

1. Parish : Elmswell

Meaning: Spring/stream where elms grew

2. Hundred: Blackbourn

Deanery: Blackburne (-1884), Thedwastre (1884-1972), Lavenham (1972-)

Union: Stow

RDC/UDC: (W. Suffolk) Thedwastre RD (-1974), Mid Suffolk DC (1974-)

Other administrative details:

Blackbourn Petty Sessional Division
Stowmarket County Court District

3. Area: 2,089 acres (1912)

4. Soils:

Mixed:

- a. Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loam over clay
- b. Slowly permeable calcareous/non calcareous clay soils, slight risk water erosion
- c. Fine loam over clay soils, slowly permeable subsoils, slight seasonal waterlogging. Some calcareous/non calcareous slowly permeable clay soils

5. Types of farming:

1086		9 acres meadow, wood for 80 pigs 3 cobs, 5 cattle, 15 pigs, 18 sheep, 48 goats
1283		245 quarters to crops (1,960 bushels), 31 head horse, 104 cattle 85 pigs, 207 sheep*
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 in preparation for corn products
1937	Main crops:	Wheat and barley,
1969	Trist:	More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet.

*'A Suffolk Hundred in 1283', by E. Powell (1910). Concentrates on Blackbourn Hundred. Gives land usage, livestock and the taxes paid.

6. Enclosure:

1814 195 acres in enclosed under Private Acts of Lands 1811

7. Settlement:

1981 Large yet compact development. Church situated to west of main settlement. Railway crosses parish in central position E-W. Disused airfield intrudes into northern sector of parish. These two factors possibly influenced development. Site of Sutton Haugh Green (enclosed area) on northern boundary with Gt. Ashfield. Scattered farms.

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 56, 1801 – 72, 1851 – 148, 1871 – 187, 1901 – 202, 1951 – 312, 1981 – 760

8. Communications:

Roads: To Woolpit, Tostock, Thurston, Great Ashfield and Wetherden
Cartway between Bury St. Edmunds and Elmswell has existed through Norton Wood since ancient times.
1844:Carrier to Bury St Edmunds on Wednesday
1891:Carriers to Bury St Edmunds on Wednesday and Saturday to Stowmarket on Thursday
1912:Remnant of 'Lord's Chariot Way' from Bury St. Edmunds remains as disused road

Rail: 1891 Rail station (level crossing in centre of village). Bury St Edmunds-Cambridge line opened 1846, closed for goods 1964, became unmanned halt 1967
Tramline branch of railway existed to Woolpit brickworks (no dates)
19th cent. Siding from railway also ran to timber yard and sawmill
1964:Private siding to Bacon factory
1974:Main buildings on N. side demolished

Air: Great Ashfield airfield: built 1942 as Class 'A' airfield, USAF station, reverted to RAF 1945, sold 1959/60, returned to agriculture

9. Population:

1086 – 41 recorded
1327 – 26 taxpayers paid £1 17s. 8½d.
1524 – 46 taxpayers paid £3 14s.
1603 – 214 adults
1662 – 51 householders paid £7 11s.*
1674 – 63 households
1676 – 110 adults
1801 – 451 inhabitants
1831 – 694 inhabitants
1851 – 779 inhabitants
1871 – 754 inhabitants
1901 – 858 inhabitants
1931 – 864 inhabitants
1951 – 1,153 inhabitants
1971 – 1,531 inhabitants
1981 – 2,127 inhabitants

* 'The Hearth Tax Return for the Hundred of Blackbourn 1662',
transcribed by S. Colman. PSIA Vol. XXXII part 2, p.168

10. Benefice: Rectory

1254 Valued £10
Portion of Hospital of St. Edmunds 13s. 4d. £10 13s. 4d.
1291 Valued £12 13s. 4d.
1341 Valued £12 13s. 4d.
1535 Valued £11 6s. 11½d.
1747 Parsonage house with hall, 2 parlours, kitchen,
brewhouse, scullery, dairy, barn, stable, hayhouse and
neat house plus 5 acres ground adjoining
1831 Glebe house. Gross income £436 p.a.
1843 Modus of £500 p.a. awarded in lieu of tithes
1864 Mortgage for building rectory with specification, ground
plan, and elevation drawings in existence
1891 Rent charge of £497. 37 acres glebe and residence
1912 Nett value £348 p.a. 43 acres glebe and residence

Patrons: Sir Robert Gardyner (1603), J.T. Lawton (1831), Incumbent
(1861), W. Luke (1873), W.A. MacFarlane Grieve (1912)

11. Church St. John the Divine

(Chancel, vestry, clerestoried nave, aisles, S. porch,
W. tower)

1086 Church plus 20 acres free land in alms
Believed originally built by monks from Bury St. Edmunds
15th cent. Nave, tower and porch, 5 bay arcade
1471 Repair of aisle of St. John Baptist
1862 S. aisle rebuilt

1864 Chancel restored
1872 N. aisle rebuilt
1884 Walls coloured

Seats: 350 free (1873)

12. Nonconformity etc:

1603 5 recusants
1606 5 recusant papists (3 members of Mannock family)
1611 7 popish recusants (2 members of Mannock family)
1779–1839 5 houses set aside for worship
1804 Wesleyan/Methodist chapel opened, pulled down 1898 and new chapel erected. While in the building, services were held in building next to railway station (office of 'Jewers' in 1959)
1959 'A Short History of a Village Methodist Society 1799–1959', by Rev. D.A. Bullen
1964 'Elmswell Methodist Chapel', by J. Duncan
1987 'Baptist church 1887–1987', Centenary booklet

13. Manorial:

1066/1086 Manor of 2 carucates belonging to the Abbot of St. Edmunds
1357 Extent and customary of the lands – Add.MSS in British Museum
1536 Sir Thomas Darcy owns (linked to Stowmarket, Woolpit, Great Ashfield, Bardwell)
1590 Sir Robert Gardner owns (linked to Winston and Woolpit)
18th cent. Christopher Calthorpe owns. The line of descent is here disputed
1905 W.A. MacFarlane Grieve owns

14. Markets/Fairs:

1912 Livestock market held here every Monday by Messrs Hugh Boby & Co.

15. Real property:

1844 £2,293 rental value
1891 £4,041 rateable value
1912 £4,131 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1884–1912 Land sub-divided

17. Resident gentry:

1679 Gardiner Kettleborough
1844 Rev. J.T. Lawton

- 1891 Capt. Alexander (10th Hussars), Rev. W.A.C. MacFarlane
MA
1912 J.C. Leatherdale JP

18. Occupations:

- 1500–1549 1 rough mason, 1 mason
1550–1599 7 husbandmen, 11 yeomen, 1 ploughwright, 1 shearman
(one who cuts woollen cloth)
1600–1649 1 husbandman, 16 yeomen, 1 servant, 1 blacksmith, 2
spinsters, 1 tailor
1650–1699 16 yeomen, 2 tanners, 1 watchmaker, 1 tailor, 1
cordwainer, 1 linen weaver, 1 clothier
1831 134 in agriculture, 26 in retail trade, 1 professional, 17 in
domestic service
1844 Beer seller, wheelwright, cutler/grinder, schoolmistress,
quartermaster, joiner, victualler, blacksmith, woodman, 2
bakers, 3 boot/shoemakers, 2 bricklayers, 2 butchers, 17
farmers, maltster, 3 gardeners/nurserymen, 2 grocer/
drapers, 3 tailors
1891 Brick manufacturer and agricultural implement
manufacturer
1906 W.W. Hawes (printers) established
1911 New roller mills built
Co-operative Bacon Factory opened
1912 Sub-postmaster, 2 schoolmistresses, station master, pork
butcher, tailor, shoemaker, 3 millers, 9 farmers, hotel
owner, auctioneer, builder/decorator, shoe maker/shop
keeper, cricket bat manufacturer, 2 publicans, corn and
flour merchant/stationer, butcher, printers, chemical
manure merchant/saddler and harness maker, highway
surveyor, carrier, horse slaughterer, wholesale corn
merchant, 2 beer retailers, baker/confectioner, motor and
general engineer, bootmaker, 2 grocers, corn merchant,
income tax collector, farm bailiff, coal merchant, 2
builders, coal and salt merchant/insurance agent,
engineer and agricultural implement manufacturer/
ironmonger, cycle agent, timber merchant/saw mill,
blacksmith, private school proprietor, insurance agent,
brick manufacturer

19. Education:

- 1818 1 Sunday school on Madras system (20 attend)
1833 3 daily schools (50 attend), 1 Sunday school (established
church) (55 attend), 1 Wesleyan Methodist Sunday
school (80 attend)
1844 School for instruction of poor supported by rector
1864 St. John's Church school founded by Admiral Sir George
Seymour, held in trust for education of children of the

parish in principles of the Church of England. Under Government inspection. Average attendance 1912 40

1886 School Board established

1890 Board school built, replacing former iron structure. Accommodates 170 pupils, average attendance 1912 115. Plans to convert into offices 1987

1912 Private school for girls

1985 New primary school opened although old school appears to have continued to function until January 1986 when it closed

20. Poor relief:

1776	£218 12s. 3d.
1803	£416 17s. 6d.
1818	£820 3s.
1830	£671 2s.
1832	£618 3s.
1834	£510 13s.

21. Charities:

Gardiner's Almshouses and Charities:

1614/15 Almshouse built containing 5 rooms to house 6 poor widows and pension of 16d. per week each plus yearly supply of ready made gowns of coarse blue cloth/stuff. Allowance for purchase of land to support almshouse, amounting to £31 p.a.

Church and Poor Estate:

1706 by Decree of Commissioners of Charitable Uses: 25 acres 3R 16P in Woolpit and Elmswell let at £84 10s. p.a. applied to the benefit of the poor and support of the church

22. Other institutions:

1614 Almshouse built by Sir Robert Gardiner (see Charities). Restored(1967)

1887 'The Tabernacle', an 'iron building' built, seats 300

1912 Thedwastre Sub-Committee of West Suffolk Local Pension Committee meet on 2nd Saturday of each month in the Council school

1956 Memorial Hall built

1959 Thedwastre RDC offices opened in parish

1979 Village Hall and playing fields in existence

23. Recreation:

1844	Beer seller, Red Lion public house
1891	2 beer houses, The Fox and The Red Lion public houses
1912	2 beer retailers, The Fox hotel, The Railway Tavern and The Lion public house
1920	Football team
20 th cent.	Cricket team, badminton and darts clubs, and Womens Institute

24. Personal:

25. Other information:

Abbots of St. Edmunds had country seat in parish. Said to have entertained Henry VI here 1433.

Churchyard contains remains of ancient cross 1912.

'Collections towards the History and Antiquities of Elmswell and Campsey Ash', by J.J. Nichols 1790.

Elmswell common consisted of 188 acres pre-enclosure.

Map of Elmswell manor 1627.

Large collection of documents relating to Bastardy 18th cent.

Grange Estate: 88 homes built at Eastern Way/Millers Close 1982.

Mann's Court: opened sheltered accommodation for elderly 1980.

Great Court of St. Edmund was held by Abbot in the parish (as well as elsewhere) pre 1536.

Inventory (photocopy of) Elmswell Hall in parish folder 1752.

'St. Edmunds Bacon Factory Ltd.' East Anglian Life, April 1964.

Transcripts of wills 1453–1476 in parish folder.

2 windmills valued 26s. 8d. 1283.

'A Suffolk Hundred in 1283', by E. Powell 1910. Concentrates on Blackbourn Hundred. Gives land usage, livestock and the taxes paid.

Elmswell Hall: originally Elizabethan but with much alteration.

List of field names from 1842 tithe map in parish folder.

'Elmswell', by E. Raynor. East Anglian magazine Vol.31, p.213.

Anglia TV programme 1962 specifically about 'Annual Bacon Fair'.