

Welcome

Kersey is one of the most picturesque villages in East Anglia with mediaeval houses hugging the slopes of a tiny valley both sides of its famous ford, overlooked by an impressive 12th century church.

Kersey is a thriving community, famed for its history of sheep farming and cloth making. It reputedly gave its name to Kersey Cloth, a coarse, ribbed, wool cloth used to clothe workers and sailors. This was a prominent industry in the 14th century, booming until the end of the 16th century, when the industry shifted to Yorkshire. From then on Kersey turned to farming for its wealth.

Today, Kersey's peaceful appearance belies a vibrant community with the characterful 14th century Bell Inn a welcoming venue for visitors and residents. The Bell Inn serves food every day.

The villages' situation in rolling countryside also makes an ideal base for walking. The walks in this leaflet provide very pleasant half days, or combined, a full day's discovery of this fascinating part of Suffolk.



Please follow the Countryside Code:

Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors

Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

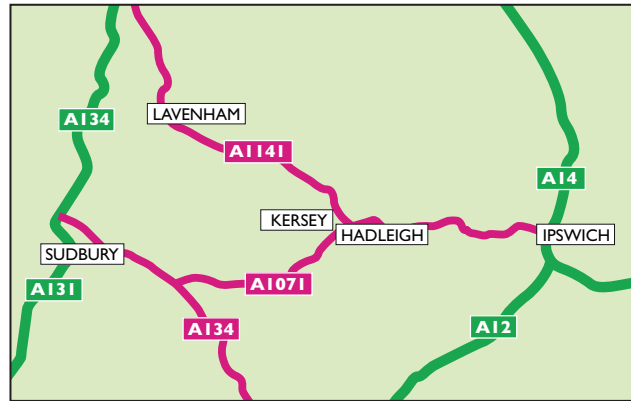
Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home

Keep dogs under effective control

Plan ahead and be prepared

Follow advice and local signs

Location



Kersey is signed off the A1141, off the A1071 Ipswich-Sudbury road, just 3 miles north of Hadleigh. Parking is usually available along the Street by the Splash. Kersey has a public house, the Bell Inn. There are no public lavatories and no shops.

Public Transport

Kersey is served by Connecting Communities - a pre booked service operating within the Babergh area, which can connect you to a bus service for onward travel or may be able take you to your destination. Ring **01473 826242** 9am - 3 pm Monday - Friday to book a journey. (if you want more information <http://hadleigh.org/>)

Use O.S. Explorer Map 196 Sudbury, Hadleigh & Dedham Vale to enjoy this walk and the wider area.

Discover Suffolk

Discover many more walks and great days out in the countryside at www.discoversuffolk.org.uk

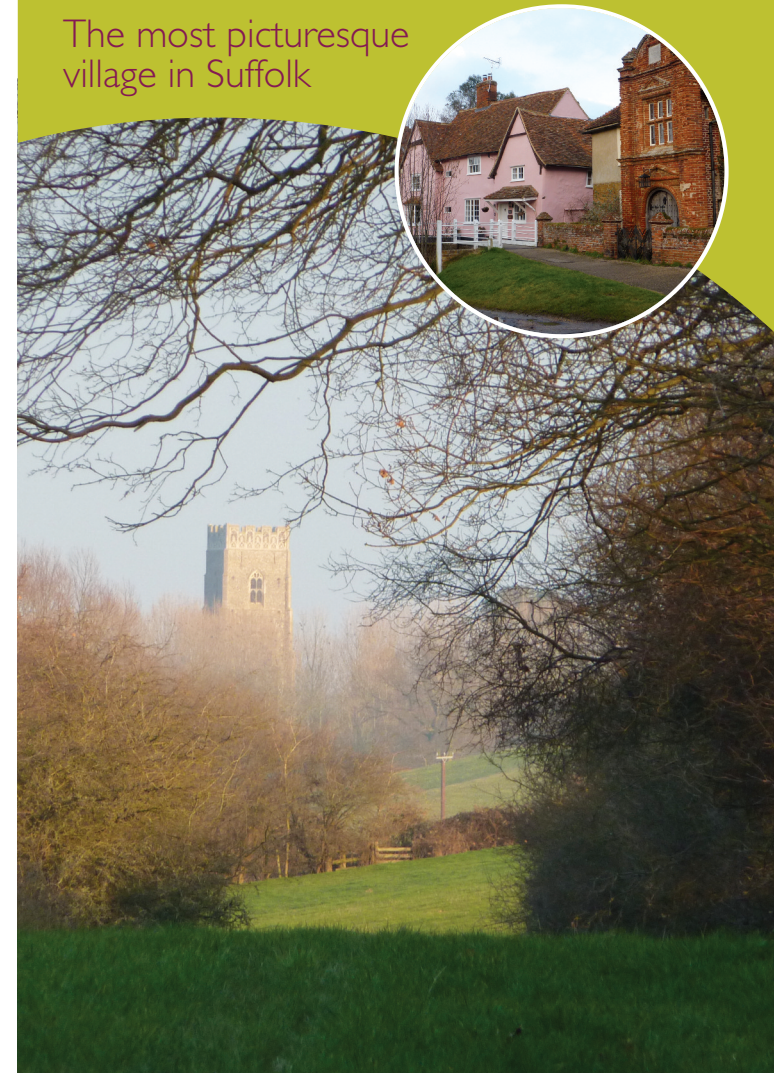
Produced by Suffolk County Council and Kersey Parish Council.



Circular Walks

Kersey Walks

The most picturesque village in Suffolk



The Copse and Tye Route

Distance: 3.5 miles (5.5km)

Duration: 2 hours

Parking: on Church Hill or The Street

Terrain: mainly footpaths and bridleways, wide tracks and cross fields, with some short stretches of road walking

With St Mary's Church behind you make your way up The Street, past the Bell Inn to an impressive view of the village. A bench provides a perfect place to stop ❶.

As with many East Anglian villages, –ey in the name indicates 'island', and with 'Kers' referring to cress, Kersey means 'cress island'. The Kersey Brook regularly flooded a large area to the west of the village yielding commercial quantities of cress. This was harvested and brought into the village on 'kedges', rough handpulled sledges, giving 'Kedges Lane', running just west of The Street, its name. The Kersey Brook was realigned in the late 1900s ending the growing of cress.

Kersey once contained five malt kilns, three forges, three public houses and two communal baking ovens, most

of the flour for which came from gleanings (collected leftover crop after fields had been harvested).

Many of the houses were once two or three cottages. Close to The Splash is 'Kedges End' and from the roof corner hangs a horse's tail, showing where the horse doctor lived. The village shop was at Market House, later moving opposite the Bell Inn. It closed in the 1990s.

Follow the short path behind the bench and turn left on to Priory Hill ❷.

In the 12th century Nesta de Cockfield, a local heiress, gave land north of Kersey for the foundation of an Augustinian Priory. In 1252, The Lord of the Manor gave it the right to hold a weekly market. The priory, after several years in decline, was dissolved in 1444 and its land held by King's College, Cambridge until 1930, by which time the Priory was in ruins. It is now on private land.

Follow Priory Hill to a footpath on your right ❸ and walk alongside fields before turning right ❹ to enter a mixed copse with views of ancient field oaks.

At Semer Road ❺, turn left and then right onto a bridleway, intriguingly known as the Shoulder of Mutton Lane ❻, a lovely walk within an avenue of trees. As you exit the avenue, follow the bridleway, keeping Rushes Farm to your left, to the farm track and the road.

Turn right and almost immediately left at the ivy covered shack ❼ to follow the footpath to the Kersey Brook. Kersey Mill is in the near distance.

Short detour

To visit Kersey Mill bear left along the footpath to reach the road. Turn right. Kersey Mill has a café, shops and services. For more information please visit www.kerseymill.net. **Retrace your steps back to reach ❸ to continue the walk.**

Continue to a small bridge, and cross to head uphill. At Mill Lane ❸ turn right and then left to follow the footpath through Noakes Tye Farm. Leave the farm and a derelict cottage to reach Water Lane ❹. Turn right along the lane and then left along a well walked crossfield path to a tributary of the River Brett.

The River Brett with its source north of Lavenham flows past Kersey and Hadleigh on its journey to meet the River Stour at Higham in the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Keep the river on your left and follow the footpath to Vale Lane to turn right ❿ past housing back to Kersey. The main road reaches a footpath through the church yard for more impressive views of the village.

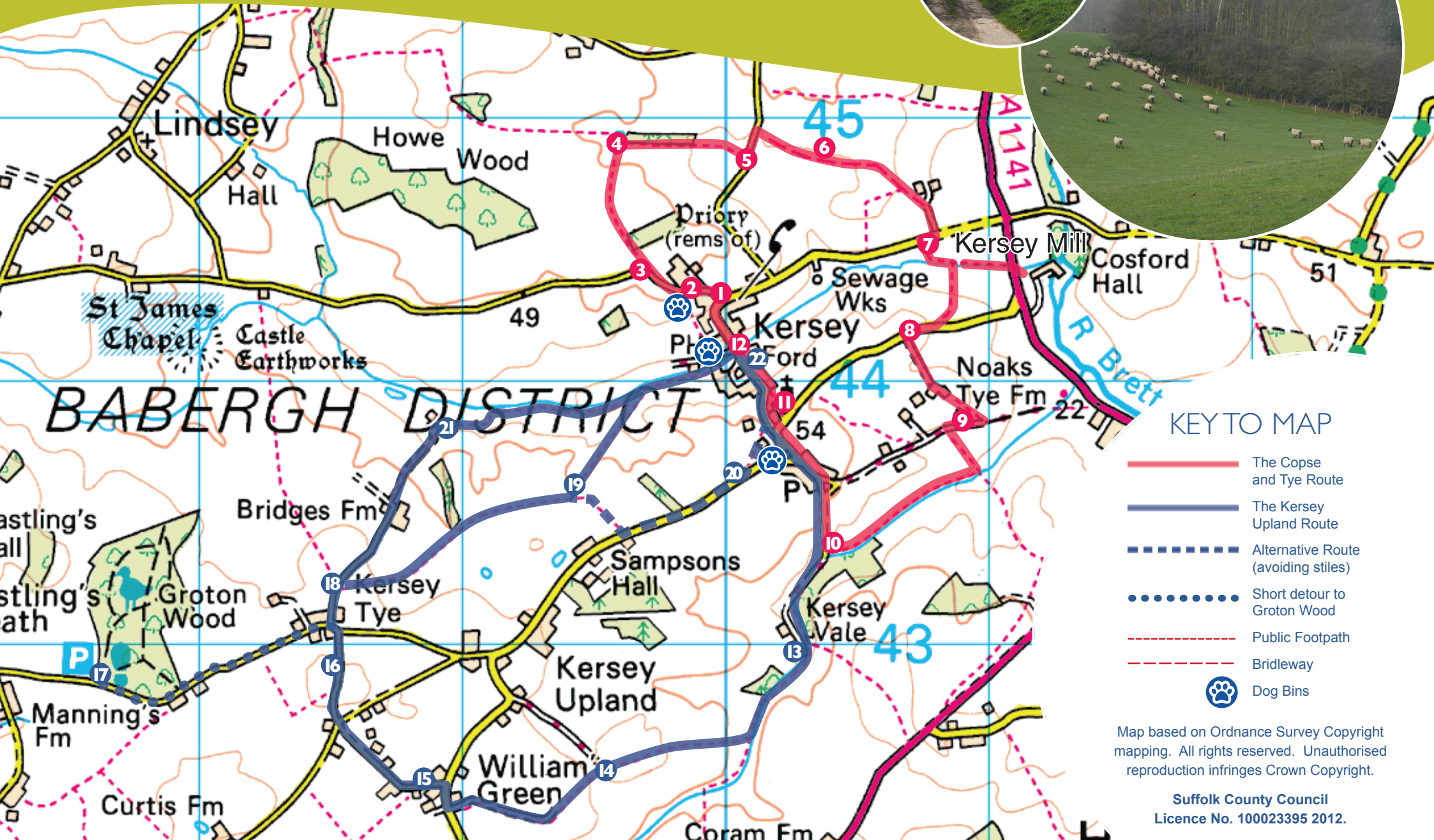
St Mary's Church ❶ stands on the site of a Saxon Church, rebuilt by the Normans in the 12th century. In the 14th century the chancel was enlarged and north aisle added. Work on the tower was halted by the Black Death in 1349. The tower was completed in 1482. Kings College, Cambridge rebuilt the chancel in 1862.

Delicate carvings decorate the south porch, and the nave hammer beam roof is finished with angels. Six panels of the original rood screen, removed at the reformation, were rescued from a local farm. In 1927 the old 12th century font was returned after use as a cottage doorstep! The eight bells, the first from 1576, are rung regularly. St Mary's shrine was a focus of pilgrimage before being destroyed in the 17th century. Kersey Shrine was re-hallowed in 2020 and is again a place of pilgrimage where you can find peace, wonder and inspiration.



Kersey Walks

The most picturesque village in Suffolk



KEY TO MAP

- The Cope and Tye Route
- The Kersey Upland Route
- Alternative Route (avoiding stiles)
- Short detour to Groton Wood
- Public Footpath
- Bridleway
- Dog Bins

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The Kersey Upland Route

Distance: 4.5 miles (7.0km)

Duration: 3 hours

Terrain: footpaths and bridleways with some short stretches of road walking

Parking: on Church Hill or The Street

Go through St Mary's Church 11 churchyard to Mill Lane and follow this to Vale Lane and the valley floor 10.

The lane leads to Kersey Vale 13. Immediately before the last house, follow the footpath left over the stream and turn right to follow the stream. Steps recross the stream and then follow the grassy path to a crossfield path.

Like much of southwest Suffolk, Kersey has loamy soils with steep slopes, giving it a long history of arable farming, shaping the local landscape and influencing the character of villages.



The Bell Inn, close by the Splash, has been here in various forms since the middle ages, and preserves many of the architectural features from that time. A wide selection of food and drink are available at lunchtime and in the evening, every day.

It is greatly valued by locals and visitors (tel: 01473 823 229)

The valley, in which Kersey sits, has good fall, meaning its rivers are excellent for water mills allowing fulling, a process whereby wool is cleaned of its oils.

Follow the crossfield path and wide path (keep the hedge on your right), to Culphs Lane 14. Turn left, following the path through a gap in the hedgerow, alongside another field to a small, narrow copse.

The landscape here is closely connected to the history of land ownership. At the time of the Norman Conquests large woodlands in north Suffolk were in common ownership and over the years these became lost to browsing, eventually becoming large commons. In this area, woodlands were privately owned and were protected, leaving today a number of ancient woodlands, such as Groton Wood.

Exiting the copse, turn right to follow the track to William's Green. A tower mill stood at William's Green until 1907. Turn right and left along the country lane. Look out for the oak commemorating the coronation of King George VI 15.

Past Uplands Farm, cross the junction. At a mere 71 meters above sea level this is the highest point on the walk! 16

Short detour

At Kersey Tye you can detour (1 mile round trip) to Groton Wood 17. Simply continue past the dead end lane on your right to the wood.

This ancient woodland is a small remnant of larger prehistoric woods. Note the many wild cherry trees; this is one of the few locations in Suffolk where you can still see this species.

Taking the dead end road you reach a junction of paths 18. Here you have 2 options; a high route or a low route.

For the high route, turn right and follow the yellow waymarkers across and alongside fields to a junction with a farm track, then up a gentle rise to views of St Marys Church. At the electricity poles 19 cross a stile to follow the line of poles (and more stiles) to return to the valley floor. Here, simply follow the path right, over another stile, to return to Kersey.

You can avoid stiles (and cattle in the field), by carrying on past the electricity poles to the road, turning left and left again to a footpath 20 to return to Kersey by St Marys Church.

The low route stays on the track, through Bridges Farm to the valley floor 21, where, with views of St Mary's Church, you follow a gently flowing stream and cross a series of stiles to return to Kersey.

'Kersey Within Living Memory' is a fascinating narrative of village life in Kersey told by its older inhabitants. Compiled by Anne Maltby it can be read at <http://kerseymemories.wordpress.com>.

