

START

1 To join the Ouse Valley Way start from **Market Hill, St. Ives**, turn left into Market Road and continue in the same direction along Cromwell Place until you come to The Quadrant, opposite a car park. Turn right towards the nearby roundabout on the busy St. Ives Bypass.

2 Cross over the roundabout and walk down Meadow Lane straight ahead. The path waymarked off to the left is advisable to use since this road is used by heavy lorries. It does, however, take you back onto the main road a few hundred metres further down by some buildings.

3 After nearly a mile / 1.6 km, just after crossing a small stream, the track turns abruptly right to the river. Turn left to follow the path along the riverbank for about 550 metres to a stile. Bear right to the riverbank until you come to where a small stream runs into the river.

4 Walk away from the river, following the bank of this stream. Cross over a footbridge and head up to a stile in front of **Holywell Church**. The church proudly stands on the hill with its 13th Century chancel and strange 17th Century tower. It is in this churchyard that you will find the well from which the village gets its name. The well may be from pre-Christian times and at one time the water was thought to have special healing properties. The Reverend Beckwith constructed a brick shelter over it in 1845.

5 Turn right at the stile along "Holywell Front" with its pretty 16th and 17th Century cottages, to the **Ferry Boat Inn**. The old chain link ferry would have meant that circular walks in this area would have been much shorter! Go past the Inn and follow the track along the top of the flood bank. Walk along here for about a mile / 1.6 km to Overcote Lane. You can find the **Pike and Eel Inn** (site of another old ferry) on the right.

6 Cross over the road and continue walking straight ahead. Walk along the flood bank for about a mile / 1.6 km. Initially the landscape is of flood meadow but it changes to open Fenland. Large numbers of mute swan can be seen here and the hawthorn hedges along the flood bank attract a variety of birds in spring.

7 **Brownhill Stauch** provides circular walkers with the option of returning to St. Ives. To follow this route back, cross over the lock and bridge and turn right along the flood bank for about a mile / 1.6 km. Follow the directions at point **14**, to end.

8 To continue along the Ouse Valley Way, do not cross the lock and bridge at Brownhill Stauch but follow the high bank past the pump house until the path forks. The left-hand path goes to Bluntisham and the right-hand path goes to Earith. Take the right-hand track which crosses over the remains of the railway line to bring you out on **Berry Fen**, a popular ice skating arena in the winter.

9 At the far end of the meadow the path heads away from the river bringing you out on to the A1123 road where you turn right to head into **Earith**.



To continue along the Ouse Valley Way towards Stretham, keep on the A1123. The Ouse Valley Way can be followed as far as King's Lynn.

10 For the circular walk via Bluntisham, take a left turn off the high street down **Colne Road** and after a few hundred metres turn left along **Whybrows Lane** across a field. Take the path around the back of the industrial estate, right initially and then left when the path forks to follow a

path with an old orchard on your right. Follow this path alongside a field edge and past a community orchard into the village of **Bluntisham**.

11 On entering Bluntisham keep straight on into the centre of the village past the Post Office and then curve around to your left to follow the road down past the church.

12 At the main road cross over and take the path opposite (slightly to the right). Follow the track down to the river.

13 You will meet another path coming in from the left, join this and walk along to the right as far as **Brownhill Stauch**. To return to St. Ives via the circular walk, cross over the lock and bridge and turn right along the flood bank and follow it for about a mile / 1.6 km.

14 Cross over Chain Road and continue along the bank for another 250 metres until a small building where you turn right across a small metal bridge. Continue to follow the high bank for about a mile / 1.6 km when the river bends slightly to the right and the path leads to a small sluice. Cross here and follow the flood bank for about a mile / 1.6 km when the path veers left away from the river and leads to a track.

15 Turn right at the track back to the river where you will be able to see the Ferry Boat Inn, but with no ferry you will have to go thirsty! Turn left to follow the path along the riverbank through overhanging trees and then onto open farmland.

16 Cross underneath the disused railway line and keep following the riverbank for about another mile / 1.6 km. You will meet a track near **St. Ives Stauch** where you have to turn left past the marina. Continue for 100 metres where you will reach a road.

17 Turn right at the road until you reach the marina entrance. Turn right off the road and walk past the shop and follow the path to the left of the water through the marina to a high footbridge. The path leads to 'Wilhorn Meadow' which you cross to come out at the bridge that leads right to **St. Ives**.



Distances

Ouse Valley Way - St. Ives to Brownhill Stauch (1. to 8.) - 4 1/2 miles / 7.2 km
 Ouse Valley Way - Brownhill Stauch to Earith (8. to 10.) - 1 3/4 miles / 2.8 km
 Circular Walk Back - Earith to Brownhill Stauch (10. to 8.) - 2 3/4 miles / 4.4 km
 Circular Walk Back - Brownhill Stauch to St. Ives (8. to 1.) - 5 1/2 miles / 8.8 km

