

# 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:

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

## 6. Enclosure:

1086	4 <sup>th</sup> penny dues of enclosure of Riseburg belonging to the King
1863	84 acres enclosed under General Acts 1862

## 7. Settlement:

1958/1975 Compact development around central church and river crossing. Declining ancient market town  
Blome: 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

**Inhabited houses:** 1674 – 57 in Blythburgh (total), 12 in Bulcamp hamlet and 10 in Hinton, 1801 – 43, 1851 – 125, 1871 – 141, 1901 – 118, 1951 – 143, 1981 – 127

## 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 (15<sup>th</sup> 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 Arncliffe, York.  
1844 Impropiator (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
- 15<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> cent. Sustained 4/5 canons  
(15<sup>th</sup> 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
12 <sup>th</sup> cent.	Bishop of Norwich owns
	Mid 12 <sup>th</sup> cent. John Fitz Robert owns (Charter at Suckling)
	Late 12 <sup>th</sup> 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**

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

**Hinton Late Priory**

12 <sup>th</sup> 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 mentoned
12 <sup>th</sup> 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 5 <sup>th</sup> April for toys and pleasure, and on 22 <sup>nd</sup> 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:**

- 1680            2 gents listed
- 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. 11¼d. | 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:**

No dates Guilds of St. Barbara, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Andrew and St. John

1500 Almshouse east of church

1754 Jail in existence. House of Correction said to be in great decay (1641)

1765/66 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

No date Quarter Sessions previously held in Blythburgh  
1926 Working Mens Club

**23. Recreation:**

1520 Inn of the Hart in existence

1844/1912 1 beerhouse/retailer, THE WHITE HART public house

1904 Working Mens Club, demolished 1950's

1920's Womens Institute formed

1973 Annual race by Southwold Sailing Club from Southwold to Blythburgh

**24. Personal:**

1614 Robert Brooke, High Sheriff of Suffolk

**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, lightning damaged church killing 2 and burning approximately 18 others (1577)  
 Westwood Lodge: built mid 17<sup>th</sup> 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 (17<sup>th</sup> 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 (15<sup>th</sup> cent.)  
 Churchwardens' accounts in print (15/16<sup>th</sup> cent.)  
 White Hart Inn doubled as courthouse (16<sup>th</sup> cent.)  
 Blythburgh Lodge: (16<sup>th</sup> cent.) Grade II listed manor house, extended (17<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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)