

# Welcome

The name Livermere was first recorded in 907AD and may derive from a pre-7th century Olde English word 'laefor-mere', which means the lake where rushes grew: rushes were once widely used for roofing, flooring and heating. It is recorded in the Domesday Book with a fishery, a horse, 3 cattle, 3 pigs, 100 sheep and a population of 52 households which placed it in the largest 20% of settlements at the time. Other derivations of the name suggest a coagulated lake from old English "lifrig" (clotted).

Today, it is a relaxed, quiet village with a fascinating history and surprising links to some famous people. At its heart is the War Memorial, a village sign, and a 12th century medieval thatched church, St Peter's, with its distinctive weather-boarded belfry. The church is open every day.

Great Livermere is one of several villages edging Ampton Water, located on the southern edge of The Brecks, a landscape characterised by loose sandy soils and belts of pine trees. The various walks in this leaflet will take you over open waters, through old woodlands and across wide fields.

The walks in this leaflet can also be linked to Troston Walks and Ixworth Walks, 2 other leaflets in the Discover Suffolk series of walk guides.

Please note, there are no pubs or facilities in Great Livermere.

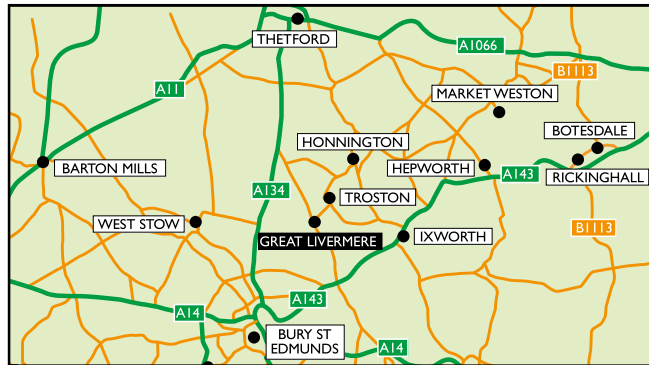
All walks start from Church Road (IP31 1JS) ❶, but there is optional parking at ❸ on the grass at the Village Hall on Troston Road (IP21 1JL)

## Please follow the Countryside Code:

- ✓ Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors.
- ✓ Leave gates and property as you would find them and follow paths.
- ✓ 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



## Directions

Great Livermere is situated just south of RAF Honington and approximately 4 miles (6km) north-east of Bury St Edmunds and 3.5 miles (5km) north-west of Ixworth. An approximate post code for a parking area by the war memorial and village sign is IP31 1JS. All walks start at the War Memorial.

## Public Transport

Great Livermere is served by bus service 332 which runs between Bury St Edmunds and Thetford.

Visit [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com) for timetables and [www.travelineeastanglia.org.uk](http://www.travelineeastanglia.org.uk). (0871 200 2233) to plan your journey.

## OS Explorer Map

Use O.S. Explorer Map 229 Thetford Forest and The Brecks 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](http://www.discoversuffolk.org.uk). Follow us on:



Produced by Great Livermere Parish Council and Suffolk County Council.



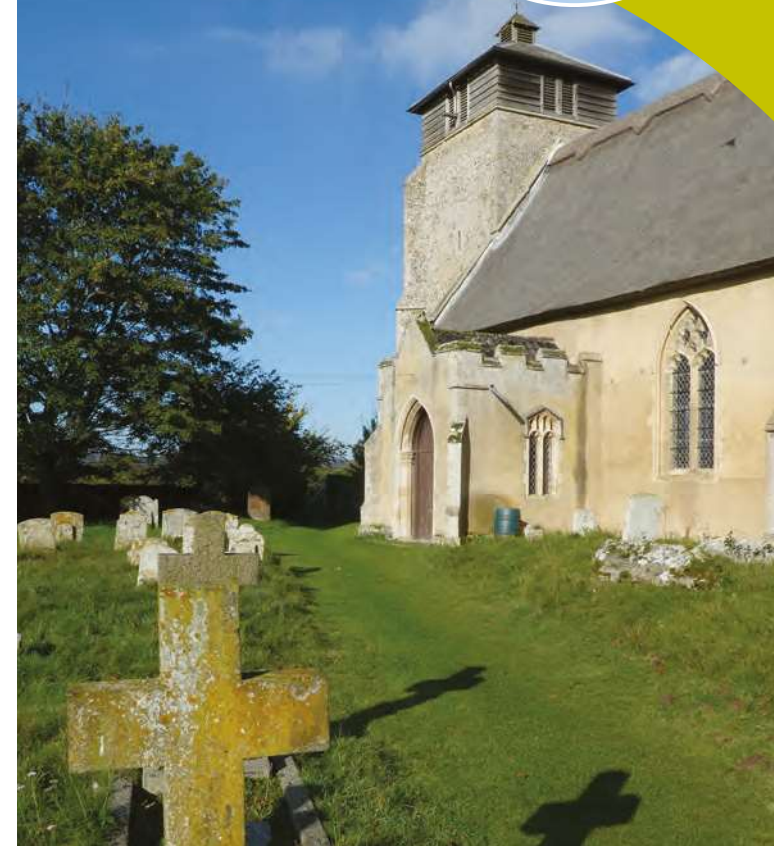
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## Circular Walks

# Great Livermere Walks

## Two Mere Strolls





# A Mere View

**DISTANCE:** Approx. 3 miles (4.5 km)

**DURATION:** 1.5 hours

**TERRAIN:** Estate tracks,  
grassy footpaths, woodland  
paths, some road walking.  
Gently undulating, easy walking.



Park in Church Road ❶ near the War Memorial. Follow the tree-lined lane away from the Memorial, to reach St Peter's Church through the white gate.

St Peter's Church is a beautiful 12th century thatched church topped by a weather-boarded belfry. The walls are 13th Century. The tower was once topped with a cupola, but the upper stage fell during a storm. The interior is full of light creating a feeling of spaciousness. There are some surviving 13th and 14th century medieval wall paintings, and a three-decker pulpit dating from 1703.



At the west end is a hanging sign depicting a falcon. The sign records an inscription on a barely legible headstone just right of the south door. This is the grave of William Sakings, the forkner (falconer) to King Charles I, King Charles II and King James II. He lived in a cottage that once stood near the War Memorial.

There is also a memorial to Montague Rhodes James. Once Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University and Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, M.R. James became famous as creator of the antiquarian ghost story, so called because there would always be an antiquarian object that unlocked a supernatural menace. He changed the genre of ghost writing away from Gothic and published 4 series of stories, some of which were based in Great Livermere where he lived when his father was Rector.

Exit through the white latch gate ❷ and turn left and continue to the main track, with the Lodge gates on the left. At the track turn right and follow it into the Great Livermere Estate to cross a bridge over Broad Water ❸.

Beside you is an area of rough scrub and a site of special scientific interest that represents what "The Brecks" were originally like, before sheep farming took hold in the 15th Century. Today this area has one of the lowest rainfalls in Britain.



In the 1740s Baptist Lee of Livermere and Lord Calthorpe Esq of Ampton joined their parks by developing a serpentine 'Long Water' to link Broad Water and Ampton Water. Lee used some of his £30,000 won in a state lottery in 1733. The work was carried out by Irish Navvies during the expansion of the canal system when labour was plentiful. In 1767 Arthur Young described it as "with a harmony very unusual, made a noble serpentine river through both parks and built a handsome bridge at their joint expense". The co-operation between these two estates was the first of its kind in the country!

Follow the track, rising gently beside large fields to Oak Grove ❹ on your left, the site of Livermere Hall.

Livermere Hall was built by Nathaniel Bacon in the 16th century, improved by the architect Samuel Wyatt in the 1790s, but demolished in 1928 as the family who bought the estate in 1919 considered Ampton Hall 'more commodious'.

Look back for views of Broad Water and the ruin of St Peter's Church, Little Livermere. Last used in 1947, it served the village which was depopulated when a deer park was formed in 1740s. The park was ploughed up in the 1930s. The upper stage of the tower is a folly, added to improve views following recommendations by the famous landscaper Humphrey Repton in 1792.



Continue along the track for about 150m and at the waymarker post turn left ❺. During the gaming season there can be shooting parties on these fields and over the waters. Continue across the field to the lower right corner and carefully cross the 'pier' over Ampton Water ❻.

Continued overleaf....



# Great Livermere Walks

## A Mere View





Continued from overleaf

The mere was once a thriving heronry and herons can still be spotted fishing the waters.

To your right is Ampton Hall, a Grade II listed Jacobean style manor, rebuilt after a disastrous fire in 1885 with gardens designed by Capability Brown. In 1805, the Hall was the birthplace of Robert Fitzroy, fourth great grandson of Charles II. At just 23, he became the captain of The Beagle. Commanding a ship could be a lonely experience; several former captains had committed suicide. Having had a series of unsatisfactory botanists on board previous voyages, he selected Charles Darwin as his companion on a 5-year voyage to South America. The rest is history!

Robert Fitzroy later became the second Governor of New Zealand and then established the forerunner of the Meteorological Office, developing a system to forecasting the weather to safeguard fishing fleets from oncoming storms. Fitzroy's name remains as part of the shipping forecast – a system to forecast the weather, and his biography is a fascinating read!



After the pier, follow the footpath veering right into woods. As the footpath narrows, bear left to pass along a wire fence. Continue along the narrow path until you emerge from the woods and continue to the Bury Road. Turn left and carefully follow the road 7 back to Great Livermere.

Just before the village, by the left bend 8 you can start the Green Walk Spinneys and Coverts. Otherwise continue on this walk to reach The Old Forge 9. This was effectively the service station of the pre-motor age. During the First World War cavalry billeted in the village had their horses shod here.

Opposite the forge was the cow pound, where stray animals were herded up and held.

Continue back along The Street, past the telephone box library and bus shelter to the War Memorial and parking area 1.

## Spinneys and Coverts

**DISTANCE:** Approx. 3 miles (4.5 km)

**DURATION:** 1.5 hours



Park in Church Road 1 near the War Memorial and walk up The Street past the Memorial.

At the T-junction bear right along Bury Road passing the Old Forge on the left 9 towards the bend in the road to 8.

Turn left onto a wide grassy track that runs between fields and gently uphill. This ends at a T-junction of paths. Turn left and follow this path along a tree belt to Brand Road 1. Turn left.

Continue down Brand Road towards Great Livermere, passing Claypit Spinney on your right. Before reaching the village you reach a Restricted Byway 2. Turn right and follow the path for approximately 300 metres and then turn left onto the footpath leading to Callowhill Covert, which was planted in the middle of the 19th century.

At the corner of Callowhill Covert continue ahead keeping the covert on your left. Walk towards the Village Hall and Troston Road 3.

**The Village Hall was built by the 20th century version of "crowd funding"; a joint venture between Troston and Livermere Parish Councils. Completed in 1935, it is in memory of Mr J Crystall, the Estates Manager for the village.**

**The field opposite the Village Hall to the side of the path is called the 'stackyard'. This was where haystacks and strawstacks were built when the village had a dairy herd. Dairy farming, continuous since Domesday, finished in the village in the mid 1980s. Oral history records that in the Second World War, a fighter pilot returning to RAF Honington, crashed into the field on the right.**

Turn left and follow the pavement towards the village. Before the first house turn right on to path behind gardens to a gap 4.

Turn left through the gap and keep to the right side of the recreation field to exit at a metal post.

The playground was the idea of the Reverend Henry James, father to MR James, and Rector of the village, who campaigned for better welfare for children in the 1880s and advocated outdoor exercise for healthy minds.

Follow the track ahead to reach The Street. Turn right, and after the paddock, left on to a footpath towards St Peter's Church which is worth a visit! 5.

**On your right is the site of the old reading room and Almshouses built by Baptist Lee in the 1760s to rehouse poor widows displaced when the park was enclosed. The Almshouses were pulled down in the 1960s to make way for the present houses.**

You'll soon return to St Peter's Church, Church Road and the parking area 1.

**St Mary's Church in Troston is worth a detour. At the Village Hall 3 turn right onto Troston/Livermere Road and continue, being careful of the traffic. Walk into Troston. At the village sign turn right into Ixworth Road, then left into Church Lane. The church is a short distance on the left a.**

**To return: retrace your steps to the War Memorial along Troston Road passing the Village Hall 3 and back to Church Road and the parking area in Great Livermere 1.**

