



12 CAMBRIDGESHIRE MANEA & OUSE WASHES

Distance: 8½ miles/14km Time: 5 hours Grade: Moderate



Ouse Washes near Point 4.

PHOTO: JO SINCLAIR



CHOSEN BY... JO SINCLAIR

The Ouse Washes is a desolate but

spectacular fenland landscape. This circuit from Manea train station to the RSPB at Welches Dam is especially impressive for wildlife enthusiasts and landscape photographers. The Washes, a half-mile-wide strip of grassland between the Old Bedford and New Bedford rivers, stretches for 20 miles between Norfolk and Suffolk. Engineered in the 18th century by the Dutch 'Adventurers', it holds shallow floodwater, creating perfect conditions for thousands of wintering wildfowl and rare breeding birds.

1 Start

Exit rail station R onto Station Road. Walk to end.

2 1 mile/1.7km

Turn R on High Street then L on Park Road opposite the Rose and Crown pub. Pass playing fields. At corner by lake follow bend to R. Continue along Straight Road.

3 2 miles/3km

At junction with Purl's Bridge Drove, turn R. Take bridleway 100m on L beside house – ignore farm track marked 'private' to join Barne's Drove bridleway, the gravel track immediately to R. Pass farm on L. The surrounding fields here become white with swans in winter. From October

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Manea railway station, grid ref TL479910. Parking on nearby streets, postcode PE15 OHG, park on nearby streets (station car park under construction). Park in the village for shorter walk

Is it for me? Hard-surfaced remote country lanes and grassy tracks.

No shelter in a very exposed landscape

Stiles None

PLANNING

Nearest town Ely

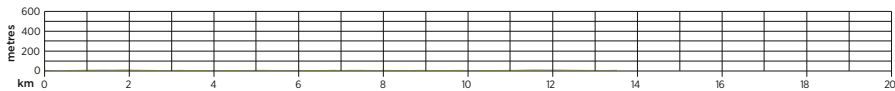
Refreshments Café, shops and pub (The Rose & Crown, 01354 680454) in Manea

Public toilets Top of Purl's Bridge Road

Public transport Greater Anglia and Cross Country trains. Wisbech-Manea bus 56 (stagecoachbus.com)

Maps OS Explorer 228; Landranger 143

GRADIENT PROFILE



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MANEA & OUSE WASHES

■ OS Explorer map 228 ■ Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

to February resident mute swans are joined by whooper swans and bewicks. Migrating in their thousands from Iceland and Russia, they graze the fields and gather on the floodwaters.

4 3¼ miles/5.2km

Near Boon's Farm barn just beyond a fishing lake (hidden at the top of bank) turn L. With the drainage ditch on the R, follow bridleway east, towards one of the wonky telegraph poles the Fens are famous for. The underlying soil is peat which has dried out and shrunk since the Fens were drained, a good reason for starting in the village if coming by car.

5 4 miles/6.4km

At end of bridleway rejoin lane: turn L for a shorter walk returning to Manea or R for the RSPB and Wildlife Trust reserve with car park, toilets and bird hides. Cross bridge by pumping station for a choice of hides, some with views towards Ely cathedral (reserve maps available at the



RSPB members' centre). The UK's largest regularly flooded landscape attracts masses of birdlife. Return to the pumping

station and stay on Purl's Bridge road (the lane from the RSPB car park), passing a house and lake on R to reach Straight Road. Follow it back the way you arrived. [CW](http://www.cw.org.uk)

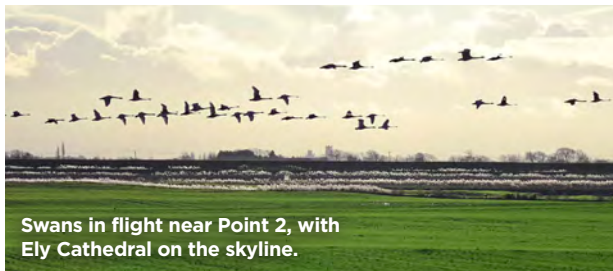


PHOTO: JO SINCLAIR

Swans in flight near Point 2, with Ely Cathedral on the skyline.

DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING

VIEW THE WALK ON
OS MAPS ONLINE:
walk1000miles.co.uk/cwroutes

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

