



Riverside and Meadows Walk

A walk along the banks of the river Nene to the west of the city centre, passing through meadows, nature reserves and Thorpe Hall parklands

- 11. Turn right on the tarmac path and right again after 50 metres to go back under the flyover. Follow the path as it curves to the left and continue straight ahead for 200 metres, passing under another road via an underpass.
- 12. Immediately after emerging from the underpass turn right onto a tarmac path through woodland.
- 13. After about 400 metres you will reach an information board at the entrance to the Holywell Ponds nature reserve. Turn right into the reserve and follow the path for 200 metres or so through the reserve. Holywell Ponds comprise eight medieval fish ponds (K) set in an area of rough grassland, woods and wetland. The ponds, which were once part of the historic Thorpe Hall estate, are fed by a natural spring over which a grotto (now Grade II listed) was built in the 18th century. The reserve covers over 8 acres and was



designated a County Wildlife Site in 1992. To visit the grotto turn left just before the main path leaves the reserve and the grotto is about 50 metres up the path.



- 14. Leave the reserve where the path reaches a gap in the hedge and follow the grassy path across the open meadow, passing through a gateway on your left after about 100 metres, then climbing gently across the meadow (L, M, N) for 400 metres to the corner of the walled garden of Thorpe Hall (O). Follow the wall round the corner and after 50 metres there is a gateway with the hall behind (P). The lovely meadows are a remnant of the Thorpe Hall estate. Thorpe Hall is a Grade I listed 17th century Cromwellian mansion and the gardens are Grade II listed. The hall is now owned by the Sue Ryder Foundation and a hospice is located in the grounds. You can see more of the hall by following the wall around the grounds.



- 15. Continue along the path for another 50 metres to where it crosses another path that is flanked by trees. Turn right and follow the path between the trees and at the bottom veer left, then after 50 metres right on the footpath down to the corner of the meadows, where you need to cross a stile onto the grass verge of Thorpe Road.
- 16. Turn left and walk up the grass verge for 20 metres before crossing the road and going down the small cul-de-sac opposite. Just before the end of the cul-de-sac go down the path to the right, signposted "Workhouse cycleway". Cross the road and turn right, then after 20 metres turn left at the roundabout into Thorpe Meadows.

After 50 metres take the left turn at the blue pedestrian/cyclist sign and go straight ahead for 100 metres, past the Boathouse pub on your right, to a bridge over a watercourse.



- 17. Cross the bridge and turn left onto the tarmac path just before a set of information boards and go straight ahead. (Q) The path turns right after 500 metres (signposted "Workhouse cycleway"), then left after 100 metres, then right again after 400 metres. After a further 20 metres you are back to the riverside where you turned off at point 6. On this section you have been walking on the other side of the Thorpe Meadows Nature Reserve mentioned in section 7.
- 18. The rest of the walk is the reverse of that described in section 1 up to the turn off the tarmac path in section 6. Retrace this section to return to Cathedral Square, where the walk ends.

Description: This walk takes you down to the river and along the north bank of the river Nene to Thorpe Meadows. It returns through a nature reserve with a grotto and ancient fish ponds, the park land around the historic Thorpe Hall, and meadows on the river flood plain before returning to Cathedral Square.

Distance: 9 km (5½ miles).

Time: 2½ hours (at a leisurely pace). The walk can be shortened to about 5.5 km (3.5 miles) covering part of the riverside and meadows.

Starting & finishing point: Cathedral Square.

Access: Paved, tarmac, dirt and grass paths. The unmade paths by the river can be muddy in wet weather and after very heavy rain the riverside paths may flood in places. If there is flooding close to the river you will need to take one of the multiple paths a little way from the river and return to the riverside when possible. There are a few gentle gradients but the walk is mostly on level ground. There is one stile over a fence.

Facilities: There are multiple cafes and restaurants in the city centre. Once on the riverside path there are few facilities but you will pass the Boathouse pub about three quarters of the way round the walk.



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Funding for this series of mini maps came from CrossCountry's Community Engagement Fund.

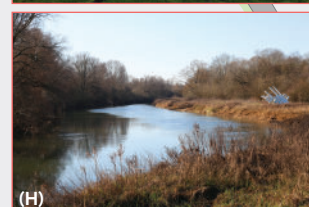
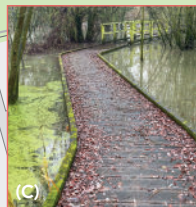
The maps were produced by Fine Design working in partnership with Peterborough Civic Society and Hereward Community Rail Partnership.

Directions

- From Cathedral Square facing the cathedral turn right and go down Bridge Street.
- After 250 metres crossing the busy dual carriageway at the pedestrian lights.
- After another 50 metres turn right and go through the Rivergate shopping arcade. Turn left as you emerge from the arcade and in front of you at the end of the Asda superstore you will see blue railings leading to a footbridge over the river. Take the path down to the left of the bridge, turn right onto the riverside path (Henry Penn Walk) going under the footbridge and follow the tarmac path beside the river.
- If you want to visit Railworld and the Railworld Wildlife Refuge, or access the Nene Valley Railway Station, cross the footbridge and turn right onto the path on the other side of the river. After 200 metres, just beyond the third railway bridge, the entrance to Railworld and the Nene Valley Railway is on your left.
- Continue the walk on the north bank and after passing under the three rail bridges and the Railworld footbridge the built-up bustle of the city is left behind.
- After about 500 metres the tarmac path turns to the right. Take the grassy footpath to the left.



- Continue beside the river, crossing a footbridge (A) after about 400 metres and a second footbridge after a further 700 metres. The riverside in this area is bordered with reeds and trees (B). On your right is a wetland area with ponds, part of which is the Thorpe Meadows Nature Reserve. There is an attractive boardwalk (C) through the wetland area just inland from the river that is an alternative to the riverside.
- Just over the second footbridge (D, E) is an information board welcoming you to Nene Park. The board includes a map of the area including the meadows, rowing lake with small café, and a sculpture trail.



- You can shorten the walk after crossing the second footbridge by following the path to the right for 200 metres, bearing right at the rowing lake (F) and following the path (G) for another 300 metres past the Boathouse pub on your left until you reach a tarmac road with a bridge over a watercourse on your right. The shortcut (dashed red line on the map) rejoins the main walk here (skip to paragraph 17), cutting about 3.5 km off the walk.

- To continue the full walk after crossing the second footbridge follow the path (H) close to the river for 1.2 km until you pass under a large road bridge and flyover (I) across the meadow. The meadows here are more open and you will see some of the sculptures on the sculpture trail and glimpses of the rowing lake to your right. Ahead you can see Orton Mere Lock (J). The riverside path is part of the Nene Way (a long-distance footpath that mostly follows the route of the River Nene from its source near Badby in Northamptonshire to its outfall into the Wash) and the Hereward Way (a long-distance footpath that links the Viking Way at Oakham with the Peddars Way at Knettishall Heath, near Theford). Closer to home, the path beyond the lock leads to Ferry Meadows country park after about 2 km.

