

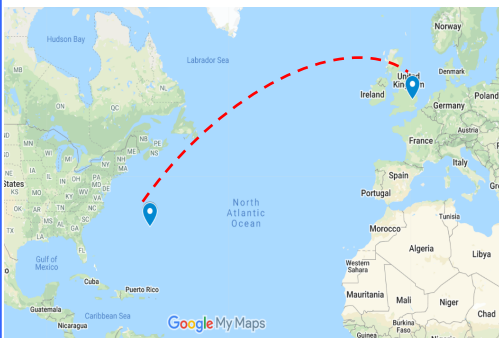
# Eels!

## Learn more about eels & answer some questions!

Sometimes places are named after things found locally. Ely got its name from the old Northumbrian word *ēlgē*, which means 'district of eels' because the marsh land surrounding Ely was filled with eels!

Look at the area around you, your garden, or your street, what is it filled with? What would you name it today?

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Read our 'lifecycle of an eel' sheet on and learn where eels spawn! Look on a map, in an atlas or on Google Maps to find these locations



How long do you think it would take you to swim that far?

How many words containing 'eel' can you think of?

Write or draw the action in the box!



What is the longest, silliest sentence you can think of using lots of 'eel' words?

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Sometimes eels grow to an enormous size! An eel weighing over 20lb was caught near Norwich in 1839. Eels over 5ft long have been recorded in the fens too - that's over 1.5 metres! ! Measure 5ft on the floor or wall and count how many things you would need to fill the space! What will you use? Are they big or small? You could try using pencils, lego bricks or socks!

5ft long



Did you know eels were a valuable source of income in Ely? They were used by the Abbots of Ely to barter & buy things including the stone for the Cathedral! Over 900 years ago in 1086, Stuntney was worth 24,000 eels, Littleport 17,000 eels and the village of Little Thetford was worth 3,250 eels!

Many people in the Fens also believed eels could be used to make people feel better too. The mysterious eel was used in all manner of fenland cures and remedies including believing that;

- Eel blood could make warts disappear.
- Eating eels would keep you young, perhaps even help you live for a hundred years!
  - Eating eels would cure deafness
- Fen ague could be cured by burying an eel skin in the ground with mint, thyme and lavender for the whole summer. It was dug up in the autumn and worn around the painful limb to cure the ache.
  - Eels could even stop a man drinking too much!



Visit our blog to listen to the song 'The Eel Fishers' to learn more about eel cures and design your own cure here!



Eels are no longer caught in the Great River Ouse, due to dwindling stocks and the retirement of our last eel catcher in 2014.

Jellied eels were also popular until recent times, particularly in London. Ely's eels had a great reputation and people would come from London to buy them sell in their shops there.

Local people also used eels to make lots of different recipes with eels including eel pie & eel stew!



What ingredients would you include in your eel pie?  
Draw or write them on the pie!

Learn about how eels were trapped in our blog post & find out more about eel gleeves, grigs and hives!

You can spot the symbol of the eel gleeve in lots of places and on lots of signs throughout Ely - how many can you find on your next walk?



Ely Museum



Eel Festival



Visit Ely



City of Ely coat of arms



Eel gleeve sculpture

In 1931, the Isle of Ely County Council was granted its own coat of arms. It had been using the arms of Diocese of Ely which was adapted to make a new design. A coat of arms uses different colours, shapes and symbols to represent our city. Ely's includes crowns, blue waves to represent the waterways around the Isle of Ely and a gleeve which has caught an eel!

Design your own coat of arms with things that represent you.  
Will it include an eel to represent Ely?

