Long Melford

Long Melford offers rich pickings for all the family seeking the perfect day out. Whether you fancy taking part in a re-enactment at Kentwell Hall or visiting the National Trust's Melford Hall; a meander through the antique shops, Lovejoy-style; savouring the culinary delights of some of the best restaurants for miles; or perhaps a spot of seriously indulgent retail therapy in its fabulous selection of independent boutiques, stylish and sophisticated Long Melford is the envy of East Anglia. With a wide range of accommodation including hotels, bed-and-breakfasts, guesthouses and campsites, Long Melford is an excellent place to make a holiday of it and explore Suffolk Wool Towns in style.

The walk:

This walk takes you out of town along Bull Lane to a bridleway where you join the grassy Melford Walk, once a railway line that carried passengers between Sudbury and Bury St Edmunds. The walk returns through the centre of town before heading up to the magnificent Holy Trinity Church, following a section of the long distance footpath – the Stour Valley Path – through open fields to the impressive Kentwell Hall, and returns past the picturesque turrets of Melford Hall. Most of the buildings in Long Melford date from the 15th and 16th centuries when the cloth industry was at its height, but this is not always obvious as the timber framing on many of them has been covered by a later brick or plaster facade.

❶ Bull Inn (east side of Hall Street)

This has been an inn since at least the 16th century (possibly earlier) and in 1532, following the death of the owner, John Chester, Mayor of Sudbury, the building was sold to George Ray, a clothmaker.

❷ Brook House (opposite Bull Inn)

This was built during the late 15th century and in 1495 was the White Hart Inn. It was owned by John Barker, a wealthy cloth merchant who also owned a dyehouse (where the raw wool or cloth was dyed) which stood in the field behind the inn. Both these buildings stood either side of the late mediaeval market place. The earlier market place was at the south end of the village on Chapel Green which, as early as 1441, had become known as the 'Oldmarket'.

❸ Cocoa-nut House (west side of Hall Street)

This mediaeval timber framed building with its characteristic central hall and two crosswings (now divided into several shops) is believed to date from the late 14th century and in

1441 was occupied by John Dyster, a weaver. The brick façade with the name Cocoa-nut House and date 1881 was added in the 19th century when the building formed part of an industrial site where coconut fibres were woven into matting.

❹ Melford Place

This stood opposite Chapel Green and was the home of the Martyn family who were closely involved in the mediaeval broadcloth industry and who built the Martyn Chapel in the church. They remained Catholic after the Reformation and built a private chapel at Melford Place, which still survives.

❺ Kings Farmhouse (east side of Hall Street)

This mediaeval building was the home in the late 17th century of John King, a wealthy sayweaver who employed a number of people in his workshops behind the building. Says were a lighter and cheaper type of cloth which became important in the 16th and 17th centuries after the earlier woollen broadcloth industry had collapsed.

❻ Holy Trinity Church (top of Melford Green)

The church was rebuilt in the second half of the 15th century and was funded mainly by bequests from local people who had become wealthy as a result of the cloth industry, and from the Clopton family at Kentwell Hall. The names of many of the donors are inscribed around the outside of the building.

Trail Details

Distance: 7½ km / 4½ miles
Duration: 2-3 hours
Parking: Anywhere along Hall Street or opposite Melford Hall

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

500 metres
500 yards

Kentwell Hall

Stour Valley Path

HIGH STREET

A1092

A134

A1092 WESTGATE STREET

Melford Green

Melford Hall

SCHOOL LANE

BULL LANE

KING'S LANE

HALL ST

Melford Walk (former railway line)

River Stour

LISTON LANE

ROMAN ROAD

A134