

Tour 2

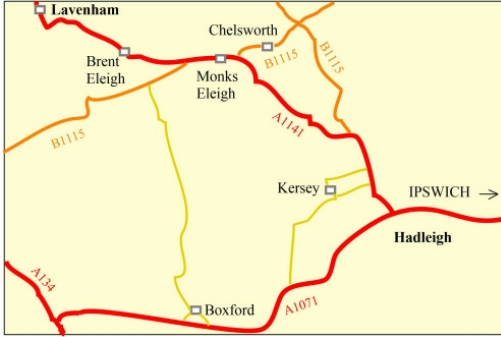
SUFFOLK VILLAGES



Monks Eleigh



Only a short drive north of London, along the border between Suffolk and Essex are a string of villages which are seemingly cut off from the hectic world around them. With colourful rustic cottages, ancient stone churches and trickling streams they epitomise the idyllic English village. This tour which could be done by car or bike visits five of these hidden gems nestling south of timber framed Lavenham.



This little corner of Suffolk grew rich on the back of the Medieval wool trade. The timber framed homes of wealthy merchants still line once busy streets which now are peaceful lanes, some houses dating back over five hundred years. Lavenham is a must to visit and is worthy of a tour on its own. It also makes a good starting point to tour the five villages which I visited in September 2010, some parts of which you will probably recognise from TV and film.

To find the villages using Google Maps/ Street View or your sat nav just enter the postcodes listed under each title. Please note that the houses are all private so please respect owners privacy.

BRENT ELEIGH, CO10 9NS.

A string of interesting buildings along the old main road starting with the wonderful oak framed and brick infill house at the junction with Hall Road (right). At the top of Hall Road is the old 14th century church which has some excellent wall paintings some dating back to the foundation of the church.



Along the main street is High Bank with plaster covering a timber framed Medieval hall which could date back 600 -700 years (left). Next to it is Colman's Almshouses, a symmetrical, two storey row dating from 1731 which is unusually grand for this type of building.



MONKS ELEIGH, IP7 7JE.

Monks Eleigh's idyllic village green headed by St Peter's Church and lined by colourful old cottages is a must to visit. Many of the houses around it date from 16th - 18th century although they have been plastered over, as was the local fashion, so their timber framed structure is hidden from view.

Not only is there variety in the shape of the houses but also in the roofs with traditional thatch interspersed with clay tiles, slate and pantiles. The cheerful colours they have been painted completes this attractive scene. Although the



whites, pinks and yellows which are so characteristic of this county's cottages seem traditional there is surprisingly little evidence to prove that they were always coloured this way. Old paintings show most were either limewashed over or left in a natural state. If they were painted then pink was the colour most associated with Suffolk, originally it was made from bull's blood but later red ochre was used. Yellow ochre was also a popular colour. Bright yellows, pale blues and greens and black painted timbers are all Victorian or 20th century fashions.



CHELSWORTH, IP7 7HU.

A string of attractive cottages set along the B1115 just a mile east of Monks Eleigh. The scene pictured here is centred on the Peacock Inn with the old medieval church and 17th century Grange just out of sight at the far end of this view.

**KERSEY,
IP7 6DY.**

Kersey is set in a little valley so the buildings can be viewed from the church on the hill above. The rustic and colourful timber framed and brick cottages line the main street which runs down to cross the River Brett via an ancient ford. Although we would term most of the buildings in these views 'cottages' they were originally built as houses, inns and farms for locals who had made money out of the wool trade. They would have been quite insulted if you called their home a 'cottage'!





St Mary's Church on top of the hill is worth the walk up to it, not only for the view but also its architecture. I particularly liked this porch (above) set against the plain nave walls. The striking effect of setting knapped flints into a framework of stone is known as 'flushwork' and this is an excellent example of the patterns which could be created.

River House at the bottom of the hill is a timber framed house with parts dating back to the 15th century. This section was faced in brick and this rather grand porch dating from the mid 16th century added to emphasize the importance of the house.



BOXFORD, CO10 5DX.

A large village packed with cottages and houses of all shapes and sizes. St Mary's Church by the river is notable for its porches, the one the the north is a very early timber framed example, the one on the south a grand perpendicular design dating from the mid 15th century (page 6). The church tower which dominates this village scene has a dainty looking spirelet on top although this was a Victorian addition .



If you would like to discover more about Suffolk's villages and cottages then take a look at my books ***The East Anglian Cottage*** (£6.95) and ***The English Village Explained*** (currently out of stock but available second hand or in Kindle version) which are available from Amazon, my publisher's website www.countrysidebooks.co.uk and your local bookshop.

