgian rooms, with fine period detail and fascinating possessions relating to the owners' ancestors since their first occupation of the house in 1800. The tranquil riverside setting and formal gardens

add to the peace and splendour - the house takes its name from the ornamental island that forms part of the grounds. Octavia Hill was sometimes a guest, and wrote effusively to her sister that Island Hall was 'the loveliest, dearest old house, I never was in such a one before.' Open only to pre-booked groups.

Wood Green Animal Shelter at Kings Bush Farm, Godmanchester is a purpose-built, 50-acre centre open to the public all year round. Cats, dogs, horses, donkeys, farm animals, guinea pigs, rabbits, llamas, wildfowl and pot-bellied pigs are among the many creatures for visitors to see, and there is a specially adapted nature trail and restaurant.

St Mary's Church is Perpendicular in style, though not totally in age, as the tower is a 17th century replacement of the 13th century original. A footpath leads from the famous Chinese Bridge (1827) to **Port Holme Meadow**, at 225 acres one of the largest in England and the site of Roman remains. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, with a huge diversity of botanical and bird species. Huntingdon racecourse was once situated here, and it was a training airfield during the First World War. Another site of considerable

MONACH FARM RIDING STABLES

The Green, Hilton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 9NB

Tel: 01480 830426

e-mail: emy2@dialstart.net website: www.monachfarm.co.uk

An ABRs Approved yard, Pony Club Centre and NVQ outreach centre. It offers adult restart classes, takes children from 4 years of age and provides group and private tuition for all abilities. In the school holidays it offers a range of activity days. Wildlife walks and nature trails available on the farm's own land. Based on a working livestock farm with cattle, sheep, pigs and goats, as well as a Farm Shop selling traditional meat and Caprilatte ice cream.

Set on the picturesque village green, with one of only three turf mazes in the country and just a 20-minute drive from Cambridge city centre, Monach Farm is a unique rural experience.



natural activity is Godmanchester Pits, accessed along the Ouse Valley Way and home to a great diversity of flora and fauna.

PAPWORTH EVERARD

6 miles SE of Huntingdon on the A1198

One of the most recent of the region's churches, St Peter's dates mainly from the mid-19th century.

Neighbouring Papworth St Agnes has an older church in St John's, though parts of that, too, are Victorian. Just up the road at Hilton is the famous Hilton Turf Maze, cut in 1660 to a popular medieval design.

BOXWORTH

7 miles SE of Huntingdon off the A14

 Overhall Grove

A village almost equidistant from Huntingdon and Cambridge, and a pleasant base for touring the area, Boxworth's Church of St Peter is unusual in being constructed of pebble rubble.

A mile south of Boxworth is **Overhall Grove**, one of the largest elm woods in the country and home to a variety of wildlife.

The Great Ouse Valley

HEMINGFORD ABBOTS

3 miles SE of Huntingdon off the A14

 Hemingford Grey Manor

Once part of the Ramsey Abbey Estate, Hemingford Abbots is set around the 13th-



The Manor at Hemingford Grey, Hemingford Abbots

century church of St Margaret, along the banks of the Great Ouse. Opportunities for angling and boating facilities, including rowing boats for hire, as well as swimming, country walks, golf and a recreation centre are all within a couple of miles. The village hosts a flower festival every two years.

Just to the east is Hemingford Grey, with its church on the banks of the Ouse. The **Manor at Hemingford Grey** is reputedly the oldest continuously inhabited house in England, built around 1130. Visits (by appointment only) will reveal all the treasures in the house and garden.

FENSTANTON

7 miles SE of Huntingdon off the A14 bypass

 'Capability' Brown

Lancelot '**Capability**' Brown (1716-1783) was Lord of the Manor at Fenstanton from 1768, and served for a time as High Sheriff of Huntingdonshire. Born in Northumberland, Brown started his working life as a gardener's boy before moving on to Stowe, where he worked under William Kent. When Kent died, Brown set up as a garden

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designer and soon became the leading landscape artist in England, known for the natural, unplanned appearance of his designs. His nickname arose from his habit of remarking, when surveying new projects, that the place had 'capabilities'. Brown, his wife and his son are buried in the medieval church. His grave is inscribed with a eulogy by the poet and landscape gardener William Mason. Any visit here should also take in the 17th-century manor house and the red-brick Clock Tower.

HOUGHTON

5 miles E of Huntingdon on the A1123

 Houghton Mill

Houghton is a popular tourist destination thanks to its proximity to **Houghton Mill** and opportunities for riverside walks, as well as its charming thatched buildings and shops. Milling takes place on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays. Houghton Meadows is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, with an abundance of hay meadow species. One of the most popular walks in the whole area links Houghton with St Ives.

ST IVES

6 miles E of Huntingdon off the A1123

 Norris Museum  Wiltorn Meadow

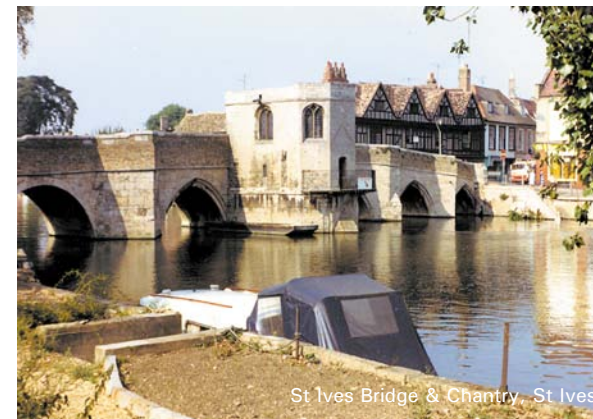
 Holt Island Nature Reserve

This is an ancient town on the banks of the Great Ouse that once held a huge annual fair. The town's motto is 'sudore non sopore', meaning 'by work, not sleep' – a pun on Slepe, the town's original name. Its present name remembers St Ivo, said to be a Persian bishop who came here in the Dark Ages to spread a little light.

In the Middle Ages, kings bought cloth for their households at the village's great wool fairs and markets, and a market is still held here every Monday. The Bank Holiday Monday markets are particularly lively affairs, and the Michaelmas fair fills the town centre for three days.

Seagoing barges once navigated up to the famous six-arched bridge that was built in the 15th century and has a most unusual two-storey chapel in its middle. Oliver Cromwell lived in St Ives in the 1630s; Frederick Pomeroy's statue of him on Market Hill, with its splendid hat, is one of the village's most

familiar landmarks. It was made in bronze with a Portland stone base, and was erected in 1901. It was originally designed for Huntingdon, but they wouldn't accept it! The Victoria Memorial marked the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, but it wasn't put up until 1902. The inscription on the side says that it was unveiled on June 26th, the day of Edward VII's coronation – but it wasn't. The coronation



St Ives Bridge & Chantry, St Ives

DOLLS HOUSE NUMBER NINE

The Coach House, 9 The Broadway, St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 5BX
Tel/Fax: 01480 464684
e-mail: dollshousenumber9@btinternet.com
website: www.dollshousenurnine.co.uk

Established in 1990 as a model railway specialist, **Dolls House Number Nine** has expanded to include dolls' houses and miniatures, teddies, gollies, Scalextric sets and Airfix kits. In the Grade II listed building, the well laid-out displays include a wide range of hand-built MDF and birch ply houses, room boxes and conservatories. Houses can be made to order to specific designs. The shop can supply all dolls' house and miniature needs including furniture, wallpaper, carpeting, flooring, gardens, ponds, flowers, food and lighting. The shop is open from 9.15am to 5pm (by appointment only Thursday and Sunday).



was postponed because the king was ill, and the Memorial was unveiled a few days later, but no one got round to changing the inscription.

The beautiful parish church in its churchyard beside the river is well worth a visit. The quayside provides a tranquil mooring for holidaymakers and there are wonderful walks by the riverside.

Clive Sinclair developed his tiny TVs and pocket calculators in the town; another famous son of St Ives was the great Victorian rower John Goldie, whose name is remembered each year by the second Cambridge boat in the Boat Race.

The **Norris Museum**, in a delightful setting by the river, tells the story of Huntingdonshire for the past 175 million years or so, with everything from fossils, mammoth tusks and models of the great historic reptiles, through to flint tools, Roman artefacts and Civil War armour as well as lace-making and ice-skating displays, and contemporary works of art. A truly fascinating place that is open throughout the year, admission is free. Exhibitions include a

life-size replica of a 160-million-year-old ichthyosaur. There are remains of woolly mammoths from the Ice Age, tools and pottery from the Stone Age to Roman times, and relics from the medieval castles and abbeys. Also on show are toys and models made by prisoners of the Napoleonic Wars.

Just outside St Ives are **Wiltorn Meadow**, a Site of Natural History Interest where Canada geese are often to be seen, and **Holt Island Nature Reserve**, where high-quality willow is being grown to reintroduce the traditional craft of basket-making. Allow some time for spotting the butterflies, dragonflies and kingfishers.

BLUNTISHAM

3 miles NE of St Ives on the A1123

There's an impressive church here in Bluntisham, with a unique 14th-century chancel that ends in three sides. The rector here at one time was the father of Dorothy L Sayers (creator of nobelman sleuth Lord Peter Wimsey) and Dorothy once lived in the large Georgian rectory on the main road.

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EARITH

4 miles E of St Ives on the A1123

Ouse Washes

The **Ouse Washes**, a special protection area, runs northeast from the village to Earith Pits, a well-known habitat for birds and crawling creatures; some of the pits are used for fishing. The Washes are a wetland of major international importance supporting such birds as ruffs, Bewick and Whooper swans, and hen harriers. The average bird population is around 20,000. Some of the meadows flood in winter, and ice-skating is popular when the temperature really drops. There's a great tradition of ice-skating in the Fens, and Fenmen were the national champions until the 1930s.

SOMERSHAM

4 miles NE of St Ives on the B1040/B1060

Raptor Foundation

The **Raptor Foundation** is located here, a major attraction where owls and other birds of prey find refuge. There are regular flying displays and falconry shows. Somersham



Peterborough Cathedral, Peterborough

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once had a palace for the Bishops of Ely, and its splendid church of St John would have done them proud.

Peterborough

Cathedral Museum Railworld
 Nene Valley Railway
 Thorpe Meadows Sculpture Park

The second city of Cambridgeshire has a long and interesting history that can be traced back to the Bronze Age, as can be seen in the archaeological site at Flag Fen. Although a cathedral city, it is also a New Town (designated in 1967), so modern development and expansion have vastly increased its facilities, while retaining the quality of its historic heart.

Peterborough's crowning glory is, of course, the Norman **Cathedral**, built in the 12th and 13th centuries on a site that has seen Christian worship since AD655. Henry VIII made the church a cathedral, and his first queen, Katherine of Aragon, is buried here, as for a while was Mary Queen of

Scots after her execution at Fotheringay. Features to note are the huge (85-foot) arches of the West Front, the unique painted wooden nave ceiling, some exquisite late 15th-century fan vaulting, and the tomb of Katherine.

Though the best-known of the city's landmarks, the Cathedral is by no means the only one. The **Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery** covers

PLANTATION

Oundle Road, Polebrook, Peterborough, PE8 5LQ
Tel 01832 274755 www.plantation.co.uk
e-mail: info@plantation.co.uk

Plantation is a new, independent plant centre located just outside the beautiful and historic market town of Oundle. It was purpose-built in 2006 and grows a broad range of plants and trees on its four acre site. With its all-wooden shop and inspirational plant displays it offers a refreshing and different experience for both keen gardeners, looking for specific plants, and new gardeners who want help and ideas in developing their garden.

Other products include pots and containers, topiary, hedging, grow your own kits, composts, seeds and organic pest controls. Plantation also offers garden consultation and encourages customers to bring along photos or drawings and will help in advising on suitable plants for space and use. Open days are held regularly with special events and courses running throughout the year. Please look at the website for details or call ahead.

In the shop you will find garden related gifts and tools. Refreshments and cream teas are available seasonably. Oundle hosts an international music festival, Festival of Literature and Farmers' Market and has a wide range of independent shops and activities. It is well worth a visit any time.



all aspects of the history of Peterborough from the Jurassic period to Victorian times.

There are twin attractions for railway enthusiasts in the shape of **Railworld**, a hands-on exhibition open daily dealing with modern rail travel, and the wonderful **Nene Valley Railway**, which operates 15-mile steam-hauled trips between Peterborough and its HQ and museum at Wansford. A feature on the main railway line at Peterborough is the historic Iron Bridge, part of the old Great Northern Railway and still virtually as built by Lewis Cubitt in 1852.

Just outside the city, by the river Nene, is **Thorpe Meadows Sculpture Park**, one of several open spaces in and around the city with absorbing collections of modern sculpture.

Around Peterborough

ELTON

6 miles SW of Peterborough on the B671

Elton Hall

Elton is a lovely village on the river Nene, with stone-built houses and thatched roofs. **Elton Hall** (see panel opposite) is a mixture of styles, with a 15th-century tower and chapel, with a major Gothic influence. The grandeur is slightly deceptive, as some of the battlements and turrets were built of wood to save money. The hall's sumptuous rooms are filled with art treasures (Gainsborough, Reynolds, Constable) and the library has a wonderful collection of antique tomes.

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Elton Hall and Gardens

Nr Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE8 6SH
Tel: 01832 280468
e-mail: office@eltonhall.com website: www.eltonhall.com

Elton Hall is an extraordinary, romantic, part Gothic house that has been in the Proby family since 1660. It lies at the heart of a 3,800-acre Estate made up of a mixture of property including farms, houses and cottages, commercial property and woodland. The Estate straddles the Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire borders and is well located for access from the East and West along the A14 and A47 and is 86 miles north of London, just off the A1.

The Hall is a mixture of styles. The garden or south front incorporates the 15th century tower and chapel, which were built at the time of Henry VII. In the 17th century, a new wing was added to the west.

The garden you see today was laid out in 1913 with the construction of the paths, the lawns, the lily pond, the well-head and the rose garden wall. By 1980 a large part of the Edwardian garden had fallen into disrepair and since the early 1980s there has been a major restoration programme. The rose garden has been replanted and a new sunken garden, a shrub garden and an arboretum created.

The Gothic orangery was built to celebrate the Millennium and a Gothic arbour was completed to mark the Jubilee celebrations.



LONGTHORPE

2 miles W of Peterborough off the A47

Longthorpe Tower

Longthorpe Tower, part of a fortified manor house, is graced by some of the very finest 14th-century domestic wall paintings in Europe, featuring scenes both sacred and secular: the Nativity, the Wheel of Life, King David, the Labours of the Months. The paintings were discovered during renovations after the Second World War.

THORNHAUGH

8 miles NW of Peterborough off the A1/A47

Sacrewell Farm

Hidden away in a quiet valley is **Sacrewell**

Farm and Country Centre, whose centrepiece is a working watermill. All kinds of farming equipment are on display, and there's a collection of farm animals, along with gardens, nature trails and general interest trails, play areas, a gift shop and a restaurant serving light refreshments.

BURGHLEY

14 miles NW of Peterborough off the A1

Burghley House

The largest and grandest house of the Elizabethan Age, **Burghley House** presents a dazzling spectacle with its domed towers, walls of cream coloured stone, and acres of windows. Clear glass was still ruinously

expensive in the 1560s, so Elizabethan grandees like Cecil flaunted their wealth by having windows that stretched almost from floor to ceiling. Burghley House also displays the Elizabethan obsession with symmetry - every tower, dome, pilaster and pinnacle has a corresponding partner.

Contemporaries called Burghley a 'prodigy house', a title shared at that time with only one other stately home in England - Longleat in Wiltshire. Both houses were indeed prodigious in size and in cost. At Burghley, Cecil commissioned the most celebrated interior decorator of the age, Antonio Verrio, to create rooms of unparalleled splendour. In his Heaven Room, Verrio excelled even himself, populating the lofty walls and ceiling with a dynamic gallery of mythological figures.

The 18 State Rooms at Burghley house a vast treasury of great works of art. The walls are crowded with 17th-century Italian paintings and Japanese ceramics, and rare examples of European porcelain grace every table, alcove and mantelpiece; the wood carvings of Grinling Gibbons and his followers add dignity to almost every room. Also on display are four magnificent state beds along with important tapestries and textiles.

In the 18th century, Cecil's descendants commissioned the ubiquitous Capability Brown to landscape the 160 acres of parkland surrounding the house. These enchanting grounds are open to visitors and are also home to a large herd of fallow deer, first established in Cecil's time. Brown also designed the elegant Orangery, which is now a licensed restaurant overlooking rose beds and gardens.

A more recent addition to Burghley's attractions is the Sculpture Garden. Twelve acres of scrub woodland have been

reclaimed and planted with specimen trees and shrubs, and now provide a sylvan setting for a number of dramatic artworks by contemporary sculptors.

Throughout the summer season, Burghley hosts a series of events of which the best known, the Burghley Horse Trials, takes place at the end of August.

PEAKIRK

7 miles N of Peterborough off the A15

A charming little village, somewhat off the beaten track, Peakirk boasts a village church of Norman origin that is the only one in the country dedicated to St Pega, the remains of whose hermit cell can still be seen.

CROWLAND

10 miles NE of Peterborough off the A1073

 Trinity Bridge  Abbey

It is hard to imagine that this whole area was once entirely wetland and marshland, dotted with inhospitable islands. Crowland was one such island, then known as Croyland; back in the 7th century, a small church and hermitage was established, which was later to become one of the nation's most important monasteries. The town's impressive parish church was just part of the great edifice that once stood on the site. A wonderful exhibition can be found in the **Abbey** at Crowland, open all year round. The remains cover a third of the Abbey's original extent.

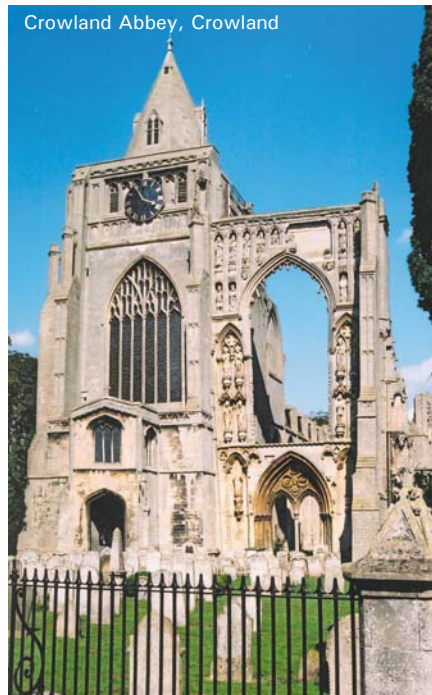
Crowland's second gem is the unique **Trinity Bridge** - set in the centre of town on dry land. Erected in the 14th century, it has three arches built over one over-arching structure. Before the draining of the Fens, Trinity Bridge crossed the point where the River Welland divided into two streams.

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Crowland Abbey, Crowland



THORNEY

8 miles E of Peterborough on the A47

 Abbey  Heritage Museum

Thorney Abbey, the Church of St Mary and St Botolph, is still a dominating presence, even though what now stands is but a small part of what was once one of the greatest of the Benedictine abbeys. Gravestones in the churchyard are evidence of a Huguenot colony that settled here after fleeing France in the wake of the St Bartholomew's Day massacre of 1572 to settle the drained fenland at the request of Oliver Cromwell.

The Thorney **Heritage Museum** is a small, independently-run museum of great fascination, describing the development of the village from a Saxon monastery, via Benedictine Abbey to a model village built in

the 19th century by the Dukes of Bedford. The main innovation was a 10,000-gallon water tank that supplied the whole village; other villages had to use unfiltered river water. Open Easter to the end of September.

FLAG FEN

2 miles E of Peterborough signposted from the A47 and A1139

 Bronze Age Centre

Flag Fen **Bronze Age Centre** (see panel on page 342) comprises massive 3,000-year-old timbers that were part of a major settlement and have been preserved in peaty mud. The site includes a Roman road with its original surface, the oldest wheel in England, recreations of a Bronze Age settlement, a museum of artefacts, rare breed animals, and a visitor centre with a shop and restaurant. Ongoing excavations, open to the public, make this one of the most important and exciting sites of its kind.

WHITTLESEY

5 miles E of Peterborough off the A605

 Museum  Straw Bear Procession

The market town of Whittlesey lies close to the western edge of the Fens and is part of one of the last tracts to be drained. Brick-making was a local speciality, and 180-foot brick chimneys stand as a reminder of that once-flourishing industry. The church of St Andrew is mainly 14th century, with a 16th-century tower; the chancel, chancel chapels and naves still have their original roofs.

A walk around this charming town reveals an interesting variety of buildings: brick, of course, and also some stone, thatch on timber frames, and rare thatched mud boundary walls.

The **Whittlesey Museum**, housed in the grand 19th-century Town Hall in Market

Flag Fen Bronze Age Centre

The Drove way, Northey Road,
Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE6 7QJ
Tel: 91733 313414 Fax: 01733 349957
e-mail: office@flagfen.co.uk
website: www.flagfen.com



Flag Fen is one of Europe's most important Bronze Age sites; this archaeological jewel is situated on the outskirts of the Cathedral City of Peterborough, on a religious site that pre-dates the Cathedral by nearly 2,000 years. The Museum of the Bronze Age contains artefacts found on the site over the past 20 years of excavating. The park is entered through a uniquely designed 21st-century roundhouse; this visitor centre is your portal to the past, with information boards and pictures. Once out on the park you will be stepping back in time with the chance to see how your ancestors used to live, as you explore the Bronze Age and Iron Age roundhouses in their landscape setting.

The Preservation Hall contains undercover archaeology, along with a 60-metre mural depicting life in the Bronze Age in the Fens. During the summer months, archaeologists can often be seen at work, uncovering Peterborough's past.

Workshops and Lectures are among our full programme of events, which include Sword and Bronze Casting, Flint Knapping, Theatre in the Park, and our Annual big event, which attracts visitors from across the country. If you would like details please contact us.

Street, features an archive of displays on local archaeology, agriculture, geology, brick-making and more. Reconstructions include a 1950s corner shop and post office, blacksmith's forge and wheelwright's bench.

A highlight of Whittlesey's year is the **Straw Bear Procession** that is part of a four-day January festival. A man clad in a suit of straw dances and prances through the streets, calling at houses and pubs to entertain the townspeople. The origins are obscure: perhaps it stems from pagan times when corn gods were invoked to produce a good harvest; perhaps it is linked with the wicker idols used by the Druids; perhaps it derives from the performing bears that toured the villages until the 17th century. What is certain is that at the end of the jollities the straw suit is ceremoniously burned.

Whittlesey was the birthplace of the writer L P Hartley (*The Go-Between*) and of General Sir Harry Smith, hero of many 19th-century campaigns in India. He died in 1860, and the south chapel off St Mary's Church (note the beautiful spire) was restored and named after him.

MARCH

14 miles E of Peterborough off the A141

St Wendreda's Church Museum

Nene-Ouse Navigation Link

March once occupied the second-largest 'island' in the great level of Fens. As the land was drained the town grew as a trading and religious centre, and in more recent times as a market town and major railway hub. **March and District Museum**, in the High Street, tells the story of the people and the history of

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FOX NARROWBOATS

10 Marina Drive, March, Cambridgeshire PE15 0AU
Tel: 01354 652770
e-mail: reception@foxboats.co.uk
website: www.foxboats.co.uk

There can be few more relaxing ways to take a break from the daily routine than on a comfortable narrowboat, and the family business of **Fox Narrowboats** is among the leaders in its sphere. They built their first narrowboat in 1973 and four years later became hire fleet operators. In 1981 the business moved to a purpose-built marina with a capacity that has risen from 50 to 200 moorings. The Fox narrowboats, developed over 35 years, are solidly built and easy to control, with optimum use made of space. The exteriors are regularly maintained and painted in a stylish colour scheme. They are all Quality in Tourism 5-Star graded.



March and the surrounding area, and includes a working forge and a reconstruction of a turn-of-the-century house.

The uniquely dedicated **Church of St Wendreda**, at Town End, is notable for its magnificent timber roof, a double hammerbeam with 120 carved angels, a fine font and some impressive gargoyles. John Betjeman declared the church to be 'worth cycling 40 miles into a headwind to see'.

The **Nene-Ouse Navigation Link** runs through the town, affording many attractive riverside walks and, just outside the town off the B1099, Dunhams Wood comprises four acres of woodland. The site contains an enormous variety of trees, along with sculptures and a miniature railway.

STONEA

3 miles SE of March off the B1098

Stonea Camp

Stonea Camp is the lowest hill fort in Britain. Built in the Iron Age, it proved unsuccessful against the Romans. A listed ancient monument whose banks and ditches were restored after excavations in 1991, the site is also an increasingly important habitat for wildlife.

CHATTERIS

8 miles S of March off the A141

Museum

A friendly little market town, where the Chatteris **Museum and Council Chamber** features a series of interesting displays on Fenland life and the development of the town. Themes include education, agriculture, transport and local trades, along with temporary exhibitions and local photographs, all housed in five galleries.

The church of St Peter and St Paul has some 14th-century features but is mostly more modern in appearance, having been substantially restored in 1909.

Wisbech

Peckover House

Octavia Hill's Birthplace House

Elgoods Brewery Wisbech & Fenland Museum

Angles Theatre

One of the largest of the Fenland towns, a port in medieval times and still enjoying shipping trade with Europe, Wisbech is at the centre of a thriving agricultural region. The

Wisbech

Distance: 3.1 miles (4.8 kilometres)

Typical time: 120 mins

Height gain: 5 metres

Map: Explorer 235

Walk: www.walkingworld.com ID:739

Contributor: Joy & Charles Boldero

ACCESS INFORMATION:

Bus service: ring the Tourist Information Centre in Wisbech on 01945 583263. There are several free car parks in the town. The walk starts from the large Love Lane car park off Alexandria Road, near the church.

DESCRIPTION:

Wisbech is an ancient port and has many historic buildings. There is a fine brass on the floor of St Peter and St Paul's Church of Thomas de Braustone, Constable of Wisbech Castle in the 1400s.

The Norman Castle was replaced by a Bishop's Palace in 1478, and in the 17th century this was replaced by a mansion house built for John Thurloe, who was Oliver Cromwell's Secretary of State. Later, this was replaced by the Georgian Crescent in 1816. Along New Inn Yard on the left is one of the oldest timber-framed buildings in the town.

Along South Brink on the left is the house where Octavia Hill was born, now a museum. She was one of the founder members of the National Trust. Along North Brink there are many old historic houses including the 18th-century Peckover House, owned by the NT. Elgood's Brewery has a museum; the brewery has functioned for the past 200 years. The Wisbech and Fenland Museum has many interesting items including the manuscript of *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens.

FEATURES:

River, Pub, Toilets, Museum, Church, Castle, Stately Home, National Trust/NTS. Good for wheelchairs.

WALK DIRECTIONS:

- 1 | Turn right into Love Lane, going towards the church. At the church turn right, then left along the street that leads to the Market Place. Turn left into Market Street.
- 2 | At the T-junction, turn left around The Crescent. Turn right along High Street, then left along the alley, New Inn Yard. Turn left along River Nene Quay to the statue. Cross the road and continue along Post Office Lane, crossing the road to the car park. Cross the car park, keeping to the right-hand side. Turn right from the car park, then left along Somers Road and continue along Coal Wharf Road.
- 3 | Turn right at T-junction along South Brink with the river on the left. Cross road at traffic-lights, turn left along North Brink. Cross two roads. At Elgood's Brewery retrace your steps, crossing one road.
- 4 | Turn left along Chapel Road. Turn right up Exchange Square, then left at road, left again along Old Market. Cross the road and continue along North Street. Go over the river bridge and keep right beside it for a short distance.
- 5 | Cross the road and turn left signed Pedestrian Zone. Cross School Lane and turn right along Scrimshire's Passage. Turn left along Hall Street. Turn right by Boots the Chemist, cross the market square and go along Market Street opposite.
- 6 | Turn left, then left again going down steps. Turn right into Love Lane which leads to the car park.



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Georgian houses beside River Nene, Wisbech

overmantels, and ornate plaster decorations. At the back of the house is a beautiful walled garden with summer houses and an orangery with 300-year-old orange trees.

No 8 South Brink is the birthplace of Octavia Hill (1838-1912), co-founder of the National Trust and a tireless worker for the cause of the poor, particularly in the sphere of housing. The house is now **Octavia Hill's Birthplace House**, a museum with displays and

exhibits commemorating her work. 18th century in particular saw the building of rows of handsome houses, notably in North Brink and South Brink, which face each other across the river. The finest of all the properties is undoubtedly **Peckover House**, built in 1722 and bought at the end of the 18th century by Jonathan Peckover, a member of the Quaker banking family. The family gave the building to the National Trust in 1948. Behind its elegant façade are splendid panelled rooms, Georgian fireplaces with richly carved

exhibits commemorating her work.

More Georgian splendour is evident in the area where the Norman castle once stood. The castle was replaced by a bishop's palace in 1478, and in the 17th century by a mansion built for Cromwell's Secretary of State, John Thurloe. Local builder Joseph Medworth built the present Regency villa in 1816; of the Thurloe mansion, only the gate piers remain.

The **Wisbech and Fenland Museum** is one of the oldest purpose-built museums in

PETER A CROFTS

117 Elm High Road, Wisbech,
Cambridgeshire PE14 0DN
Tel: 01945 584614

Peter A Crofts, now trading as Patricia L Crofts, has been owned and run by the same husband-and-wife team since 1950. In a showroom attached to their bungalow, laid out for easy access and viewing, the stock they display includes furniture (mostly antique or pre-1950), porcelain, glass, silver and wooden boxes, jewellery, copper and brass. There's no sign outside the premises, which are located on Elm High Road (A1101) just south of the junction with the main A47 south of Wisbech. All viewing must be by appointment.



the country, and in charming Victorian surroundings visitors can view displays of porcelain, coins, rare geological specimens, Egyptian tomb treasures and several items of national importance, including the manuscript of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Napoleon's Sèvres breakfast set captured at Waterloo, and an ivory chess set that belonged to Louis XIV.

Wisbech is the stage for East Anglia's premier Church Flower Festival, with flowers in four churches, strawberry teas, crafts, bric-a-brac, plants and a parade of floats. The event takes place at the beginning of July. The most important of the churches is the Church of St Peter and St Paul, with two naves under one roof and an independent tower with a peal of 10 bells. Note the royal arms of James I and, in the north chancel, a mosaic by Salviati of Leonardo's Last Supper.

Another sight to see in Wisbech is **Elgoods Brewery** on the banks of the River Nene. Visitors can watch traditional brewing methods using original open copper vessels, before sampling a selection of Elgood's wide range of prize-winning real ales in the Visitors Centre bar. Behind the brewery is a four-acre garden incorporating specimen trees about 200 years old, herbaceous borders, a lake, rockery,



Elgoods Brewery and Gardens, Wisbech

water features and lawns leading to a maze planted with thuja and laurel. Also well worth a look is the impressive 68-foot limestone memorial to Thomas Clarkson, one of the earliest leaders of the abolitionist movement. He was born in Wisbech, son of the headmaster of the Grammar School. The monument, which towers over Bridge Street, was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott in Gothic style. Clarkson's tireless efforts in the campaign against slavery were finally recognized nationally in 1997, 150 years after his death, when a plaque was laid in his memory in Westminster Abbey.

Still a lively commercial port, Wisbech boasts a restored Marina and new facilities for small craft that include floating pontoons with berths for 75 yachts. River trips are available from the yacht harbour.

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The Fens Around Wisbech

WEST WALTON AND WALTON HIGHWAY

3 miles NE of Wisbech off the A47/B198

Fenland & West Norfolk Aviation Museum

Several attractions can be found here, notably the Church of St Mary the Virgin in West Walton with its magnificent 13th-century detached tower that dominates the landscape. Walton Highway is home to the **Fenland and West Norfolk Aviation Museum**, whose exhibits include Rolls-Royce Merlin engines, a Lightning jet, a Vampire, crashed aircraft, a Jumbo jet cockpit simulator, uniforms and

The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

Hundred Foot Bank, Welney, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE14 9TN
Tel/Fax: 01353 860711
e-mail: welney@wwt.org.uk
website: wwt.org.uk

The Wildfowl & Wetland Trust Welney is a wetland paradise of international importance with something to offer whatever the season. In winter, enjoy the magic of hundreds of Whooper and Bewick's Swans accompanied by flocks of thousands of ducks. During the day, carpets of Wigeon graze this precious wetland, while flocks of Pintail, Teal, Gadwall and Shoveler dabble in the pools and lagoons. Late afternoon is a special time as flocks of swans flight-in to claim their night roosting sites. Summer brings an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity broken only by the piping calls of waders, drumming Snipe and the chatter of warblers. Lush meadows are bordered by a dazzling display of Purple Loosestrife, Great Willowherb and Marsh Woundwort.

Visitors can stroll along the boardwalks through rustling reedbeds, and spend a while pond-dipping for water beasts. The Visitor Centre houses displays, educational facilities and a well-stocked gift shop. WWT Welney also runs a packed programme of special events throughout the year.



memorabilia. The museum is open weekends during the summer.

LEVERINGTON

1 mile NW of Wisbech off the A1101

The tower and spire of the Church of St Leonard date from the 13th and 14th centuries. The most exceptional feature of an exceptionally interesting church is the 15th-century stained-glass Jesse window in the north aisle. There are many fine memorials in the churchyard. Oliver Goldsmith wrote *She Stoops to Conquer* while staying in Leverington.

PARSON DROVE

6 miles W of Wisbech on the B1169

Samuel Pepys visited Parson Drove in 1663. He stayed at the village's Swan Inn, and mentions it in his diaries, though he was not complimentary. Parson Drove is most certainly not the 'heathen place' once described by Pepys!

It was a centre of the woad industry until 1914, when the last remaining woad mill was demolished.

The Parson Drove Visitors' Centre is set in the old Victorian lock-up on the village green, a building with an unusual 170-year history. Photographs and documents trace the story of this lovely Fens village. The Church of St John the Baptist has many treasures, including delightful carved medieval faces and large clear windows with medieval glass in the tracery.

WELNEY

12 miles S of Wisbech off the A1101

 Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

The **Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust** (see panel on page 347) in Welney is a nature reserve that attracts large numbers of swans and ducks in winter. Special floodlit 'swan evenings' are held, and there is also a wide range of wild plants and butterflies to be enjoyed.

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