1. **Parish: Blythburgh**

**Meaning:** Dwellers on the Blyth (Ekwall)

2. **Hundred: Blything**

**Deanery:** Dunwich (-1868), Dunwich (South) (1868-1914), N. Dunwich (1914 – 1972), Halesworth (1972 - )

**Union:** Blything

**RDC/UDC:** Blything RD (1894-1934), Blyth RD (1934-1974), Suffolk Coastal DC (1974- )

Other administrative details:

Blything Petty Sessional Division
Halesworth County Court District

3. **Area:**

4,325 acres of land, 5 acres of water, 23 acres of tidal water and 95 acres of foreshore (1912)

4. **Soils:**

**Mixed:**

a) Deep well drained sandy soils, some very acid especially under heath or woodland. Risk wind erosion
b) Fine loams over clay, slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged.

5. **Types of farming:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Main crops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1086</td>
<td>3,000 herring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500–1640</td>
<td>Light lands, sheep-corn region, sheep main fertilizing agents, bred for fattening. Barley main cash crop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Management varies with the condition of sandy soils. Universal feature – turnips as preparation for corn and grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Wheat, barley, oast, sugar beet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Main crops are barley and sugar beet but on better sands rotation of wheat, barley, sugar beet or kale is practiced. Also cattle farming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **Enclosure:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1086</td>
<td>4th penny dues of enclosure of Riseburg belonging to the King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>84 acres enclosed under General Acts 1862</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. **Settlement:**

1958/1975 Compact development around central church and river crossing. Declining ancient market town
Blume: 1679 “Tis now a poor decayed town”
Restricted development by marsh land to E., wet lands to W., and River Blyth to N. Few scattered farms


8. **Communications:**

Road: To Henham, Walberswick, Wenhaston and Thorington
1844 Mail cart, coaches, carriers to Ipswich and Yarmouth daily
Junction of Beccles and Lowestoft turnpike roads
1912 Situated on main London – Yarmouth road. Carrier from Southwold daily

Rail: 1891 rail station: Southwold – Halesworth line opened (1879), closed (1929)

Water: River Blythe. Navigable to point beyond Blythburgh (15th cent.)

9. **Population:**

1086 — 75 recorded
1327 — 71 taxpayers paid £4. 10s. 1d. (includes Walberswick)
1524 — 70 taxpayers paid £25. 12s. 4d.
1603 — 230 adults
1674 — 71 households
1676 — Not recorded
1801 — 886 inhabitants
1831 — 983 inhabitants
1851 — 1,118 inhabitants
1871 — 861 inhabitants
1901 — 646 inhabitants
1931 — 584 inhabitants
1951 — 649 inhabitants
1971 — 445 inhabitants
1981 — 414 inhabitants

10. **Benefice:** **Perpetual Curacy** (1831) **Vicarage** (1891)

1254 valued £17. 6s. 8d.
1650 Valued £35
1831 Glebe house. Incumbent also holds Perpetual curacy of Walberswick and the Vicarage of Arncliff, York.
1844 Impropriator (Sir Charles Blois) allows £45 p.a. to incumbent from tithes. Reduced to £15 (1891)
Patrons:

John Brooke (1650), Sir C. Blois (1831), Sir R.M. Blois (1891)

11. Church

Holy Trinity (128' long, tower 83' high)
(Chancel, side chapels, clerestoried nave, aisles, S. porch, W. tower)

1086 1 church + 2 carucates land
Norman N. & W. walls
1442 Bequest for building chancel
1450 Built on site of Austin Priory. Remains of which exist to NE of church
1452 N. chapel (Hopton) founded
15th cent. Tower
1577 Spire fell damaging the font
1643 William Dowsing ordered 20 superstitious pictures destroyed, 3 crosses, 20 cherubim and another 200 pictures to be removed. £1. 5s. 6d. paid by churchwardens for removal of brasses, rails etc. (1644)

Seats: 200

Other religious institutions:

Augustinian Priory:

Dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary
Founded as dependency of St. Osyth.

1291 Income £594. Sea encroachment and the balck death reduced the income in 14th cent. Sustained 4/5 canons (15th cent.)
1537 House suppressed

Hospital/Priory of Black Friars:

1384 Removed from Dunwich to Blythburgh due to encroachment of sea
1760 Remains of ancient chapel called Holy Rood N. side main street leading to bridge

12. Nonconformity etc:

1882 Primitive Methodist chapel (built 1837)

13. Manorial:
1086 Manor of 5 carucates 15 acres belonging to the King
1086 Manor of 1 carucate belonging to Roger Bigot
12th cent. Bishop of Norwich owns
Mid 12th cent. John Fitz Robert owns (Charter at Suckling)
Late 12th cent. William de Norwich owns
1372 Sir Robert de Swillington owns
Circa 1585 Links with Bucklesham and Nacton (Sir Robert Broke)
1909 Sir R.B.M Blois owns

Sub-Manors:

**Blythburgh Late Priory**

12th cent. Abbot of St. Osyth owns
1538 Absorbed by main manor (Sir Arthur Hopton)

**Hinton Late Priory**

12th cent. Abbot of St. Osyth owns
1538 Absorbed by main manor (Sir Arthur Hopton)

**Westwood** (questionable as to manorial status)

1415 Links with Aldringham (de la Pole)
1489 Absorbed by main manor (Sir Arthur Hopton)

14. Markets/Fairs

1066 Market mentioned
12th cent. William de Norwich had licence for weekly market on Thursday and 3 annual fairs
1324 Market and 2 fairs
1679 Market no longer exists
1844 2 annual fairs held on 5th April for toys and pleasure, and on 22nd June (at Hinton), obsolete (pre 1844)

15. Real property:

1844 £2,818 rental value
1891 £3,550 rateable value
1912 £3,125 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844/1891 Land sub-divided
1912 Sir Ralph Barrett Macnaghten Blois and Earl of Stradbroke principle owners

17. Resident gentry:
18. **Occupations:**

1086 2 mills, 3,000 herring, 1 money-changer, 1 salt pan
1500-1549 1 mercer, 2 cordwainers, 1 butcher
1550–1599 4 yeomen, 6 husbandmen, 1 mercer, 1 cooper, 1 tinker, 1 weaver, 1 painter
1600–1649 10 yeomen, 4 husbandmen, 2 blacksmiths, 1 mercer, 1 thatcher, 1 shoemaker, 1 carpenter, 1 chapman
1650–1699 11 yeomen, 4 husbandmen, 1 vinter
1831 133 in agriculture, 16 in retail/handicrafts, 2 in labouring, 25 in domestic service, 3 others
1844 Pre-1844 considerable fishing industry
Millwright, governor of workhouse, wheelwright/beerhousekeeper, policeman, corn merchant, schoolmistress, registrar, victualler, 3 boot/shoemakers, 12 farmers, miller, 3 grocer/drapers, tailor
1912 Public offices, sub-postmistress, station master, teachers, beer retailer, 2 apartment owners, cart builders, grocer/draper, 2 shopkeepers, shoemaker, 4 farmers, dressmaker, surgeon, game-keeper, blacksmith, miller, publican, 3 farmers and gamekeeper at Bulcamp and 4 farmers at Hinton

19. **Education:**

1818 1 Sunday school (50 attend)
1833 1 Infants school (6 attend), 2 daily schools in the Poorhouse (181 attend, 151 assisted from poor rate), 1 Sunday school endowed with £3 p.a. (46 attend)
1844 Sunday school. 1 schoolmistress listed
1875 School built for 145. public Elementary school, average attendance (1912) 104, closed 1964. Children transferred to Wenhaston
1879 School Board established

20. **Poor relief:**

1776 £111. 4s. 6d. spent on poor relief
1803 £212. 5s. 11½d. spent on poor relief
1818 £488. 1s. spent on poor relief
1830 £849. 5s. spent on poor relief
1832 £1,085. 4s. spent on poor relief
1834 £1,109 spent on poor relief

21. **Charities:**

*Neales Charity:*
1701 by will of Thomas Neale. £3 p.a. to support of Sunday School

**Dole:**

1840 £1 p.a. distributed in bread and money

**Walter’s Dole, Raymond’s Gift:**

1589 Bequest of Matthew Walter. £1 p.a. for the poor
1728 Bequest of Benham Raymond. £5 p.a. for education of 12 poor children

**Church Land:**

1844 At Thistley Meadow and Penny Pightle let at £19 p.a.

22. **Other institutions:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>Almshouse east of church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1754</td>
<td>Jail in existence. House of Correction said to be in great decay (1641)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1765/66</td>
<td>Union workhouse built at Bulcamp, partly destroyed by mob during construction, dispersed by military. Opened (1766) housing 56 paupers. 352 inmates in 1767 and 264 in 1843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No date</td>
<td>Quarter Sessions previously held in Blythburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Working Mens Club</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. **Recreation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1520</td>
<td>Inn of the Hart in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844/1912</td>
<td>1 beerhouse/retailer, THE WHITE HART public house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Working Mens Club, demolished 1950’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920’s</td>
<td>Womens Institute formed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Annual race by Southwold Sailing Club from Southwold to Blythburgh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. **Personal:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1614</td>
<td>Robert Brooke, High Sheriff of Suffolk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25. **Other information:**

Decline of town from flourishing town and port with considerable fishery has been attributed to the suppression of the Priory and the silting up of the river making navigation accessible only by small barges.

An accidental fire destroyed many houses, damage estimated at £18,030 (1679)
Terrific thunderstorm occurred Sunday, lightening damaged church killing 2 and burning approximately 18 others (1577)
Westwood Lodge: built mid 17th cent. by John Brooke. Original ancient house thought to have been destroyed by fire.
Legend: Anna, King of East Angles, and Firminus his son were slain fighting Penda, King of Mercia, in Bulcamp forest and were buried there (654 AD)
More than half the town said to have been destroyed by fire (1667)
New turnpike road constructed (circa 1780)
Chapel of Holy Cross (wayside chapel) located beside great bridge (1525)
Old church chest containing churchwardens' accounts and other documents destroyed by accidental fire (1831)
Gallows situated by Hulver (Holly) Heath (1400)
Lease exist relating to Westwood Lodge (1573). Alterations (1614). Former Lodge of park or warren, converted to farmhouse (1637)
Sir Owen Hopton said to have enclosed the common land of Blythburgh “with pail and dyke and laid into his park” (1567)
Disputes over common land still occurred (17th cent.) sometimes occasioning violent clashes with Sir Robert Brooke’s men
Held priority over Dunwich in administration of corporal punishment (1086)
Town at height of it’s prosperity (15th cent.)
Churchwardens’ accounts in print (15/16th cent.)
White Hart Inn doubled as courthouse (16th cent.)
Blythburgh Lodge: (16th cent.) Grade II listed manor house, extended (17th cent.)
‘Blythburgh’ by M.J. Becker (1935)

Archaeological Sites

Med. hearths, postholes, pits and ditches (CRN 801)
Site of Blythburgh Priory (CRN 1876)
Rom. Salt working site, tile production site (CRN 1878)
Rom. Square enclosure (CRN 1883)
Field system, track (CRN 1884)
Ring ditch (CRN 1887)
Reputed site of 7th cent. battle, human skeletons (CRN 1895)
Stray finds: Med. Key (CRN 1902)
Pottery (CRN 1903)
Coin (CRN 1513)
Neo. Flint axe (CRN 1877, 1886, 1888)
Worked flint (CRN 1889)
Un. Inhumation/human skeleton (CRN 1882)
B.A. axe (CRN 1890)
Rom. Pottery and coin (CRN 1891)
Sax. Whalebone writing tablet (CRN 1892)
Scatter finds: Med. Pottery (CRN 1901, 1881, 1885)
Sax.  Pottery (CRN 1879, 1880)
Un.  Human skeletons (CRN 1896)