

# 1. Parish: Botesdale (formerly Botolph's Dale)

**Meaning:** Botwulf's valley (Ekwall)

2. **Hundred:** Hartismere

**Deanery:** Hartismere (North)

**Union:** Hartismere

**RDC/UDC:** (E. Suffolk) Hartismere RD ( - 1974), Mid Suffolk DC (1974 - )

## Other administrative details:

Created separate civil parish (1866)  
Ecclesiastically a hamlet of Redgrave  
Hartismere Petty Sessional Division  
Eye County Court District

3. **Area:** 1,234 acres land, 35 acres water (1912)

4. **Soils:**

Fine loam over clay soil, some slowly permeable, subsoil containing marl, sand and gravel. The whole subject to seasonal waterlogging

5. **Types of farming:**

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:	Coarse of crops varies usually including summer fallow as preparation for corn products
1937	Main crops:	4 course system: wheat, barley, clover, roots
1969	Trist:	More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet

6. **Enclosure:**

1818 156 acres enclosed under Private Act of Lands 1808)

7. **Settlement:**

1958 Compact settlement along line of Rickinghall – Wortham road which, at two points almost touches the parish

boundary. Church centrally situated. Botesdale Green  
appears uninhabited  
Few scattered farms

**Inhabited houses:** 1674 – 74, 1801 – 61, 1851 – 131, 1871 – 120,  
1901 – 101, 1951 – 147, 1981 – 213

**8. Communications:**

**Road:** Roads to Rickinghall Superior and Inferior, Wortham and Redgrave  
Main Bury St. Edmunds – Norwich road  
1844 Coaches pass through 8 times daily to Norwich, ury St. Edmunds and London  
Market coach to Bury St. Edmunds Wednesday  
Carriers daily  
Described as “a great throughfare”  
1912 Carriers to Bury St. Edmunds Wednesday  
Carriers to Diss Friday  
Carriers to Finningham and Mellis stations daily  
Bus to Diss every Friday

**Rail:** 1912 4½ miles Mellis station: Mellis – Eye line, opened (1867), closed for passengers (1931), closed for goods (1964)  
Ipswich – Norwich line: opened (1849), station closed for goods (1964), closed for passengers (1966)

**9. Population:**

1086 — Not recorded  
1327 — Not recorded  
1524 — 58 taxpayers paid £9. 2s. 2d. (includes Redgrave)  
1603 — Not recorded  
1674 — 11 households  
1676 — Not recorded  
1801 — 565 inhabitants  
1831 — 655 inhabitants  
1851 — 626 inhabitants  
1871 — 579 inhabitants  
1901 — 399 inhabitants  
1931 — 402 inhabitants  
1951 — 601 inhabitants  
1971 — 475 inhabitants  
1981 — 533 inhabitants

**10. Benefice: Chapelry (with Redgrave)**

Circa 1500 St. Botolph’s Chapel founded as chantry by John Sheriff: endowed for support of priest to pray for his wife’s soul  
1831 Joint gross income £777  
Valued £400 p.a. 42 acres glebe and residence (1908)

1912 Joint nett income £520. 42 acres glebe and residence

**Patrons:**

George Holt Wilson (1912)

**11. Church Chapel of St. Botolph**  
(rectangular building, undivided nave and chancel)

Circa 1500 Built on site of ancient chapel  
Made into chantry by John Sheriff  
1576 Established as free school by Sir Nicholas Bacon  
House added – integral building with chapel  
1884 Returned to ecclesiastical use

**Seats:** 250

**12. Nonconformity etc:**

1714-1766 Houses set aside for worship  
1745 House and barn set aside for worship  
Wesleyan chapel built (1832), rebuilt (1907)  
Congregational chapel built (1868)  
Gospel Hall: meeting place for Plymouth Brethren (1908)

**13. Manorial:**

**14. Markets/Fairs**

13<sup>th</sup> cent. Grant for fair (May 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>), eve and day of St.  
Botolph – obsolete (1844)  
1759 Fair for cattle and toys on Holy Thursday, abolished  
(1873)  
1792 Wednesday market  
1844 Fair for hiring servants: Thursday before Michaelmas,  
obsolete (1856)  
Thursday market (long disused) revived (1854), changed  
to Monday but by (1891) had again been discontinued

**15. Real property:**

1844 £1,565 rental value  
1891 £2,316 rateable value  
1912 £1,671 rateable value

**16. Land ownership:**

1844 G. St. Vincent Wilson, and J. Amys, principle owners  
1891 G.H. Wilson, principle owner  
1912 George Holt Wilson, principle owner

**17. Resident gentry:**

1844 James Amys Esq. and S. Taylor Dawson  
1912 G.H. Wilson JP

**18. Occupations:**

1550–1599 1 yeoman, 1 shearman (one who cuts woollen cloth)  
1600–1649 1 cooper, 3 tailors, 1 joiner, 1 labourer, 1 collarmaker, 1  
spinster, 1 husbandman, 1 cook, 1 thatcher  
1650–1699 7 yeomen, 2 linen weavers, 2 blacksmiths, 1 clerk, 1  
glazier, 1 linen bleacher, 1 bladesmith, 1 wollen draper, 1  
tanner, 1 apothecary, 1 bricklayer, 1 carpenter, 1 inn  
holder, 1 spinster, 1 husbandman, 2 bakers  
No dates Prices candle makers  
1831 57 in agriculture, 65 in retail trade, 7 professionals, 14 in  
labouring, 38 in domestic service, 5 others  
1844 Wheelwright, 3 tailors, dressmaker, blacksmith, 2  
saddlers, watchmaker, bricklayer, hairdresser, solicitor, 2  
bakers, cabinet maker, chemist/druggist, surgeon,  
plumber/glazier, bookseller, stone/marble mason,  
butcher, 3 teachers, 2 shoemakers, 3 millers, 4 farmers, 2  
grocer/drapers, 5 publicans  
1912 Sub-postmaster, police officer, draper/grocer, 3 bakers, 3  
builders, 2 hotel owners, 2 beer retailers, hairdresser, 3  
cow keepers, grocer, 2 shopkeepers, 3 insurance agents,  
5 farmers, carpenter/wheelwright, miller, pork butcher,  
stationer, dressmaker, painter, basket maker, corn/flour  
merchant, horse doctor, egg depot., 2 cycle agents, 4  
publicans, 2 butchers, surgeon, carriage builder, brush  
maker, fish/pig dealer, blacksmith, watch repairer,  
hardware dealer, asst. overseer, 3 bootmakers, general  
dealer, carpenter, chimney sweep, furniture broker,  
saddler, marine store dealer, dairy, teacher, newsagent,  
district nurse  
(Note: some of these may have located in Redgrave)  
No dates Maltings, 5 windmills  
1984 Production of visual aids

**19. Education:**

1578-1786 14 schoolmasters/tutors recorded  
1560/61 Grammar school founded by Sir Nicholas Bacon.  
Bequeathed £20 p.a. to Benet College, Cambs. to  
support 6 scholars from this school  
1818 1 school called Redgrave Grammar school (6 attend)  
1833 Free grammar school (31 attend, 6 taught free)  
1 daily school (20 attend)  
1 Sunday school endowed by Congregationalists (1822)m  
with 16 acres ground (130 attend)  
1 Boarding school (20/30 attend)

- 1867 Boys Grammar school (fishermen's children preferred)  
Grammar school dissolved (circa 1890/91)  
Free school established (1885)
- 1891 Children attend either National School at Redgrave or  
Dyers School Rickinghall
- 1912 Public Elementary school endowed by Dyers Charity.  
Average attendance 13. Children also attend National  
school in Redgrave

**20. Poor relief:**

1776	£135. 6s. 2d.	spent on poor relief
1803	£347. 6s. 1¼d.	spent on poor relief
1818	£509. 7s.	spent on poor relief
1830	£488. 15s.	spent on poor relief
1832	£587. 14s.	spent on poor relief
1834	£490.	spent on poor relief

**21. Charities:**

**Allotment:**

- 1840 2 acres called Back Hills. For providing gravel for road  
repairs and site for annual fair (1815)  
Let at £3. 5s. p.a. paid to overseer of the poor (1819)

**22. Other institutions:**

- Guild of St. Botolph (1504)  
Bridewell lock-up built (1809)  
Gas works (1862), disused by 20<sup>th</sup> cent.
- 1844 Petty Sessions held 22 times per year
- 1912 Police station and bank  
Botesdale Health Centre opened (1981)

**23. Recreation:**

- Inn (1508), now Hambly House (1984) situated on parish  
boundary
- 1650-1699 1 inn holder recorded
- 1844 Steeple chase held annually in April  
5 public houses
- 1891 3 beerhouses and 3 public houses
- 1912 THE BELL Hotel, 2 beer retailers, 4 public houses  
Bowling Club, Cricket Club, Oddfellows and Foresters  
Lodge  
Church Hall built (1913)  
Sports Club and football club (early 20<sup>th</sup> cent.)  
British Legion and library (1920's)  
Cock Inn darts team (1937)  
Annual Quality Fair (1964)

**24. Personal:**

**25. Other information:**

Hearth Tax returns imply widespread fire in parish (12 homes destroyed)  
(1674)

World War I memorial in Market Place (no dates)

**Archaeological Sites**

Rom. Pottery kiln (CRN 8363)

Med. excavation/ditch (CRN 8364)

Sax. Cremation (CRN 8367)

PMed. tile kiln (CRN 8405)

Med. chapel (CRN 8406)

Med. house (CRN 8407)

PMed. Windmill (CRN 8381) (documentary evidence)

Stray finds: Neo. Worked flint (CRN 8385)

Axe (CRN 8382, 8383)

PMed. pottery (CRN 8371)

Med. ring (CRN 8374)

Scatter finds: Med. pottery (CRN 8379, 8368, 8370, 8380)

Rom. Pottery (CRN 8366, 8373)

PMed. pottery (CRN 8369)

I.A. pottery (CRN 8372)

Un. Burnt flint patch (CRN 8408)