

1. Parish: Semer

Meaning: The Lake

2. **Hundred:** Cosford

Deanery: Sudbury (–1864), Sudbury (Eastern) (1864–1884),
Hadleigh (1864–)

Union: Cosford

RDC/UDC: (W. Suffolk) Cosford R.D. (–1974), Babergh D.C. (1974–)

Other administrative details:

Civil boundary changes 1883, 1885, 1935, Rationalisation
of boundary with Whatfield 1885,
gains part of Kersey and Whatfield 1935
Hadleigh Petty Sessional Division and County Court
District

3. **Area:** 1,235 acres land, 7 acres water (1912)

4. **Soils:**

Mixed: a. Slowly permeable calcareous/non calcareous clay
soils.
b. Deep well drained fine loam, coarse loam and sandy
soils, locally flinty and in places over gravel. Slight risk
water erosion.

5. **Types of farming:**

1086		1 mill, 11 acres meadow, 2 cobs, 16 cattle, 97 sheep, 24 pigs
1500–1640	Thirsk:	Wood-pasture region, mainly pasture, meadow, engaged in rearing and dairying with some pig-keeping, horse breeding and poultry. Crops mainly barley with some wheat, rye, oats, peas, vetches, hops and occasionally hemp.
1818	Marshall:	Course of crops varies usually including summer fallow as preparation for corn products.
1937	Main crops:	Wheat, barley
1969	Trist:	More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet

6. **Enclosure:**

7. Settlement:

1973/78 River Brett flows across parish from NW–S forming parts of northern and eastern boundaries for part of its length. extremely small development at Semer mere and church and settlement of similar size at Ash Street. Scattered farms.

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 27, 1801 – 41, 1851 – 51,
1871 – 57, 1901 – 40, 1951 – 52,
1981 – 50

8. Communications:

Road: To Nedging and Naughton, Whatfield, Hadleigh, Kersey, Lindsey and Chelsworth

Rail: 1891 Carriers pass through to Hadleigh daily
1891 3 miles Hadleigh station: Bentley–Hadleigh line opened 1847, closed for passengers 1932, closed for goods 1965

Water: River Brett

9. Population:

1086 – 21 recorded
1327 – 13 taxpayers paid
1524 – 17 taxpayers paid
1603 – 70 adults
1674 – 27 households
1676 – not recorded
1801 – 203 inhabitants
1831 – 429 inhabitants
1851 – 558 inhabitants
1871 – 414 inhabitants
1901 – 274 inhabitants
1931 – 149 inhabitants
1951 – 169 inhabitants
1971 – 144 inhabitants
1981 – 146 inhabitants

10. Benefice: Rectory

1254 Valued £9 6s. 8d.
1291 Valued £11 6s. 8d.
1535 Valued £11 7s. 1d.
1831 1 curate, stipend £80 p.a. Glebe house. Gross income £387 p.a.
Incumbent also holds Rectory at Bromeswell
Rent charge of £370 p.a. in lieu of tithes 1844

1891 Commodious residence overlooking River Brett 1844
66 acres 3R 39P glebe
1912 Nett income £250 p.a. 64 acres glebe. Residence is
former manor house.

Patrons: Sir John Heigham (1603), C. Cooke (1831), Rev. J.Y. Cooke
(1873), Mrs. Ball (1912)

11. Church All Saints

(Chancel, nave, vestry, S. Porch, W. tower)

1086 Church + 30 acres land, 1 acre meadow, 1 plough
13th cent. Main structure
1873 Chancel rebuilt, vestry and new pulpit added
1899 S. porch rebuilt, reseated and chancel screen added

Seats: 8 pews appropriated, 35 free (1873)

Chapel: at Cosford Union Workhouse built 1859

12. Nonconformity etc:

1593 2 persons negligent in receiving communion
1611/1627 1 person negligent in attending church and receiving
Communion
Congregational chapel built 1877

13. Manorial:

1066/1086 Manor of 3½ carucates belonging to Abbot of St.
Edmunds
1542 Sir Clement Heigham owns (linked to Nedging, Moulton,
Wickhambrook and Wattisfield)
c.1570 John Bronde/Brand owns (linked to Thorpe Morieux,
Polstead, Edwardstone, Great Cornard, Bures and
Boxford)
1764 Rev. Thomas Cook owns
1896 Rev. Francis J. Eld owns

14. Markets/Fairs:

15. Real property:

1844 £1,718 rental value
1891 £1,732 rateable value
1912 £1,163 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844 J.C. Archer and Rev. J.Y. Cooke, principal owners
1891 E.J. Archer and E.H. Hardwick, principal owners
1912 W.J. Salmon, C.J. Grimwade and W.J. Gay, principal owners

17. Resident gentry:

Benjamin Bruming 1679
1844 Rev. J. Young Cooke MA

18. Occupations:

1550–1599 2 husbandmen, 1 parson, 1 weaver
1600–1649 7 yeomen, 4 husbandmen, 1 labourer, 1 wire drawer, 1 wheelwright, 1 brickmaker
1650–1699 9 yeomen, 1 labourer, 1 miller, 1 clerk, 1 broad weaver
1831 51 in agriculture, 9 in retail trade, 3 professionals, 1 in labouring, 14 in domestic service, 3 others
1844 Corn miller, wheelwright/carpenter, staff of Cosford Workhouse, blacksmith, 6 farmers
1912 Sub-postmaster, officers of Cosford Union workhouse, schoolmistress, prep-school owner, 5 farmers, wheelwright/blacksmith, carpenter

19. Education:

1818 1 Sunday school (25 attend)
1833 1 Sunday school (20 attend)
School built 1871/99 50 attend 1891, average attendance 1912 27
Preparatory school for boys (Semer House School) 1912
Children attend school in Hadleigh 1951

20. Poor relief:

1776 £36 5s. 2.
1803 £53 10s. 7d.
1818 £439 1s.
1830 £492 4s.
1832 £672 16s.
1834 £512 2s.

21. Charities:

Doles: 1607 by John Goodall: Rent charge of 20s. p.a. Applied to the poor. Interest on £20 p.a. 1840 applied to purchase of bread for poor.

22. Other institutions:

Stok of the Guild £3. 1524. Guild of Mary Magdalen 1546

Cosford Union Workhouse: built 1780 as House of Industry to accommodate 500 inmates. Hold 165 inmates 1811, 150 in 1843, 180 in 1871, dropping to 131 by 1881.
Hospital for infectious diseases built 1870, chapel built 1859
Dismantled except for laundry and part of hospital building 1928.
Later converted to dwellings 20th cent. Remaining inmates transferred to Tattingstone.

Parish Hall presented by Mr. & Mrs. Letts 1923

23. Recreation:

24. Personal:

25. Other information:

Village known to have contained 'safe' warehouse used to store contraband tea by smugglers known as the 'Hadleigh Gang' c.1745.

Rental and survey of manor c.1500.

Semer Wood extends to 28 acres 1974.

'Short History of Semer' (typescript) in parish folder.

Believe the cellarer of St. Edmunds abbey used income from manor (£6) to purchase wines 1086.

Income later applied to upkeep of Priory at Kersey c.12th cent.

Parish troubled by flooding.

Parish has no mains water or electricity 1951.