while to enjoy the delight of this Cathedral City. the weary traveller. We recommend you stay a to Hereward and today gives a warm welcome to Hereward Way. Ely, a former island, gave refuge end of the Cambridgeshire section of the Ely Cathedral, the 'Ship of the Fens', marks the

spanning hundreds of year of man's involvement tens are all about, bringing alive a history section of the walk really illustrates what the 1830 and Ely Cathedral in the distance. This intensive arable fen, a pumping station built in here you can see the unique landscape, the the flood banks from Welney towards Ely. From The Hereward Way continues along the top of



to breed. As one of the most important wetland black-tailed Godwit, Snipe and Redshank come in Hoodwater recedes in the spring waders such as Swans aswell as many species of duck. As migratory birds, especially Bewick and Whooper internationally important wintering site for The flooding produced in the winter creates an seen at the Washes at Welney.

sites in Europe the Washes are protected under

international conventions.

not contained between the massive floodbanks out to sea and would flood all the fens if it were landscape mean that water cannot flow quickly level. The very shallow gradients of this winter, holding water from land at or below sea rivers, act as a huge inland reservoir in the The Washes, the land between the two Bedford water pumped out of the Cambridgeshire tens. Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire aswell as the Bedford. The Levels receive floodwater from group of investors headed by the Duke of Cornelius Vermuyden who was contracted by a the mid- seventeenth century by the Dutchman These two huge drainage channels were cut in land drained by the Old and New Bedford rivers. Velney marks the centre of the Bedford Levels, the generic name for the area of

on bundles of brushwood and can still be traced This Roman route through the Fens was carried roughly following the line of the Fen Causeway. From March the Hereward Way goes easterly

butter or wool crosses as trading grew in preaching stone. These were usually replaced by 1450. It was probably used by friars as a you will pass a stone cross dating from about Wendreda stands. On the way to St Wendreda's river where the 15th century church of St The oldest part of March lies to the south of the



through the clay to divert the river. boats into the town a new channel was cut the clay island, but to ensure that it could carry Market Square. The river originally flowed around along West End up to the Clock Tower in the follows the river past traditional fenland houses the market town of March. The Hereward Way Sitting resolutely on its clay island in the tens is

the old fenland way of life. its restaurant, has an interesting display about Welney centre, aswell as welcoming walkers to visitor centre at the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust the ten is still a remote and tranquil land. The replaced with the specialised farming of today, this unique way of life has gone and has been reed beds without disturbing the birds. Although wildfowl in the marsh. Punts slide easily between (such as those seen in Cambridge) to hunt full of fish, eels and birds. Fenmen used punts from that of today. The marsh and meres were Hereward got from the land was very different land has always been productive but the food thousands of acres of highly productive land. This methods in England. Large machinery cultivates see some of the more highly mechanised farming heart of the Cambridgeshire Fens. Here you can By the time the Hereward Way rejoins the River March, the walker really is in the

marsh between meandering streams and rivers. waterways, travellers would use stilts to cross the time, before the construction of these artificial because of their original widths). In Hereward's Bevill's Leam, or the Twenty Foot River (so-called the Whittlesey Dyke or Sixteen Foot River and Anglebridge, the route crosses two waterways, gates can be seen. To the east of the town, at Briggate River, where a handsome pair of lock In Whittlesey the Hereward Way follows the horses towing barges of goods across the fens.



səlim [1]

rights of way which run alongside watercourses into and between the towns. Many of the public passes were important in transporting produce landscape through which the Hereward Way The rivers and waterways which dominate the

walkway to allow water to flow underneath. pedestrians. Gaps have to be left in the raised bank with duck-board bridges is provided for occasionally floods and for this reason a raised Dog in a Doublet sluice across the washland approach roads to the town. The road from the Lines of willows can again be seen on the

in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Causeway). The town is mentioned, as Whitesig, the marsh north of Whittlesey (the Fen The Romans built a raised gravel road through can still be seen at the nearby Flag Fen centre). island and Peterborough island (remains of which causeway across the marsh between Whittlesey age settlers built a kilometre-long timber tor 'island'. The town has a long history. Bronze deriving from Whittle's Ea. Ea is the Anglo-Saxon ▼ V ground surrounded by marshy fen, its name

A hittlesey was historically an island of dry

for refreshment and a railway station. sky welcomes walkers with many opportunities St Mary' Church rising 150 feet into the fenland The market town of Whittlesey with the spire of the sea outfall at Sutton Bridge in Lincolnshire. becomes a tidal river though still 20 miles from Peterborough. Beyond the sluice gates the Nene sluice controls the flow of water to and from crosses the washland south into Whittlesey. The At the Dog in a Doublet sluice the Hereward Way

tilled with lush and colourful wetland plants. cattle and herons amongst meadows and ditches In summer the washland is populated by grazing

popular area for ice skating. snipe. When the floodwaters freeze, this is a the country's nesting black-tailed godwit and England and support a significant proportion of ome of the best floodplain meadows left in



at sea.

the wetness make the Washes a great place for River Mene. The combination of grassland and land serves as the flood storage area for the agriculture in the 17th and 18th centuries. The drainage of the surrounding fenland for skes of open land created as a result of the Whittlesey, the Nene Washes comprise a large are seen in the distance. Lying to the north of

Whooper swans from Iceland. The washes are

here including Bewick swans from Russia and

wildlife. Important numbers of wildfowl winter

and Moreton's Leam (dug in the 15th century) views across the washland between the Nene continues along raised embankments. Good Beyond Peterborough, the Hereward Way

large areas of fenland marsh in Hereward's time. tolerate wet conditions and would have covered and are native to this area. Willow and alder both occur frequently over the 43 miles of the route The willows which line the banks in Peterborough Nene out past the rowing course into the fens. Theatre, the Hereward Way follows the River From the Old Customs House and the Key

making himself an outlaw and vagabond. ground the old cathedral of Peterborough, thus to have ransacked, robbed and burnt to the associations with Heyeward the Wake who is said the railway station. The City has strong starts in Peterborough, only one mile from

The fenland section of the Hereward Way

(səlim S1

Weiney to Ely

səlim S1

March to Weiney

Whittlesey to March

Peterborough to Whittlesey

or always, from the foot of the wolds, the green flat stretched

away, illimitable, to an horizon where, from the roundness of

the earth, the distant trees and islands were hulled down like ships

The firm horse-fen lay, bright green, along the foot of the wold;

beyond it, the browner peat, or deep fen; and amongst that, dark

velvet alder beds, long line of reed-round, emerald in spring; and

metes dotted with a million fowl, while the cattle waded along their

edges after the rich sedge-grass, or wallowed in the mire through

golden under autumn sun; shining 'eas' or river reaches; broad

The Hereward Way

The Hereward Way **Peterborough to Ely**

The Hereward Way Long Distance Footpath runs for 110 miles between Oakham in Rutland and Thetford in Norfolk. The fenland section runs for 43 miles through some of the lowest land in England, providing an unique walking experience. Probably one of the most engineered landscapes in the country, this area has an ancient and tangible history of flooding, island communities, drainage and agricultural improvement. This walk is readily accessible by public transport. Fenland towns offer good accommodation and refreshment for the traveller.

The route is signposted from the roadside, with all the signs bearing the logo or name 'Hereward Way'. Changes of direction away from the road are marked with yellow waymarks. This leaflet provides Ordnance Survey mapping of the whole route at a scale of 1:25000, from Ordnance Survey Explorer sheets 227 and 228

Hereward the Wake was an outlawed English nobleman who, in 1071, made a final stand against William the Conquerer on the Isle of Ely. As the Normans lay siege to the island,

43 miles

Hereward gathered together the English barons at Ely, protected by the surrounding marsh. He held out for eight years before the Normans finally took his stronghold and Hereward vanished with his men into the marsh.

Today his name is given to a long-distance footpath across the land he knew, following both ancient track through the Cambridgeshire Fens. The landscape is now quite different from that Hereward knew, but is still an exhilarating wilderness of big skies, beautiful sunsets and absolute tranquillity.

Public footpaths link the Hereward Way from Peterborough to join the Viking Way at Oakham, and from Ely to the southern end of the Peddars Way near Thetford. The Hereward Way also links into two circular walks published by Cambridgeshire County Council, the Bishops Way at Ely and the Woodmans Way at March. Leaflets are available at libraries, TICs and at the County Council website

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/ countrysideandrights

Extra information

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This leaflet is one of a series produced by Cambridgeshire County Council to encourage the use and enjoyment of some of the many public rights of way in Cambridgeshire. We hope you have enjoyed the walks and would appreciate any comments you may have.

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www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/ countrysideandrights

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Follow the country code – why?

Because the countryside is a place to be enjoyed by all; do protect wildlife, plants and trees, don't leave rubbish behind don't disturb others with unnecessary noise.

Because the countryside is a place of work; do keep to paths and use stiles and gates to cross boundaries; don't let your dogs disturb stock and don't interfere with crops or machines.

Enjoying the countryside means respecting its life and work. If you don't, you won't!

Access for all

The Cambridgeshire countryside is there to be enjoyed by EVERYONE. This route follows grassy droves which although muddy in winter are firm if uneven underfoot in summer. There are no stiles and access to sections of the route from the road is good. More information about other Access for All walks is available on the Cambridgeshire County Council website at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/ countrysideandrights

Come and enjoy it

How to get there

By bus

Stagecoach in Peterborough 01733 554575 Stagecoach in Cambridge 01223 423578

Stations in Peterborough, Whittlesey, March and Ely

National Rail Inquiries 08457 484950

Cambridgeshire County Council Passenger Transport Inquiries tel. 0345 045 0675



Cambridgeshire County Council

The Hereward Way

A long-distance walking route using fenland rights of way linking the historic centres of Ely and Peterborough



the hot summer's day. Here and there, too, upon the far horizon, rose a tall line of ashen trees, marking some island of firm rich soil. In some of them the huge ashes had disappeared before the axes of the monks; and a minster tower rose over the fen, amid orchards, gardens, cornfields, pastures, with here and there a tree left standing for shade.

'Painted with flowers in the spring' with 'pleasant shores embosemed in still lakes' as the monk-chronicler of Ramsey has it, those islands seemed to such as the monk terrestrial paradises. Overhead the arch of heaven spread more ample than elsewhere.

> **Hereward the Wake** by Charles Kingsley

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

