

## Walk 8: Oakington to Rampton via Cuckoo Lane.

This walk starts at the Guided Bus crossing in Station Road. (Please note there is a section of this route on a narrow footpath beside Oakington Road, and then a short stretch on the road itself. To bypass these please see Walk 6.)



Head towards Westwick along the footpath, taking care particularly on several narrow stretches next to the road.



On your right you will see the driveway to Westwick Hall.



Continue until the footpath ends just short of the Old Granary Business Centre, but you can continue on the flat grass verge until the entrance to Westwick Farm.



Here you need to move with suitable care onto the road itself for about 100m, passing out of the 30mph zone, until you come to a Bridleway sign on the right as the hedge gives way to an open field.



Follow the Bridleway down the bank from the road, and immediately turn left (the track ahead is part of Walk 6).



In another 150m you will come to a metal barrier leading into a small open space. To your right is Gun's Lane (see Walk 7).

Cross the road very carefully into the entry of a track opposite, signed Lambs Cross Farm. The Bridleway (actually a Byway) sign is at the time of writing buried in the hedge at the left of the track. Continue up the track towards the farm. This track has various names, Cuckoo Lane, Cuckoo Drove, and sometimes, possibly erroneously, Rampton Drift, and is about 2km long.



As the track is a byway, as well as farm traffic at any time of the year, it may be used by other motor vehicles at various times of the year, so please keep that in mind as you walk along it.

The track also has sections that run over patches of the local clay, and is sometimes slow to drain after periods of rain. The track moves steadily up Cuckoo Hill and emerges from the hedgerows into open fields on each side.



If you have ever wondered what happens to all the trailer loads of straw and silage that seem to go through the village so often, you can see part of the answer to the right as you near the top of the hill.



From the top of the hill there are good views in all directions, especially to the west over Beck Brook and the Guided Busway to the area that will eventually become Northstowe. Sadly, it is not likely to be as attractive then. Parts of Rampton begin to appear in the distance to the north.



The track then descends slowly and turns a little round some mature oaks until it reaches Cuckoo Bridge, across Beck Brook. All the rainwater from Hardwick, Bar Hill, Dry Drayton, Oakington, Girton, Histon, Impington and parts of North Cambridge comes through here.



After the bridge the track runs alongside the brook another 200m or



so, until the brook then turns away to the right. It is possible to follow the track by the brook towards the east end of Rampton, but this walk continues straight on as the path drops slightly into a belt of trees.



After another 500m or so the path arrives at a metal gate defining the end of this section of the byway. The section beyond is one of the streets that comprise Rampton.



Where next? It is possible to continue straight ahead for about 300m on the roadway, which then turns right towards the centre of Rampton, or from that point continue on a further track for about 200m to the Rampton to Willingham road. Or you could turn left onto another section of byway known as Reynold's Drove, towards the Guided Busway and Longstanton, and that it worth a little further description.

Reynold's Drove is another byway that used to connect Rampton to Longstanton for occasional motor traffic, however, the byway is now broken at the Guided Busway and only non-motor traffic can go through.



The byway runs alongside Reynold's Ditch, which is the watercourse taking all the surface water from Longstanton, part of Bar Hill and Childerley, and which will carry all the surface water from Northstowe. It flows into Beck Brook about 100m to the east of the byway junction to form

Cottenham Lode (sometimes called New Cut on maps).



After about 500m the track comes to a bridge over the ditch that leads onto a footpath running up to the Rampton – Willingham Road.

Our track continues straight on for about another 300m until it reaches the Guided Busway. There is an information board here describing the old Cambridge to St Ives railway that was replaced by the building of the Busway.



Where next? If you cross the guided busway carefully looking out for buses and the beams that the buses follow, the track continues as Rampton Road to the Rampton Drift houses, the old Barracks and Longstanton, becoming a tarmac surface as it approaches the village (see Walks 1 and 2). All this area will be changed by the building of Northstowe. Turning right onto the Busway path will take you to the Longstanton Busway stop and the Park and Ride site and beyond. Turning left you will head back towards Oakington, with views to the east towards Beck Brook and the Cuckoo Lane walk, and views to the west over the land that will become Northstowe.