

# 1. Parish: Covehithe

**Meaning:** Original name possibly meant 'northern neck of land' (now lost). Current name means 'cove harbour' (Ekwall)

2. **Hundred:** Blything

**Deanery:** Dunwich ( -1868), Dunwich (North) (1868-1914), Beccles (1914-1972), Beccles and South Elmham (1972- )

**Union:** Blything

**RDC/UDC:** Blything RD (1894-1934), Lothingland RD (134-1974), Waveney DC (1974- )

## Other administrative details:

Blything Petty Sessional Division  
Halesworth County Court District

3. **Area:**

1,367 acres land, 3 acres water, 12 acres foreshore (1912)

4. **Soils:**

- Mixed:**
- a) Deep well drained sandy soils, some very acid, risk wind erosion
  - b) Small amount deep peat soils associated with clay over sand, in part very acid. High groundwater levels, risk of flooding

5. **Types of farming:**

1086		2 acres meadow, 1 cob, 8 pigs, 105 sheep This area has problems of acidity and trace element deficiencies.
1500–1640	Thirsk:	Sheep-corn region, where sheep are main fertilizing agent, bred for fattening. Barley main cash crop.
1804	Young:	"This corner of Suffolk practices better husbandry than elsewhere". He identifies this area as a carrot growing region.
1818	Marshall:	Management varies with condition of sandy soils. Rotation usually turnip, barley, clover, wheat or turnips as preparation for corn and grass.
1937	Main crops:	Mainly arable/dairying region. Wheat, barley, oats, turnips
1969	Trist:	Dairying has been replaced by arable farming.

**6. Enclosure:**

1788 383/591 acres enclosed under Private Act of Lands 1787  
(lands in Kessingland and Covehithe)

**7. Settlement:**

1958 Small compact coastal development around centrally  
situated church. Development sandwiched between  
Benacre Broad to the north and Covehithe Broad to the  
south. Parish affected by coastal erosion. Few scattered  
farms.

**Inhabited houses:** 1674 – 25, 1801 – 21, 1851 – 35, 1871 – 38, 1901  
– 34, 1951 – 31, 1981 – 15

**8. Communications:**

**Road:** Roads to South Cove and Wrentham

**Rail:** 1891 4½ miles Southwold station: Southwold – Halesworth  
line opened (1879), closed (1929)

**Water:** 13<sup>th</sup> cent. Hithe or quay for loading/unloading vessels

**9. Population:**

1086 — 30 recorded  
1327 — 72 taxpayers paid £6. 4s.  
1524 — 61 taxpayers paid £8. 9s. 6d.  
1603 — 130 adults  
1674 — 36 households  
1676 — Not recorded  
1801 — 180 inhabitants  
1831 — 182 inhabitants  
1851 — 195 inhabitants  
1871 — 182 inhabitants  
1901 — 189 inhabitants  
1931 — 114 inhabitants  
1951 — 98 inhabitants  
1971 — 55 inhabitants  
1981 — 41 inhabitants

**10. Benefice:** **Vicarage** (consolidated with Benacre and Easton  
Bavents) (1831) **Discharged Vicarage** (1912)

1254 Valued £10. 13s. 4d.

1291 Valued £13. 6s. 8d.

To the vicar £5. 6s. 8d.     £18. 13s. 4d.

1535 Valued £5. 6s. 8d.

Vicarage houses are in decay. Incumbent also holds  
parsonage of Ellough (1597)

1831 Joint benefit of 1 curate, stipend £100 p.a. No glebe house. Joint gross income £467. p.a. Joint nett value £440) (1835)

1912 Joint nett value £290 p.a. + 22 acres glebe

Patrons: Prior and monks of Wangford (1301), The King (1349), Prior and Convent of Thetford (1402-1536), Thomas Rowse (1551), Sir Edward Cleer (1604), Sir William Playters (1628), Sir T. Gooch (1831), Sir A.S. Gooch (1891), Sir T.V.S. Gooch (1912)

**11. Church**

**St. Andrew**

(Chancel, nave, S. porch, W. tower)

Cautley suggests that judging by the scale of the windows etc., this was a particularly fine 14/15<sup>th</sup> cent. church

1643 Puritanical Vandals (William Dowsing) destroyed 200 pictures, ordered steps leveled and inscription removed. Some pictures in windows were beyond reach – help to raise ladders was withheld.

1672 All dismantled except for the tower and the materials sold (Pevsner suggests church was ruined during Civil War (1643)). Small thatched building erected in western sector of nave arcade

1974 Tower made redundant

**Seats:** 50 (1831)

**12. Nonconformity etc:**

1597 1 person excommunicated for 1 year (no reason given)

**13. Manorial:**

**Northales Called Oulstede Manor**

1066 Manor of 2 carucates held by Edric, a free man

1086 Manor of 2 carucates belonging to William of Warenne

Circa 1286 John de Vallibus owns (linked to Shottisham, Bramfield and Wenham Parva)

1298 John de Cove owns

Circa 1324 Simon de Pierpont owns

Circa 15<sup>th</sup> C. Thomas, Lord Dacre owns

1577 Robert Payne owns

1707/08 Thomas Carthew owns (linked to Easton Bavents)

1742 Sir Thomas Gooch owns (linked to Benace and Easton Bavents)

**14. Markets/Fairs**

1298 Grant of market and fair  
1844 Formerly a fair held on St. Andrews day (disused)

**15. Real property:**

1844 £808 rental value  
1891 £887 rateable value  
1912 £781 rateable value

**16. Land ownership:**

1844 Sir Thomas Gooch, sole owner  
1891 Sir A.S. Gooch, sole owner  
1912 Sir Thomas Vere S. Gooch, sole owner

**17. Resident gentry:**

1680 1 gent

**18. Occupations:**

1500-1549 1 yeomen, 1 husbandmen, 2 sailor/mariners, 1 roper  
1550-1599 1 yeoman, 3 husbandmen, sailor/mariner, 1 cooper, 2  
bricklayers  
1600-1649 9 yeomen, 1 glover, 11 husbandmen, 2 sailors/mariners,  
1 labourer, 2 tailors, 1 smith, 1 weaver  
1650-1699 3 yeomen, 3 husbandmen, 1 sailor/mariner, 1 thatcher, 1  
brewer, 1 linen weaver  
1831 40 in agriculture, 8 in domestic service, 4 others  
1844 Victualler, 4 farmers  
1912 Shopkeeper/threshing machine owner, 3 farmers

**19. Education:**

1833 1 day school and Sunday school established (1825), 36-  
40 attend  
1891 Parochial Infant school supported by voluntary  
contributions (20 attend)  
1912 Children attend school at Wrentham

**20. Poor relief:**

1776	£21. 3s. 8d.	spent on poor relief
1803	£51. 10s. 0¼d.	spent on poor relief
1818	£67. 9s.	spent on poor relief
1830	£139.1s.	spent on poor relief
1832	£122. 8s.	spent on poor relief
1834	£137	spent on poor relief

**21. Charities:**

**Poors Allotment/Poors Land:**

1840            40 acres set aside at enclosure let at £25 p.a.  
7 acres used as covert for game let at £2. 12s. 6d. p.a.  
Rents applied to coals for the poor.

**22. Other institutions:**

1891            Guild of St. George (1491)  
Coastguard station attached to Kessingland

**23. Recreation:**

1650-1699    1 brewer recorded  
1844            THE ANCHOR public house

**24. Personal:**

**John Bale:** (b.1495 – d.1563) native of parish. Carmelite friar of Norwich, author of 'De Scriptibus Britannicis'. Subjected to persecution of Catholic clergy after embracing Reformation doctrines. His beliefs eventually led him into exile in Holland and Switzerland.

**25. Other information:**

'The History of Antiquities of Covehithe' by J. Browne (1874)

John de Cove held a hythe or quay on his estate in the parish from which vessels could load/unload (1308)

82 persons died of plague (1603)

**Archaeological Sites**

Numerous sites all periods