

1. Parish: Eye

Meaning: Island, land by water

2. Hundred: Hartismere

Deanery: Hartismere (–1897), Hartismere (North) (1897–1931), North Hartismere (1931–1972), Hartismere (1972–)

Union: Hartismere

RDC/UDC: (E. Suffolk) Eye Borough Council (–1974), Mid Suffolk DC (1974–)

Other administrative details:

Town incorporated by King John by Charter granted (1205).
Governed as a borough by mayor, 4 aldermen and 12 common councillors
25 Burgesses 1086
Hartismere Petty Sessional Division
Eye County Court District

3. Area: 4,394 acres land, 16 acres water (1912)

4. Soils:

Mixed:

- a. Clay soil overlying peat. Risk of localised flooding.
- b. Deep well drained fine loam over clay or coarse loam over clay and fine loam soils with some clay subsoil. Some subject to seasonal waterlogging.

5. Types of farming:

1086		Woodland for 99 pigs, 1 cob, 90 sheep. 1 park.
1500–1640	Thirsk:	Wood-pasture region. Mainly pasture, meadow, engaged in rearing and dairying with some pigs 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 as preparation for corn products
1937	Main crops:	Wheat, barley, oats and beans
1969	Trist:	More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet

6. Enclosure:

1812 243 acres enclosed in Eye, Brome, Oakley, Thrandeston and Yaxley under Private Act of Land 1808.

7. Settlement:

1958 Large medieval market town centralised around castle and probably also the market site. Secondary development at Langton Green and Gretna Green. Cranley Green appears uninhabited. River Dove flows through the parish and Eye airfield is situated at the northern end of the parish, both features could have influenced development.
Scattered farms.

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 68, 1801 – 300, 1851 – 480, 1871 – 500, 1901 – 455, 1951 – 479, 1981 – 612

8. Communications:

Road: To Brome, Yaxley, Thronham Parva and Redingfield
1844 Coaches to Norwich and Ipswich daily via Yaxley
Carriers to London and Norwich Monday, Thursday and Saturday.
to Ipswich Tuesday and Saturday.
to Norwich Friday
1891 Carrier passes through to Ipswich and Norwich
Saturday
1912 Buses to Diss on Friday and Mellis twice on Sunday.

Rail: 1891 Eye railway station (terminal): Mellis–Eye line opened
1867, closed for passengers 1931, closed for goods 1964.

Water: Situated at the confluence of two rivers, covered by water on three sides.

Air: Eye airfield constructed as Class 'A' heavy bomber base for USAF 1943. Necessitated red hazard light for Eye church. Transferred to RAF Bomber Command 1945, sold for industrial development 1962/63.

9. Population:

1086 – 147 recorded
1327 – 83 taxpayers paid £8 0s. 3d.
1524 – 102 taxpayers paid £11 16s. 1d.
1603 – 410 adults
1674 – 232 households
1676 – 709 recorded

1801 – 1,734 inhabitants
 1831 – 2,313 inhabitants
 1851 – 2,587 inhabitants
 1871 – 2,396 inhabitants
 1901 – 2,004 inhabitants
 1931 – 1,733 inhabitants
 1951 – 1,631 inhabitants
 1971 – 1,660 inhabitants
 1981 – 1,782 inhabitants

10. Benefice: Vicarage

1254 Valued £33 6s. 8d.
 Benefice of Vicar £5
 Portion of Sacriste £2. £40 6s. 8d.

1291 Valued £33 6s. 8d.
 To Vicar of Eye £5. 6s. 8d.
 Portion to Sacriste of Eye £1 6s. 8d. £40 0s. 0d.

1535 Valued £11 4s. 7d.
 Vicarage house rebuilt 1733

1831 Curate, stipend £145 p.a. Gross income £333 p.a.
 Incumbent also holds Presbend in Cathedral of Lichfield
 and Rectory of Great Bradley.
 Tithes commuted: Vicarial £451 5s. and Rectorial £783
 15s. 1842.
 Valued £331. 13 acres 1R 17P glebe 1855.

1912 Nett value £300. 14 acres glebe and residence.

Patrons: The King (1603), Sir E. Kerrison (1831), Dowager Lady
 Bateman (1912)

11. Church Saints Peter and Paul

(Chancel with clerestory and aisles, clerestoried nave,
 aisles, W. tower)

1086 Church of St. Peter and 2 carucates free land.
 Formerly appropriated to Eye Benedictine Priory

13th cent. S. doorway (inside south porch attached to wall is dole
 table with tablet above showing uses to which porch and
 dole table were put). 'Suffolk Churches', by H.M. Cautley
 p.283.
 Scratch dial and flying buttress over south chancel aisle
 door

14/15th cent. Chapel (flying buttress supports wall in front of priests
 doorway) and arcades and walls of south and north aisle.

15th cent. Tower (101' tall with battlements and pinnacles): wills of
 15th cent. leave money to repairs tower.

1643/44 Puritanical Vandals (William Dowsing) destroyed seven
 superstitious pictures and six windows

1868/69 Restoration including roofs, west gallery removed, walls cleaned (revealing remains of a Doom found over chancel arch).

Seats: 800 (300 free)

11a. Other religious institutions

Priory St. Peter and the Apostles For Benedictine Monks

c.1080 Robert Malet built monastery upon gaining Lordship of Eye and conferred it with the parish church of St. Peter
1138 King Stephen confirmed
Originally subordinate to the Abbey of Bernay in Normandy
1384 Released from foreign domination by Richard II
1291 Valued £66 10s. 2½d.
1534 Prior and six others signed supremacy
1535 Nett income £161
1537 Granted to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk
1543 Gross value £184 9s. 7¾d.
Remains exist in grounds of private house

12. Nonconformity etc:

1603 Two non-conformists
1676 17 papists, 17 non-conformists
Baptist church (Church Street) built 1810, rebuilt 1868, seats 500.
Wheelwrights shop and one other house set aside for worship 1816.
Wesleyan chapel built (Castle Street) 1877, seats 120

13. Manorial:

1066 Manor of 12 carucates belonging to Edric
1086 Manor of 12 carucates belonging to Robert Malet
1066 Manor of 30 acres belonging to Wulfric under patronage of Edric
1086 Manor of 30 acres belonging to Robert Malet, held by Walter of Caen
1066 Manor of 120 acres belonging to Swartrik under patronage of Harold
1086 Manor of 120 acres belonging to Robert Malet

Eye/Eye Sodemere

12th cent. Stephen, Earl of Boulogne owns
1160 Reverted to the Crown and then by diverse ownerships to
1226 Henry, Earl of Brabant owns

c.1319	Held in dower by Isabel, Queen of Edward I
1330	John de Eltham owns (linked to Haughley, Thorndon and Clopton)
1337	Yearly value £207 12s. ½d. Grant includes Eye Castle, town, manor, Honor, Thorndon Manor and the Hundreds of Hartismere and Stow, and the reversion of Benhall Manor and the manor and town of Haughley. Robert de Ufford, Earl of Suffolk owns (linked to numerous manors throughout Suffolk)
1385	Sir Michael de la Pole has grant in tail male (linked to numerous manors throughout Suffolk)
1538/39	Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk owns (linked to numerous manors throughout Suffolk)
1553	Mary Tudor (later Mary I) owns
1625	Formed part of jointure of Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles I
1698	Charles, Lord Cornwallis owns (annexed to Culford)
18/19 th cent.	Matthias Kerrison owns (linked to Oakley Park, annexed to Thelnetham and absorbed Flemworth Hall)

Sub-Manors:

Netherhall

14 th cent.	John Thorpe owns
15 th cent.	John, Duke of Suffolk owns (value 20 marks)
1524	Robert Garneys owns (linked to Kenton)
18 th cent.	Sir Robert Rous owns (linked to Henham)
19 th cent.	Earl of Stradbroke owns

Flemworth Hall

15 th cent.	Michael Brett owns
1590	Bedingfield family owns (linked to Bedingfield)
1764	Charles, Viscount Maynard owns (linked to Hoxne) and by descent to the Kerrisons (absorbed by main manor) to Lady Bateman 19 th cent.

Cranley/Cranley Hall

1086	Estate of 100 acres belonging to Ralph de Limes
1530	Sir John Cornwallis owns (linked to Oakley, and Stuston)
1676	Miles Edgar owns (linked to Occold and Wetheringsett)
1805	Charles, Marquis of Cornwallis died seised (absorbed at some point by main manor)

Eye Hall/Eye Priory Manor

11 th cent.	Monastery built by Robert Malet
1537	Granted to Charles Brandon (absorbed by main manor)
1598	Granted to Edward Honing at yearly rent of £20. 2s. 9d.

Lands are tithe free.

14. Markets/Fairs

1086	Market recorded Fair recorded 1135
1679	Saturday market referred to as small due to Diss taking trade Fair for cattle and toys Whit Monday 1759 Saturday market 1792 Mayor of Eye holds court of 'pie poudre' 18 th cent.
1891/1912	Monday market for corn Note: 'pie poudre': Court of Piepowders – a summary court formerly held at fairs and market to administer justice among itinerant dealers etc. Piepowder = a wayfarer/itinerant merchant

15. Real property:

1844	£6,475 rental value
1891	£8,848 rateable value
1912	£8,278 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844–1912	Land sub-divided
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17. Resident gentry:

1679	Oliver Cheney, gent Charles Cornwallis, Baron Cornwallis of Eye Thomas Deye, Esq. Henry Edgar, gent
1680	One Lord, two gents
1844	J. Barker, H. Gooch, L. Hayward, S. Peck, R. Pretymann, R. Riches, R. Wallis
1912	W. Short JP, Sir Thomas H. Tacon, Kt. DL., Rev. R.J. Tacon MA, JP., and Col. J.I.M.S. Wilkins DSO

18. Occupations:

1086	One fishery, two mills
1500–1549	1 husbandman
1550–1559	2 yeomen, 1 tailor, 2 masons, 1 haberdasher, 2 mercers, 1 cook, 1 weaver, 1 clothier, 1 vicar
1600–1649	12 yeomen, 1 cordwainer, 1 tailor, 4 husbandmen, 1 burgess, 1 spinster, 3 butchers, 1 carpenter, 1 grocer, 2 labourers, 1 weaver, 1 baker, 1 woollen weaver
1650–1699	12 yeomen, 3 cordwainers, 2 tailors, 1 husbandman, 1 draper, 4 spinsters, 1 surgeon (surgeon), 2 clerks, 1 glazier/plumber, 4 blacksmiths, 3 butchers, 1 innholder, 1

	linen weaver, 1 millwright, 1 carpenter, 2 grocers, 1 glover, 1 labourer, 1 clothier, 1 apothecary, 1 woollen draper, 1 collarmaker, 1 knacker, 1 farmer, 1 joiner, 1 miller, 1 tanner, 1 woollen weaver, 2 oatmeal makers, 1 chapman, 1 barber
1679	Women employed in the making of Bone-lace
1831	204 in agriculture, 186 in retail trade, 30 professionals, 23 in labouring, 124 in domestic service, 14 others
No dates	Industries: Handmade boots, Tallow chandlery, Pillows, bobbins and wheels for thread, Flaxworks employed 200 workers until the fire of (1864)
1844	Excise officer, bank agent, 2 solicitors, glass/china dealer, 2 booksellers/stationers, 6 fire & life officers, 15 victuallers, 1 hotel keeper, 6 teachers, 3 attorneys, 5 bakers, 7 beerhouse keepers, 4 blacksmiths, 6 shoemakers, 2 brewers, 4 bricklayers, 4 butchers, 2 chemists/druggists, 1 coachmaker, 3 millers, 28 farmers, 5 grocer/drapers, 2 hairdressers, 3 ironmongers, 6 joiners, 4 drapers, 4 milliners, 2 painter/plumbers, 3 saddlers, 3 shopkeepers, 2 straw hat makers, 1 stone mason, 5 surgeons, 6 tailors, 2 tinnerns, 3 watchmakers, 2 wheelwrights, 2 wine/spirit merchants
1912	2 police officers, 10 fire officers, 2 registrars, Adnams brewery, Colchester Brewing Co. Ltd., 11 publicans, 3 chemists, teacher of music, 1 dressmaker, 2 plumber/glaziers, 4 solicitors, 2 beer retailers, laundry, 5 drapers, 5 bakers, chimney sweep, 3 surgeons, 2 wheelwrights, 10 apartment house owners, 4 tailors, 3 corn merchants, 2 saddlers, 4 shopkeepers, 3 butchers, 3 grocers, 2 smiths, 21 farmers, fried fish dealer, 2 auctioneers, 4 pork butchers, cooper, iron monger, 5 boot/shoemakers, 2 cycle dealers, poulterer/pig killer, 2 hairdressers, 2 watchmakers, 4 hotel owners, 2 builders, cattle dealer, 2 furniture brokers, 2 bill posters, 2 millers, insurance agent, mason, master of workhouse, printer, 2 photographers, fancy repository, artist, wardrobe dealer, nurseryman, stocking knitter, coach builder, tobacconist, blacksmith, wool buyer, laundress, head gamekeeper, tinsplate worker, agricultural implement maker.

19. Education:

	Grammar school: foundation unknown but believed to predate 1548.
	Extended and adapted to take boarders between 1876 and 1881.
	1891 Accommodates 70 inclusive of 30 boarders
1581–1778	8 schoolmasters/tutors mentioned
1818	1 endowed boys school (20 attend)
	1 Sunday school (80 attend)
1833	1 endowed day school (20 attend)

2 unendowed infant's schools (30 attend)
 1 unendowed daily school (27 attend)
 2 girls boarding schools (27 attend)
 3 Sunday schools (77 attend Church of England, 133 attend Baptist, 70 attend Wesleyan Methodist)
 Eye Grammar school (1867) (36 day pupils)
 2 boarding schools, 1 large parish school and an endowed grammar school 1855
 Infant school established 1848
 1891 National schools attended by approximately 310 pupils
 New schools built 1911 to accommodate 110 inclusive of 25 boarders
 1912 Public Elementary school, average attendance 313

20. Poor relief:

1776	No return
1803	£959 17s.
1818	£2,236 13s.
1830	£3,314 13s.
1832	£2,369 9s.
1834	£2,302 2s.

21. Charities:

Town Lands:

1840 Corporation charities: 281 acres 2R in lands tenement, adjoining churchyard, 2 cottages with yards, town hall, rents and profits applied according to several trusts by the bailiffs and burgesses of Eye.

Kent's Charity:

1593 by will of Francis Kent: Grammar school.

Magdalen Almshouse:

Foundation date unknown. Had ceased to exist 1840.

Town Houses:

1575/76 Conveyed to trustees by deed of Edward Golding: 2 cottages in Magdalen Street – occupied rent free by poor families.

Harwin's Charity:

1840 Rent from house of £2 10s. p.a. applied to poor women and maiden women of Eye at Christmas.

Small's Charity:

1654 by will of Wiliam Small: Rent charge of lands of Eye Park of £21 p.a. £10 of which is applied to Eye for education and maintenance of poor male children of 16 years and thereafter to apprenticing.

Woodman's Gift:

1572 by deed poll of Edward Golding: 5 marks to finding 2 parish clerks

Bedingfield Almshouses:

15th cent. by provision of Nicholas Bedingfield: tenement in Lambeth Street for free habitation of 4 poor widows/old maids of Eye with pension of 2s. monthly, 1 new gown every 2/3 years and cart of firewood every year.
1840 Occupied by 8 poor women.

Lomax Charity:

1640/41 by deed of Ann Lomax: distribution of £1 p.a. to 8 poor maids/widows over 50 years.

22. Other institutions:

Eye Hospital of St. Mary Magdalen

1329 Hospital for leprous persons founded just outside town (in vicinity of Magdalen Street)
In use up to time of Dissolution

Guild of Our Lady and Guild of St. Peter 1524

6 Friendly Societies (200 members) 1803

Hartismere Union Workhouse: 18th cent. building, rebuilt 1854, 178 inmates 1881

Police Station, 3 banks, Gaslight & Coke Co., Fire station 1912

Bedingfield Almshouses 1840 8 poor women occupy

23. Recreation:

1844 Annual Races on Cranley Green in July
Small theatre
14 inns/public houses/hotels, 2 brewers, 7 beerhouses
1891 16 public houses, 2 beerhouses
Eye Medical Club
Reading Room and library established 1877 at
Workmen's Hall (50 members).

1912 Eye Rifle Volunteer Corps established 1860 120 strong
 Freemasons Lodge No. 1663 held at White Lion Hotel.
 4 hotels, 11 public houses, 2 beer retailers
 Castle Museum opened 1910
 Horticultural Society and annual show (held in August)
 Lodge of Foresters meet at White Lion Hotel
 Oddfellows meet at Cherry Tree Inn
 Freemasons
 Eye Medical club
 Reading room and library
 Territorial Battalion (5th) Suffolk Regiment

24. Personal:

William Hoare: 1705–1792 original member of the Royal Academy
 'Peeps at Eye' by Rev. G.F. Maclear 1862.
 'Historical Reminiscences of Eye', by Mary E. Short 1922.

25. Other information:

Eye Castle: Robert Malet reputed builder of castle. Lord Cornwallis said to have defended it against Parliamentary Party but was captured about 1655. This is local myth and is totally without foundation as Lord Cornwallis can be placed in France at this time. Cromwell's army demolished the castle 17th cent. and windmill was erected on the mound. Castle ruins still visible.

'Eye Castle', by Rev. H.A. Harris. PSIA Vol. XIV, p.249.

'Eye Castle', PSIA Vol. V, p.104.

Honor of Eye said to have comprised of 120 manors

'On the Castle and Honor of Eye', PSIA Vol. II, p.117.

King John Charter: Granted 1205 but disputed in 1956/59. It was suggested that the first real Charter was granted 1575. The 1205 Charter being given to Eye in error (articles in parish folder).

Fire and flood attacked Eye within 6 months of each other 1864.

Eye County Magistrates sat for last time 1955 thereafter became Eye Petty Sessional Division Court.

Battle helmet 1530 returned to Eye by Belgian antique dealer having previously been stolen from the church 1977. 'The Ancient Helmets in Eye Church', by J.S. Corder. PSIA Vol. XV, p.1.

Guildhall 15th cent. restored 1876. Used as Grammar school 1598, offered for sale 1980.

'Excavations on the site of the priory church and monastery of St. Peter, Eye', Antiquaries Journal Vol. 7, p.299.

'Additional Particulars of the Grant of Arms to the Borough of Eye', by Rev. C.R. Manning. PSIA Vol. VII, p.33.

‘Note on the Red Book of Eye’, by Rev. F.E. Warren. PSIA Vol. XIV, p.259.

‘Inventory of Monastery of Eye 1536’. PSIA Vol. VIII, p.105.

‘Eye Vicarage: The Documentation of a parsonage house’, by S. Coleman. PSIA Vol. 34, p.49.

‘Armorial Insignia of the Borough of Eye’, by G.A. Carthew. PSIA Vol. VI, p.85.

‘The Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Eye’ PSIA Vol. II, p.125.

‘Set of small toilet implements in bronze found in an urn at Eye’. Proceedings of Society of Antiquaries Vol. 3, p.186,

‘Anglo–Saxon Urn: Eye’, PSIA Vol. II, p.218.