1. **Parish:** Clare

   **Meaning:** Gentle/bright or clayey slope

2. **Hundred:** Risbridge

   **Deanery:** Clare

   **Union:** Risbridge

   **RDC/UDC:** Clare Borough (status not sustained), (W Suffolk), Clare RD (–1974), St Edmundsbury DC (1974—)

**Other administrative details:**

Civil boundary change 1884
Risbridge Petty Sessional Division
Haverhill County Court District

3. **Area:** 2,275 acres land, 10 acres water (1912)

4. **Soils:**

   **Mixed:**
   
   a. Slowly permeable calcareous clay soils, some slowly permeable non calcareous clay soils, slight risk water erosion.
   
   b. Deep well drained fine loam over clay, coarse loam over clay and fine loam soils, some with calcareous clay sub-soils.
   
   c. Stoneless mainly calcareous clay soils affected by ground water, risk of flooding close to river.

5. **Types of farming:**

   1086  
   43 acres meadow, wood for 12 pigs, 1 mill,  
   5 arpents of vines, 6 cobs, 14 cattle, 60 pigs,  
   480 sheep, 12 beehives

   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, beans, barley, oats, roots

   1969 **Trist:** More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet

6. **Enclosure:**
7. Settlement:


Clare was originally regulated by rivers, streams and ditches to south, east and west, the wet lands associated with which probably influenced the course of development.


8. Communications:

Roads: To Cavendish, Stoke by Clare, Poslingford, Kedington and Ovington.

1844: Coaches to London daily except Sunday
Carriers to London on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
to Bury St Edmunds, Colchester, Nayland,
Sudbury and Haverhill on Tuesday and Thursday
to Ipswich and Lavenham on Wednesday
to Linton on Monday, Wednesday and Friday
to Wickhambrook and Haverhill

1891: Carriers by railway and to Sudbury on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

1912: Carriers by rail and road to Denston, Stansfield and Wickhambrook on Friday
to Sudbury by road on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

Rail: 1891  Rail station. Haverhill–Sudbury line, opened 1865,
Closed for goods 1966, closed for passengers 1967
Clare station – country park centre 1977

Last barge travelled as far as Dedham 1928

9. Population:

1086 – 128 recorded
1327 – 25 taxpayers paid £2 19s.
1524 – 80 taxpayers paid £14 5s. 6d. (includes 13 from Chilton hamlet paying
12s. 10d.)
1603 – 380 adults
1674 – 194 households (includes Wixoe and Chilton Street)
1676 – 800 adults
1801 – 1,033 inhabitants
1831 – 1,619 inhabitants
1851 – 1,769 inhabitants
1871 – 1,887 inhabitants
1901 – 1,582 inhabitants
1931 – 1,252 inhabitants
1951 – 1,320 inhabitants
1971 – 1,675 inhabitants
1981 – 1,951 inhabitants

10. Benefice: **Vicarage 1831, Discharged Vicarage 1844**

1254  
Valued £20  
Portion to Prior of Stoke (by Clare) £1  
Portion to Vicar £5  
Portion to Archdeacon of Sudbury £6 13s. 4d.  £32 13s. 4d.

1291  
Valued £20  
To Vicar £5 6s. 8d.  
Pension of Prior of Stoke £1  £26 6s. 8d.

1535  
Valued £4 18s. 9d.

1603  
Tithe to be let yearly at 3 score and 10 pounds. Bishop of Ely Having £50 and William Weekes has £20. Vicarage worth £20 p.a.

1831  
Value £195 1835  
Value £245 1873

1891  
Vicarial tithes commuted for £237 p.a. Great tithes commuted for £343

1912  
Net value £200 + 32 acres glebe and residence

Patrons:  
Crown (1603–), Duchy of Lancaster (1873)

11. Church: **Saints Peter and Paul**  
(Chancel, nave of 6 bays with clerestory, N & S aisles, N vestry, N & S porches, S chapel, W tower)

C.1250  
Church said to have been erected by Richard de Clare  
13th cent.  
Lower part of tower

C.1380  
S porch (vaulted chamber above, vaulted bone house or ossuary beneath) and chapel

C.1460  
Nave and chancel rebuilt, aisles widened

1476  
Rood loft being built

15th cent.  
Upper portion of tower

1603  
Chancel has fallen down

1617  
Chancel virtually rebuilt

1643  
Puritanical vandals (William Dowsing) destroyed 1,000 Superstitious pictures, ordered 12 apostles on roof and 20 cherubim and the sun and moon in E window to be taken down

1834/36,  
1876, 1898,  
1885  
Restorations
1898  Tower restored

Seats: 426 appropriated, 1,004 free (1873)

11a. Other Religious Institutions:

Alien Priory in Clare Castle:

St John Baptist

Collegiate church in Castle of Clare, given to Benedictine Abbey of St Mary at Bec, Normandy 1090 by Gilbert de Clare
Founded by Earl Alfric c. 1045
Transferred to Stoke by Clare 1124

Priory

Founded by Richard de Clare, Earl of Clare, Gloucester and Hertford for canons of St Augustine 1248. Believed 1st house of Austin Friars in England.
29 friars 1296/97
Burial place of John of Acre (daughter of Edward I)
Cell of St Peter’s, Westminster 1395/96
Chapter house built by Elizabeth de Burgh between 1310 and 1314
Church consecrated 1338, consisted of chancel of 6 bays, S chapel, S vestry, central tower, nave of 6 bays and N aisle
Converted to college consisting of dean and secular canons 1419/20
Dissolved 1538 valued £324 4s. 1d.
Restored to Austin Friars 1953

Free Chapel/Chapel of St. Mary Magdelene, Chilton

Granted to Guild of St John Baptist, in Chilton by Richard, Duke of York 1444 (¼ mile from parish church)
Yearly value £1 6s. 4d. 1546. Priests stipend £1 4s. 8d.
Grant made of dissolved chapel to Thomas Marsh 1550

Wentford Chapel 12th cent.

Possibly the same as Free chapel above. Chapel Cottage said to now occupy the site.

Lesser Secular Almshouse:

Founded by J. Bingley 1462

12. Nonconformity etc:

1611  1 person negligent in attending church
1676  300 nonconformists
Independent chapel/Congregational chapel founded 1687, Rebuilt 1841, seats 500
Baptist chapel built 1859 to replace older structure (built c.1803), enlarged 1832. Seats 400
Cottage and garden purchased 1685 for Quaker burial ground

1718–1833
5 houses set aside for worship
‘History of Clare Congregational Church’ by J. Duncan 1968
Large Meeting House built 1710
Independent church building opened 1841, renovated 1906
Became part of United Reformed Church movement 1971/2

13. Manorial:

Note: Pre 1066 Aelfric, sone of Withgar gave this manor to St John
5 free men have always belonged to this manor with every
customary due. King William however took the manor back into
his own hands.

1066 Manor of 24 carucates held by Aelfric
1086 Manor of 24 carucates belonging to Richard, son of Count Gilbert.
Manor descended through the Earls of Clare, Hertford and
Gloucester to the Mortimers.
1462 Cicely, Duchess of York (the King’s mother)
1553 Granted to Sir John Cheke
Note: The same year, however, Queen Mary took the manor in exchange
for other lands. It became annexed to the Duchy of Lancaster in
which is remains.
For long periods it was in possession of the Barnardiston family
Passing to Elwes of Stoke College
1909 John Payne Elwes possesses

Sub-Manors:

Stone Hall al Stonehouse al Manse Manor

1553 Granted by the Crown to Thomas and George Golding

14. Market/Fair:

1066 Market in existence
Grant of fair 1226/7
Grant of market and fair 1250/51
Weekly market held on Friday. Fair held on Maundy Thursday
(March) c.1618
Holds a ‘thin’ market on Friday 1679
Fairs on Easter Tuesday land July 26th (toys) 1759
Market held on Monday 1792, Fairs as above.
1844 Described as market town. Market held on Monday (appears
abolished by 1912). However market place had been recently
enlarged.
2 annual fairs for toys and pedlary on Easter Tuesday and
July 26th (both abolished by 1891)

15. Real Property:
1844 – £3,417 rental value
1891 – £5,055 rateable value
1912 – £5,315 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844–1912 Land sub-divided

17. Resident gentry:

1844  Mrs & Col. Baker
1891  J.E. Barnes, JP and Col. J.E. Boyes
1823  Henry Usborne, High Sheriff of Suffolk
1829  John Ruggles Brise, High Sheriff of Suffolk

18. Occupations:

1500–1549  3 weavers, 3 tailors, clothier, yeoman, coverlet weaver,
           2 husbandmen, 3 tanners, merchant, smith, 5 clothmakers
1550–1599  Weaver, 4 clothiers, 5 yeomen, carpenter, 2 spinsters, vicar,
           2 blacksmiths, 3 husbandmen, bricklayer, tanner, 2 butchers,
           labourers, 2 gloves, shearmans*, priest
1600–1649  3 weavers, 1 tailor, 17 yeomen, 2 blacksmiths, 7 husbandmen,
           bricklayer, butcher, labourer, cordwainer/shoemaker, shearmans,
           websters*, glazier, 2 innholders, saddler, mercer, baker, pail
           maker, linen draper, wheelwright
1650–1699  Physician, tailor, 4 clothiers, 11 yeomen, 3 carpenters, spinster,
           leather dresser, 2 blacksmiths, 5 husbandmen, bricklayer, 2 say
           weavers, carrier, butcher, say maker, 2 cordwainers/shoemakers,
           plumber, shearmans, 4 websters, 2 innholders, maltster, miller

Note: * shearmans – one who cuts wollen cloth
       websters – female weaver

1679  Chief trade is say making
1831  147 in agriculture, 125 in retail trade, 10 professionals,
      59 in labouring, 86 in domestic service, 19 others
1844  Manufacture of Tuscan straw plat employs female labour.
      2 gardeners, tea dealer, attorneys clerk, coachman, confectioner,
      organist, clog/pattern maker, basket maker/corn dealer, umbrella
      Tuscan plat manufacturer, chief constable, 2 auctioneers/estate
      agents, traveller, rate collector, coal dealer, clothes dealer,
      coach maker, 7 teachers, 4 attorneys, 8 fire and life officers,
      7 publicans, 6 bakers/flour dealers, banker, 2 beerhouse keepers,
      4 blacksmiths, 1 bookseller, 12 boot/shoemakers, 8 bricklayers,
      3 butchers, 5 cabinet makers/upholsterers, 3 chemists, 2 coopers,
      3 corn millers, 1 currier, 12 farmers, 4 grocers, 2 hairdressers,
      ironmonger, 6 joiners, 2 maltsters, 8 milliners, 3 millwrights,
      2 plumber/glaziers, 3 saddlers, 5 shopkeepers, 4 straw hat makers,
2 surgeons, 7 tailors, 4 watchmakers, 3 wheelwrights

1912 Public officials, station master, fire brigade of 11 men, 2 teachers, cab proprietor, bankers, police officers, 3 builders, 2 beer retailers, 3 hoteliers, 2 watch makers, grocer/draper, corn/coal/manure merchant, 2 bootmakers, shopkeepers, stationer, 5 bakers, 2 carpenters, saddler, bricklayer, 5 publicans, coach builder, 6 dressmakers, tobacconist, miller, 2 painters, boot repairer, 4 butchers, 3 farmers, 2 house furnishers, cowkeeper, clothier, draper, tailor, insurance agent, 2 newsagents, 2 grocers, plumber/beer retailer, servants registry office, 2 surgeons, plumber/painter, ladies school owner, agricultural engineer, tea/coffee dealer, horse slaughterer, 2 chimney sweeps, basket maker, pork butcher, artificial teeth maker, miller, nurse, fruitier, blacksmith, ironmonger, teacher of music, saddler, china/glass dealer, apartment owner, fishmonger/fruitier, tailoress, solicitors, farm bailiff, wheelwright, cycle agent, chemist, hairdresser.

‘Nethergate: Clare’s new brewery’ – article in Suffolk Fair 1986, p.42

19. Education:

Priest aids in education at Grammar school 1546
Master of free school linked with Secular College 1553

14th cent. Master John Chaplain described as schoolmaster
Grammar school recorded 1443
School reputedly held in former Guildhall 1550
Free school (held in 2 rooms above Market Cross) endowed by William Cadge 1668 for education of 10 poor boys. Free places abolished 1856. Endowment then paid half fees for all Clare children.

1818 1 endowed school (10 boys), 1 Sunday school (225 attend)
1833 1 endowed school (37 attend – 10 free), 6 infants schools (80 attend), 4 daily schools (97 attend), 1 boarding school (51 girls attend), 2 established church Sunday schools (281 attend), 1 Baptist Sunday school established 1832 (29 attend)
Infant school established 1843

1844 Free school – new school built in Cavendish Road 1838
6 Academies listed
School Board formed 1875
Board school converted from former National School 1875
Average attendance 1891 305, 1912 226

1891 Grammar school listed together with Ladies school
1912 Ladies school
Clare secondary school 1955–72, middle school 1972–

20. Poor relief:

1776 £ 385 10s. 10d.
1803 £1,057 18s. 7d.
1818 £2,184 9s.
1830 £1,209 1s.
1832 £1,243 13s.
21. Charities:

**Church Estate:**

1840  
22½ acres land let at £100 p.a.  
5 cottages and a blacksmiths shop let at £35 14s. p.a. applied to  
church repairs and churchwardens accounts  
Almshouses: 2 cottages adjoining Common pasture – empty  
1840

**Poor's Land:**

1840  
3 acres at Towns End – appropriated for fuel for poor in  
almshouses  
11 acres 2R called Goose Croft let at £32 10s. for  
relief and maintenance of Almsfolk and poor of Clare.

**Collin's Dole:**

1840  
6s. 8d. p.a. paid by custom from land called 'Collins' and  
distributed among poor of Chilton hamlet.

**Cadge's Charity:**

1668  
by will of William Cadge: £15 to support of Schoolmaster to  
teach 10 poor boys of Clare £15 for clothing of 8 poor widows  
cottage, barn, stable and 55 acres 1R 8P.  
Let at £55 16s. p.a.  
Any surplus is distributed among the above widows and the church  
wardens general account.

**Common Pasture:**

1554/55  
1,000 acres being the manor of Earbury let at £31 13s. 4d. to  
persons possessing less than 15 acres land for pasture of their  
kine and horses.  
1610  
By order/certificate this land (then stated as 62 acres) came under  
direction of feoffees.  
Profits were applied to relief and benefit of the poor. Income from  
letting pasture said to have been approximately £50 p.a. 1840.

22. Other institutions:

Guild of St Augustin in Convent of Clare 1488  
Guild of St Peter 1524  
Guild of St John Baptist 1524  
Guild of Corpus Christi c.1524  
Almshouse of James Bingley (founder) 1462  
Almshouse in High Row mentioned 17th cent.
**Clare Castle**


Fortified site believed to date earlier than the castle building.

Castle is mentioned in grant of Gilbert de Clare to monks of Bec re privileges of fishing in river 1090.

Put in good repair by Roger Mortimer 14th cent.

Fell into ruinous state c.16th/17th cent.

Castle’s most inner bailey occupied by rail station.

Repairs to Guildhall 1543. Believed situated at W. end of Church.

Corn Exchange built by James Fenner 1838.

Petty Sessions held at Half Moon Inn every 4th Monday 1844.

1844 Almshouses. 1 bank listed. 8 fire and life officers listed.

1776 Workhouse listed (30 inmates), established 1780 in Market Street. Closed 1834.

1803 2 Friendly Societies (64 members)

1891 Gas works lights town (owned by C.W. Grimwood), built 1853.

Royal Clarence Masonic Lodge established 1879.

Literary Institute and Reading Room established 1850.

Courts baron and customary held yearly for manors of Erbury and Stoke with Clinton.

County Police station built 1848 with compliment of Supt. And 2 constables.

Petty Sessions held at Police station fortnightly on Mondays.

Young Mens Book Society (30 members)

1912 Old Clare fire brigade, compliment of Capt. and 10 men.

Town fire brigade compliment of Capt. and 10 men.

Clare and Bumpstead Joint Hospital boards Infectious Diseases Hospital.

Clare and District Nursing Association.

Clare and District Working Mens Club.

Territorial Army, 5th Battalion Suffolk Regiment.

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23. **Recreation:**

Alehouse known as Quylters (now called ‘le Swan’) 1848 (Quilters tenement mentioned in Court Roll of 1361).

Inventory of 1549 mentions Half Moon public house.

17th cent. 2 innholders listed.

1844 7 inns and taverns listed, 2 beerhouses.

1891 4 beer retailers, The Millers Arms, The Bear and Crown (posting house), and the Waggon and Horses public houses.

The Half Moon commercial hotel and posting house.

The Cock Inn and brewer, The Bell hotel and The White Hart, The Lion and The Swan public houses.

Clare Choral Society 20\textsuperscript{th} cent.
Cricket Club.
3 football teams, cricket club and mixed hockey teams. Tennis played to rear of Swan Inn pre 1914.

24. **Personal:**

- **de Clare family:** Clare gave the title ‘Earl’ to Richard Fitz-Gilbert c.1066 (kinsman of William I). His grandson took the name ‘de Clare’.
- **Joan of Acre:** (2\textsuperscript{nd} daughter of Edward I and wife of Gilbert de Clare) died 1305. Dialogue at the Grave of Dame Joan of Acres gives lineal descent of the Clare family (reproduced in ‘Clare Priory’ by Barnardiston). Ascribed to Osbern Bokenham.
  - The Last Clare Lord, Gilbert, son of Joan of Acre, was killed at Bannockburn 1314.

25. **Other information:**

- ‘Clare as it was 1800–1850. A Welfare Parish’, by D. Ridley (no date).
- ‘Clare Castle and Priory’ – contains reproductions of engravings c.1810.
  - ‘Clare Priory’, no date.

Wool Hall stood at SE corner of Market Place on site occupied by Bear and Crown public house.

Market Cross demolished 1838. Original said to be in need of repair (16\textsuperscript{th} cent.) and new market cross built.

Clare Common: occupied site of approximately 60 acres to NE of town and made available by Katherine of Aragon for pasture of cows at low rent.

2 pest houses built on common c.1724. Used for small pox victims.

Water Mill: in existence 1770.
Earliest mention of Moothall 1481. Reputedly sited on South side of market place. Said to be in need of repair 1650 and upper part of hall fell down 1664.
Government of town vested in mayors and 24 burgesses 1515.
Town vested with rights of a corporate town by Charter of 1553.
Water maltmill: recorded 1381/2.

During medieval period town was almost surrounded by water – to south and east were rivers (Stour and New River) and Chilton ditch. To the west ran the Hawedych and a stream ran from Haweditch across Gosford Street (Callis Street) into the Chilton ditch.
Gosford bridge newly built with wood from Hundon park 1387/8.
Bailiffs ordered to repair ‘le Cuckyngston’ 1357.
Pillory known to have existed, reputed site was near Moothall.
Bridewell prison mentioned 1700, converted to private house 1787.
From Court Rolls it is possible to trace rise and fall of cloth trade as it relates to the parish from 14th cent.

For account of woollen industry in Clare see ‘A History of Clare’ by G.A. Thornton.
List of Bailiffs, Constables and Aletasters for Clare 1273–1832 and List of apprenticeship indentures in woollen industry for 17/18th cent. See ‘A History of Clare’ by G.A. Thornton, pages 212 and 228 respectively.

Streets, spacious but neither paved nor lighted 1844.

Honor of Clare comprised many parishes in Suffolk, Essex, Surrey, Middlesex and Hertford.
‘Honor of Clare in Early Middle Ages’, by J.C. Ward. PSIA Vol. XXX, p.94.

2 cases of incendiarism due to agrarian unrest 1843/44.

Clare RDC HQ situated at Stone Hall, Nethergate Street which it purchased 1949.

Stone Hall is mentioned in documents since 1307. Reconstructed 1931. some timber work (16th cent.) remains to rear of premises. Previously used as Institute and Parish Reading Rooms as well as private dwelling.

Town Hall built 1912/13 on site of Corn Exchange.

Ancient House: dated 1473 priests house contains original N. doorway and 17th cent. ornate pargetting to the exterior. Converted in museum 1976/78.

Romano-British Camp earthworks. Constructed c.AD 300. Believed to mark the site of 1st permanent settlement at Clare. Reputedly only example of double ditched camp remaining in Suffolk. Known as ‘The Erbury’.

Country Park exhibition centre housed in former railway station.
Clare Castle country park established 1972.

New Telephone exchanged opened 1981.


Clare Priory: Dwelling mainly 14th cent. (one doorway in Cellarium, vaulted S. chamber). Refectory doorway and doorway to Chapter house built between 1310 and 1314. Walls of Cloister remain. Priors house converted to dwelling house 1604. Joan of Acre said to have built chapel within Clare Priory (dedicated to St. Vincent) in which she was buried (site unknown). Priory was used as nursing home before being reinstated as Priory 1953.

4 mills said to be valued £10 c.1295.

Wayside chapel (Chapel cottage) used as powder magazine in Civil War 17th cent.

Ruling made that chimneys were to be made of brick and extending 4½ feet above the roof, non-compliance would meet with fine of £5 1621. However, chimneys were still being made of clay 1719 and fines of 10s. were imposed. The offenders were given 3 months to rectify matters.


‘Chapel House’, by Rev. F. Haslewood. PSIA Vol. VIII, p.239.


‘Suffolk Limiters’, by L.J. Redstone. PSIA Vol. XX, p.36.