



The Offords

OFFORD-GODMANCHESTER

(4.5 miles) O.S. Pathfinder Series Sheet Nos. 981 and 960

This section of the Ouse Valley Way begins at Buckden Marina. Car parking is available here, with the manager's permission, and also at the nearby villages of Buckden and Offord Cluny.

On the road between Offord Mill and Buckden, about 250 yards west of the narrow Offord Bridge, look for the sign leading the Ouse Valley Way northwards into the marina.

Follow the hardened track around the bends and down to the river, then walk along the attractive river bank for about 2 miles, passing alongside former gravel pits, agricultural land and a golf course.

The track then enters a copse and runs between trees until it meets a concrete access road. Follow this road out of the copse until it meets the gravel-surfaced Bromholme Lane near the entrance gate to Brampton Mill, where food and drink may be obtained.

Turning left into Bromholme Lane, follow the track for about 300 yards, then turn right walking along a path leading into woodland.

Shortly after passing under a railway bridge carrying the main London-Edinburgh lines, you will come to a field gate leading into a fine large open meadow. This is Port Holme, an area of registered common land of about 226 acres. The land has been managed under a traditional grazing/hay-making regime, and this has assisted its botanical diversity, warranting its designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). In the past the Huntingdon Racecourse was situated here, and during the First World War the meadow was used as a training airfield.

As you look over the field gate, you should be able to see the outskirts of Huntingdon diagonally to your left and Godmanchester, a mile away, diagonally to your right. Public footpaths lead over the meadow to both towns from this point, and the Ouse Valley Way heads right towards Godmanchester, marked by the spire of the Parish Church.

When you get nearer to Godmanchester you should be able to pick out the lock on the river. Head towards the lock, and follow the path alongside the river for a short distance, where it runs into Godmanchester Recreation Ground. A gravel track will lead you past the Chinese Bridge, designed in 1827 by the architect, Gallier. Continue along this track across the backwater and into Post Street, the main road in Godmanchester, lined with houses built in a variety of styles over the past 400 years.

There are public conveniences, car park and refreshment facilities available in the town.

Town Trail leaflets have been produced for both Godmanchester and Huntingdon.

Cross Post Street and, following the waymarks into Church Place, head for the fine Perpendicular Period spire of St. Mary's Parish Church completed in 1625. Although most of the church is 16th century, the chancel is much earlier and probably dates from the 13th century. The church was extended in the 16th century, incorporating stone from Ramsey Abbey, Huntingdon Priory and Hinchingsbrooke Nunnery, a reminder of the effects of the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII in 1537.