

## Just a short walk away ...

**St Ives is an ideal centre from which to visit Cambridgeshire. To the west lies the picturesque Ouse Valley full of thatched cottages and 'olde worlde' charm. To the east are the Ouse Washes, with its unique Fenland landscape of big skies and a rich heritage of life in this reclaimed marshland.**

Below are two walks easily made from The Old Riverport of St Ives.

### A walk through 'Olde' England

Make your way to the Parish Church at the end of The Broadway, beyond the moorings at The Waits. Through the churchyard you will see Barnes Walk, a footpath which leads to the Thicket path along the Ouse Valley Way to the village of Houghton.

There are plenty of places for refreshment here: tea rooms, pubs and the iconic mill at Houghton (right), now owned by the National Trust and open to the public as a working mill between mid March and the end of October.



From the Mill, cross the meadow to Hemingford Abbots and further on to Hemingford Grey. These are commonly known as the Hemingfords and stand timeless in their rural setting of old pubs, and thatched buildings - notice the sculptures that adorn the roofs. Cats, bowler hats and pheasants provide interest as one strolls through the quiet streets.



Meadow at harvest time. Photo: Alan Bennett/Media Imaging Solutions.

It is an easy walk of just under 6 miles, mostly following the course of the Great Ouse, returning to St Ives across the ancient right of way over Hemingford Meadow. You may need to stay on the road in winter when the flood meadow becomes too wet to navigate. See walk details on our website.

**Arriving in St Ives across the ancient bridge you will find a wealth of pubs, cafés and tea rooms to help refresh you.**

**JUST 30 MINUTES FROM CAMBRIDGE ON THE GUIDED BUS**

### Discover the new wetlands

It is easy to explore the Ouse Valley to the east and the area of wetlands being created at Ouse Fen. This area is very different from the Ouse Valley Way and links into the Ouse Washes that run through Fenland to Denver Sluice and beyond to the Wash.

Years of gravel extraction has allowed the creation of the lakes to form the largest wetland area in the country, home to thousands of wildfowl.



**Fen Drayton Lakes**, an RSPB reserve, is just two miles away and easily reached by foot, cycle or by bus along the Guided Busway. This complex of lakes and traditional riverside meadows next to the Great Ouse is a fantastic place to explore and watch birds with huge numbers of ducks, swans and geese on the lakes in winter. In summer, terns, hobbies and a variety of dragonflies are regularly seen but the otters who live here are harder to find.

If the walk has tired you out you can catch the Guided Bus back into St Ives. A chance to relax and enjoy your evening.



### Good Nightlife

St Ives is also well-known for its nightlife with many good restaurants offering a wide variety of cuisine from around the world. You will find something to do most evenings. Many pubs, clubs and bars often have live music.

**There are many events organised throughout the year. For a list of what's on go to: [www.theoldriverportstives.co.uk](http://www.theoldriverportstives.co.uk).**

## Visit The Old Riverport St Ives

If you would like any further information about St Ives, our history or our future events, please contact:

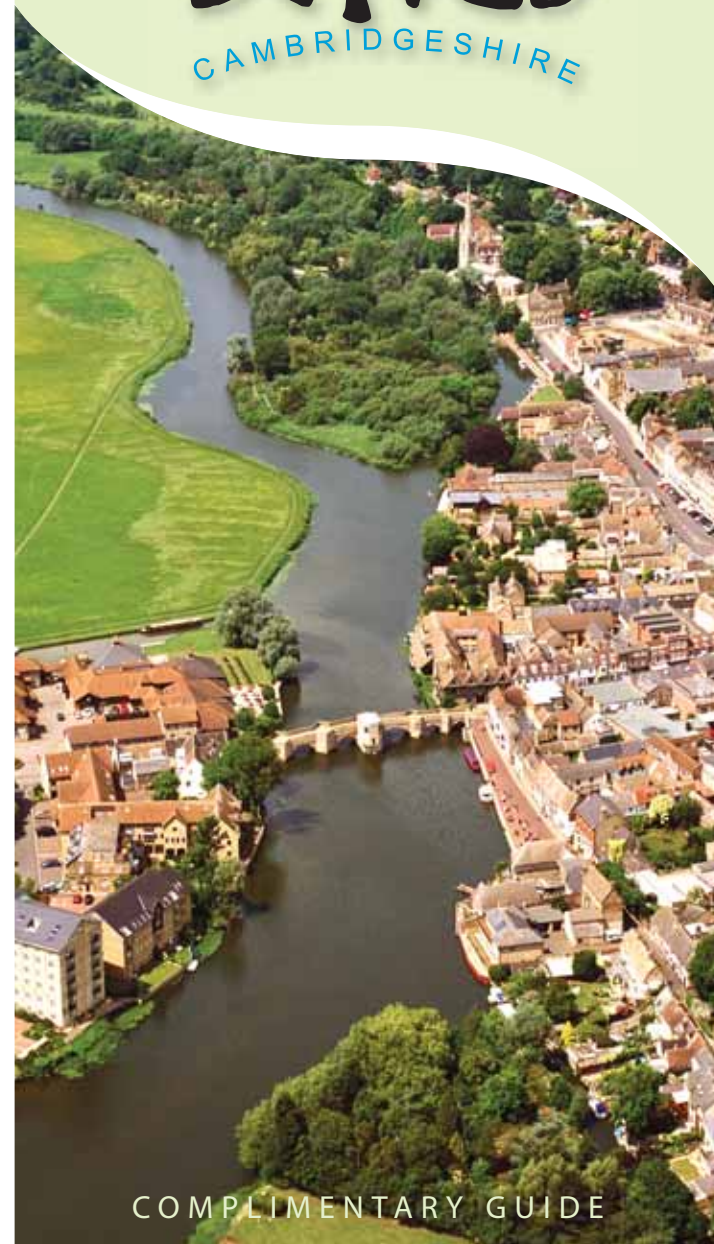
### St Ives Town Team

C/O The Town Hall, Market Hill,  
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or visit: [www.theoldriverportstives.co.uk](http://www.theoldriverportstives.co.uk)

# The Old Riverport St Ives CAMBRIDGESHIRE



COMPLIMENTARY GUIDE



# Take a trip to The Old Riverport and discover why everyone is 'Going to St Ives'

## St Ives CAMBRIDGESHIRE

**Not only could you meet a man with seven wives and lots of cats, you will definitely see a unique range of independent shops, wonderful historical buildings, a stunning water meadow and an award-winning nature reserve.**

Why not stay a while in one of the fine hotels or on one of the nearby campsites and enjoy some of the superb cafés, pubs and restaurants. You will be surprised by just how much goes on in this pretty market town.

### Gateway to Cambridgeshire

On this page are some interesting facts about the town and details of other places to visit, only a short drive away, showing why St Ives is the best place from which to explore the area.

Open up the centre pages to reveal a map of the town and ten historic sites to see, all within The Old Riverport area. Overleaf are details of two walks that can be taken further afield to discover the wonderful countryside surrounding the town.

As I was going to St Ives



## 10 Interesting Facts

### Why is part of St Ives known as The Old Riverport?

In 2014 St Ives Town Council decided to call the town centre The Old Riverport. They did this for three reasons. Firstly to recognise the importance of the riverport - the history of which had been largely ignored. Secondly to emphasise how people today consider the river a key feature of the town and thirdly to create a sense of place that defines St Ives as somewhere different.

The Great Ouse river was, according to former Norris Museum Curator Bob Burn-Murdoch, 'one of the great crossroads of England'. Goods flowed into central England, often from abroad via Kings Lynn and along the Great Ouse. St Ives was at the centre of this important waterway.

**The world's first pocket calculator** the Sinclair Executive was made in St Ives in 1972 by Sir Clive Sinclair in his factory in the Old Mill.

**In 1086** St Ives, then still called Slepe, was valued at just £16. The Domesday Book recorded the population at just 52 men – nobody bothered to count the women and children.

**In 1840 St Ives had 70 pubs but only 3,500 people** - so one pub for every 50 inhabitants. To have the same ratio nowadays we'd need 350 pubs instead of the eleven we have.



**Oliver Cromwell** lived in St Ives for five years before he became famous. Although born in Huntingdon, 300 years after his birth Huntingdon was still such a Royalist town that they didn't want his statue, so it came to St Ives instead. It is the only one paid for by public subscription.

His name wasn't really Cromwell but Williams. He was Welsh and related to Henry VIII's minister Thomas Cromwell so changed his name to benefit from the connection.

**St Ives Fair** was one of the four biggest fairs in the country during the Middle Ages. Merchants came from Europe, often by boat via Kings Lynn, to deal in woven woollen cloth and King Henry III, Edward I and Edward II were among the customers.

**The Monday market** started in AD 1200 when King John granted a charter for a market in the streets of the town.

**Augustus Pugin**, famous for designing the interior of the Palace of Westminster, designed and built the Sacred Heart RC Church on Needingworth Road. Originally built as St Andrew's Church in Cambridge it was dismantled brick by brick in 1902 and transported to St Ives by barge.

**The chapel on St Ives Bridge** is dedicated to Saint Leger, Bishop of Autun in France during the Dark Ages.



**The riddle 'As I Was Going to St Ives'** was known as far back as the 18th century. Different versions, not mentioning St Ives but using the same idea of multiplying things by seven, go back to the Middle Ages. One version was recorded on an Egyptian papyrus 4,000 years ago.



Cartoon by Sandra Souter.  
Old pictures courtesy of the Norris Museum.  
Unless marked otherwise - all photographs & maps by John Souter.  
Holt Island map by Coral Walton Design Management.  
Cover photograph by Dae Sasitorn and Adrian Warren.



View of the town from Holt Island.

## Holt Island.

The nature reserve in the town.

**Make your way to the Parish Church at the end of The Broadway beyond the The Waits. Through the churchyard you will find the bridge that connects you to the old osier beds, now the award-winning nature reserve of Holt Island.**

Teaming with birds and other wildlife it is an ideal place to relax and enjoy the tranquility of the riverside setting. The island is open from 10am – 4pm on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays between April and September.



## Just a short drive away ...

**St Ives is handily placed to see Cambridgeshire and the Fens. Of course the Guided Busway can get you to or from the centre of historic Cambridge in just 30 minutes.**

If visiting by car or cycle there are many interesting places within easy reach, including the cathedral cities of Peterborough to the north and Ely to the east.

There are a surprising number of things to do and see within a 25 mile radius of St Ives, such as the archaeological sites of Flag Fen and Must Farm and a host of nature reserves including Welney and Wicken Fen. Closer to St Ives the area is dominated by pretty villages and market towns with listed buildings, old



churches and a lot of good pubs.

For something different why not visit Johnson's Crocodile Farm and The Raptor Foundation, great places for a day out with children.

You can find details of where to stay and local campsites on our website.



# Explore our ancient town centre and discover its fascinating history ...

## The Old Riverport St Ives CAMBRIDGESHIRE



### 1 The Parish Church

All Saints' Church and churchyard stands in a lovely riverside setting on the site of the old village of Slepe, from which grew the town of St Ives.

A Grade I listed 15th century building, the spire was rebuilt twice, the last time in the 1920s after an aeroplane crashed into it during the First World War.

### 2 The Waits

Probably the site where John Wesley preached when he visited St Ives in 1774. He wrote in his diary that he preached to 'a very well dressed and yet well behaved congregation.' The Methodist Church still stands opposite and on Sunday afternoons in July and August free music concerts are held here.



Photograph by Jerry Hills.

### 3 The Norris Museum

At the end of the Broadway is The Norris Museum, the Museum of Huntingdonshire, which re-opened on 29th July 2017 after extensive redevelopment.

Arthur Mee, in his book The King's England, says: 'It would be hard in this old town, with all its enchanting places, to find a place surpassing in attractiveness the museum on the river bank. We have seen few museums built so neatly in so fair a place as this.'



The Broadway shortly after the memorial was unveiled.

### 4 Victoria Memorial

The memorial to Queen Victoria was put up several years after the event that it was intended to commemorate. Mr Elliott Odams, a brewer from Fenstanton, on holiday at Sandown in the Isle of Wight spotted their Jubilee Memorial and liked it so much, that he hired the Sandown architect to design a replica for St Ives.

By this time Queen Victoria had died, so Odams decided to present the memorial to the town on the coronation day of her son, Edward VII, Thursday 26th June, 1902, but it had to be postponed, because the new King had appendicitis.

The Jubilee Memorial was unveiled on the following Monday, however an inscription had already been carved, which claimed that the ceremony had taken place on Edward's coronation day.

### 5 The Corn Exchange

The Corn Exchange, now owned by St Ives Town Council, was opened in 1864, built and paid for by local businessmen.

Following a heated campaign by residents to save it as a community centre the restored building was formally re-opened on 24 June 2010.

It is run by the Corn Exchange Community Interest Company (CIC) with the help of volunteers from ACE - Friends of St Ives Corn Exchange.



'Here are the most beautiful meadows on the banks of the river Ouse, that I think are to be seen in any part of England' Daniel Defoe 1724



### 6 The Free Church & Cromwell Statue

The Free Church, built in the 1860s, was transformed in 1980 as the church was raised to a new first floor, creating a shop, café and meeting rooms at ground level.

Outside is Cromwell's Statue unveiled in 1901. Both are reminders of the strong St Ives tradition of nonconformity.

### 7 The Manor House

Built in 1616 it is St Ives' oldest surviving house, partly because the Great Fire of 1689 destroyed a third of the town's buildings.



### 8 The Bridge and Chapel

The historic Chapel Bridge, built in 1425, is one of only four in the country.

The left two arches were rebuilt a different shape after being blown up in the Civil War.



### 9 The Quay

It is a busy place when the sun shines and river trips run from here from April to the end of September.

Illuminated boat parades, outdoor plays, jazz & blues concerts and Santa arriving by boat can all be enjoyed on The Quay.



### 10 The Cattle Market

A weekly livestock market started in The Broadway and in 1886 the lodges, which today form the exit to the bus station, were built as the entrance to the 'new' market, following the arrival of the railway.



The crest of St Ives Town Council of four bulls' heads is a reminder of the big cattle markets held in the town in the 18th and 19th centuries, said to be second only to Smithfield in importance.

From the 1940s auctions were held in the green, wooden clad, Octagon which still stands by the bus station in the cattle market car park.



Cattle being auctioned in the Octagon.

To Park & Ride and additional coach parking on Meadow Lane

### Guided Busway

Buses stop in the bus station, or on the corner of Station Road and also a short distance away in the Park & Ride, the other side of Harrison Way.

Guided Busway

To A14 Cambridge & M11

CAMBRIDGE IS JUST 30 MINUTES AWAY ON THE GUIDED BUS

Map created by John Souter based on an original drawing by Bob Burn-Murdoch.