PRACTICAL INFORMATION

ROUTE OVERVIEW 10.5 miles (16.9km)

This is a short, easy stage with good services and transport links at the start and end. There is nowhere to eat or stay between the two at Santon Downham, but there are public toilets in the car parks. You would need to use a bus or taxi to divide this section into two shorter ones.

This comparatively short stage begins by taking in the pilgrim highlights of Thetford, then follows the St Edmund Way alongside the River Little Ouse before a short climb to a forest stretch, reaching St Helen's Oratory and Holy Well in **5.4 miles**. There is a descent to cross the Little Ouse, then a walk along forest tracks and a lane via All Saints, to reach St Mary's, Santon Downham in a further **1.9 miles**. The route leaves the St Edmund Way at this point.

From Santon Downham, the path is once again alongside the river, now following the route of the Little Ouse Path, reaching Brandon in **2.9 miles**, then following High St (A1065) to the end of the stage at Brandon's railway station, reached in a further **0.3 miles**.

Public transport options

This stage is well connected by both **train**, with stations at Thetford and Brandon, and **bus**, with services including the No 40 Thetford to Kings Lynn, the No 84/86 Brandon to Bury St Edmunds and the No 200/201 Thetford to Mildenhall, of which four buses a day travel via Santon Downham. See also public transport map and table pp29-31.

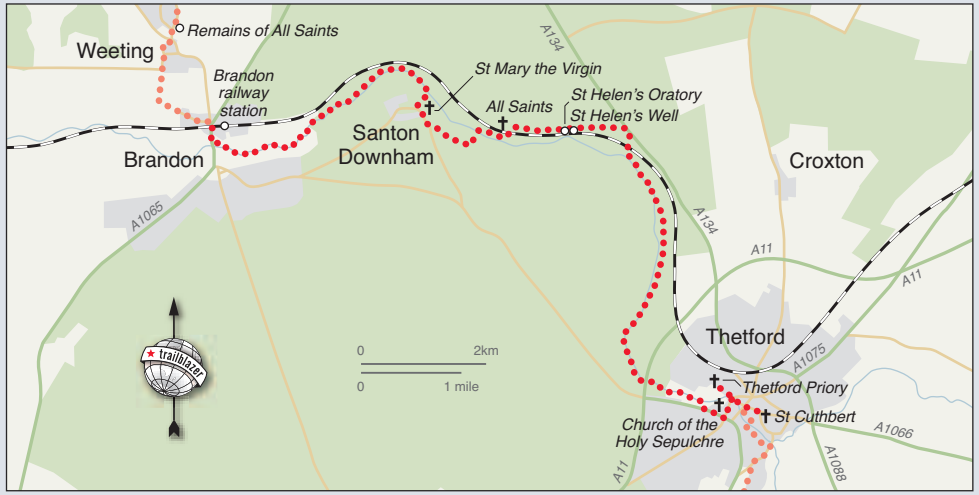
There are two car parks in Santon Downham where a car could be left or a taxi pick-up arranged. St Helen's Trail car park (toilets; open summer only, dawn-dusk; IP27 0TJ) just past All Saints church; and at the Forestry Commission Offices (toilets; 9am-4pm; off Mark Ln IP27 0TJ) just before the lane crosses the river Little Ouse.

Taxi firms include ***A2B Taxis*** (☎ 01842-755222, 💻 www.a2btaxisthetford.co.uk) or ***Perry's Taxis*** (☎ 07985-386059, 01842-769686, 💻 perrystaxis.co.uk), both based in Thetford, and in Brandon there's ***Carters Brandon Cars*** (☎ 01842-811430, 💻 cartersbrandoncars.co.uk).

Where to eat or stay along the way

- **Thetford** (see Stage 8, p119)

- **Terrain** Riverside and forest paths
- **Difficulty** Easy
- **Cumulative distance from London** 126.5 miles (203.9km)
- **Time** 3hrs 40mins actual walking time
- **Total ascent** 123metres/403ft
- **Map** OS Explorer *229 Thetford Forest in the Brecks*
- **GPX route file & directions*** 509.pdf, 509.gpx, 509.kml at 💻 https://trailblazer-guides.com/press * See pp27-8 for more information on downloads



- **Brandon Stay, eat** or **camp** at historic ***Ram Inn*** (☎ 01842-810275, 💻 facebook.com then search Ram Inn Brandon; High St; pub open Mon-Thur 11am-11pm, Fri-Sat 11am-1am, Sun noon-11, food: check for Mon-Sat times, Sun noon-3.30). Hotel, bar, restaurant, campsite. Pleasant inn with 16 rooms, which has been hosting pilgrims and travellers since 1349. Alternatively the ***Bridge Hotel*** (☎ 01842-338228, 💻 bridgehotelbrandon.com; 79 High St) is a 200-year-old, family-run riverside hotel with seven rooms.

Services

- **Thetford** (see Stage 8, p119)
- **Brandon** On the High St is **supermarket** Aldi (Mon-Sat 8am-10pm, Sun 10am-4pm), while the l**aundrette** (☎ 01842-813111; daily 9am-9pm) is at 11 Stores St.

PILGRIMAGE HIGHLIGHTS

- **Thetford** ***St Cuthbert's*** (💻 thetfordteamministry.org.uk; open check website, services Sun & Wed 10.30am, 1 King St). **Pilgrim stamp in church.** On Water Lane, ***Thetford Priory*** (☎ 0370-3331181, 💻 english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/thetford-priory; open 8am-6pm, to 4pm winter) was once the burial place of Henry VIII's illegitimate son. ***Church of the Holy Sepulchre*** (💻 english-heritage.org.uk; Brandon Rd) Access restricted during conservation work but can be viewed easily from the gate leading onto the site.
- (after 5.5 miles/8.5km) ***St Helen's Oratory and Holy Well*** is open at all times.
- **Santon** (after 6.2 miles/10km) ***All Saints*** (💻 santondownham.org/about/all-saints, Santon Houses; open daily, no services) redundant church now in the care of Norfolk Churches Trust.

		Stage 9 Thetford to Brandon
Distance from start	Distance from last waypoint	
0	0	From the bridge in Bridge St, walk north over the River Little Ouse until you reach King St.
110yds/100m	110yds/100m	Turn right into King St, and walk to St Cuthbert's church.
380yds/350m	260yds/240m	Arrive at St Cuthbert's. To continue, retrace your steps to Bridge St.
700yds/650m	330yds/300m	Cross Bridge St and walk along Minstergate, continuing until the path passes beneath London Rd and reaches a tarmacked path. This is the Little Ouse Path and the St Edmund Way, roundel signs for each of which will occur on occasions during the walk.
880yds/800m	165yds/150m	Turn left on the tarmacked path, and look out for Thetford Priory on your right.
.6mile/1km	220yds/200m	Arrive at Thetford Priory. To continue, return to the tarmacked path and turn left, then take the steps almost immediately on your right up to London Rd.
.9mile/1.4km	440yds/400m	Turn right on the pavement and follow London Rd south over the River Little Ouse until you get to Brandon Rd.
1mile/1.6km	220yds/200m	Turn right into Brandon Rd and look out for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on your right.
1.1miles/1.8km	220yds/200m	Arrive at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. To continue, turn right and continue along Brandon Rd, looking out for a footpath crossing beneath the road in a tunnel.
1.2miles/2km	220yds/200m	Turn right to descend to this footpath and take it over the River Little Ouse, looking out for the Little Ouse Path/St Edmund Way footpath running along the far bank.
1.3miles/2.1km	330yds/300m	On the far bank, turn left onto the Little Ouse Path/St Edmund Way, and follow it, with the river to your left, past the power station, until the path turns sharply right.
4.5miles/7.3km	3.2miles/5.2km	Follow the path as it turns sharply right and passes beneath the railway line to reach the A134. Turn left, walking either through the trees and parallel to the road, or along the grass verge, for 100yds, looking out for a forest track leaving the road on your left.

4.8miles/7.8km	550yds/500m	Turn left onto the forest track, which is still the Little Ouse Path/St Edmund Way, and continue for about half a mile, looking out for a board on your left with details of St Helen's Oratory and Holy Well.
5.4miles/8.7km	990yds/900m	Arrive at the site of St Helen's Oratory. The Holy well is down the slope to your left, just before the railway line. To continue, go back to the forest track and turn left.
6.1miles/9.9km	.7mile/1.2km	At the point where, on OS Exlporer maps, Railway Cottage is marked, look out for a track bearing left and passing beneath the railway to Santon House (also marked on OS maps. You will see All Saints, Santon on the other side of the rails. A roundel with a black arrow on a yellow background points the way.
6.2miles/10km	110yds/100m	Arrive at All Saints. To continue, turn left out of the church to follow the lane. There is a toilet block (open dawn to dusk, summer only) at the St Helen's Trail car park, on the right just after leaving the church. Continue until you see a track leaving the lane to your left and crossing the river.
6.5miles/10.4km	440yds/400m	Take the track to your left, cross the river and continue until you reach a T-junction.
6.6miles/10.7km	330yds/300m	Turn right at the T-junction and continue along the forest track until you reach a lane.
7.1miles/11.5km	880yds/800m	Bear right into the lane and look out for St Mary the Virgin, Santon Downham, on your right.
7.3miles/11.7km	220yds/200m	Arrive at St Mary, Santon Downham. To continue, return to the lane you were following and bear right onto it. There is a fingerpost for Santon Downham Circular walk, which has a St Edmund's Way roundel on it, pointing the way. Continue until you see a road sign warning vehicles of a sharp bend.
7.6miles/12.2km	550yds/500m	When you reach the road sign warning of a sharp bend, walk to the right of it, following a path over grass to a metaled track. Continue until you reach a wood.
7.7miles/12.4km	220yds/200m	At the edge of the wood is a fingerpost for Santon Downham Circular Walk. On it is a St Edmund's Way roundel, pointing the way. Go straight ahead, down a narrow woodland path. Continue until you reach a path passing diagonally left and right.

7.9 miles/12.7km	330yds/300m	Turn diagonally right onto a wide track. A low post bears roundels for Circular Walk and St Edmund's Way which point the way. Continue until another track crosses your path
8 miles/12.9km	220yds/200m	Where the other track crosses your path, go straight on. Continue until you reach a bar set over your path.
8.6 miles/13.8km	990yds/900m	Pass to the left of the bar and continue straight on, along a wide earth track. A St Edmund's Way roundel points the way. There is a stables to your right. Continue until you see a narrow path leading off to your right, following the edge of a wood.
8.7 miles/14km	220yds/200m	Take the narrow path leading off to your right. A St Edmund's Way roundel shows the way. This path will become Gas House Drove, a metaled road. Continue until you reach Brandon High Street.
9.8 miles/15.8km	1.1miles/1.8km	Turn right onto Brandon High Street and continue until you are at a level crossing. On the way you will pass the Bridge Hotel and Ram Inn, both of which have accommodation. Details on the book.
10.1miles/16.2km	440yds/400m	Turn right just before the level crossing to reach Brandon Station
10.2miles/16.4km	220yds/200m	Arrive at Brandon railway station.