

1. Parish: Lavenham

Meaning: Lafa's valley and enclosure

2. Hundred: Babergh

Deanery: Sudbury (–1864), Sudbury (Western) (1864–1914), Lavenham (1914–)

Union: Cosford

RDC/UDC: (W. Suffolk) Cosford RD (–1974), Babergh DC (1974–)

Other administrative details:

Melford Petty Sessional Division
Sudbury County Court District

3. Area: 2,898 acres (1912)

4. Soils: Some slowly permeable calcareous/non-calcareous clay soils, some fine loam over clay with slowly permeable subsoils with slight risk of seasonal waterlogging or water erosion

5. Types of farming:

1086		Wood for 100 pigs, 3 horses at hall, 1 mill, 37 cattle, 69 pigs, 302 sheep, 80 goats, 6 beehives, 1 arpent (1¼ acres) vines
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 as preparation for corn products
1937	Main crops:	Wheat, beans, barley, beet, turnips
1969	Trist:	More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet, better loams attract orchard and soft fruit growers

6. Enclosure:

7. Settlement: 1977 Small town development with market square. Some scattered farms. Site of Roman road forms southern boundary. Line of disused railway crosses parish SW–NE

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 179, 1801 – 331, 1851 – 404, 1871 – 427,
1901 – 467, 1951 – 524, 1981 – 694

8. **Communications:**

Road: To Brent Eleigh, Gt. Waldingfield, Acton, and
Cockfield
1844 Carriers to Ipswich on Monday and Thursday
to Clare on Wednesday
to Bury St. Edmunds on Wednesday and
Saturday
1891 Pony and trap.
Carriers to Bury St. Edmunds on Wednesday and
Saturday.
to Sudbury on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
and Friday
1912 Carriers to Bury St. Edmunds on Wednesday and
Saturday
to Ipswich on Monday, Wednesday and
Thursday
to Long Melford on Tuesday and Friday
to Sudbury on Monday and Thursday

Rail: 1891 Lavenham station: Bury St. Edmunds–Long Melford
Line opened 1865, closed for passengers 1961,
closed for goods 1965
Holloways factory occupies site of station 1987

Water: River Brett

Air: Standard bomber airfield built 1943, opened 1944,
occupied by 487th Bomb Group USAF equipped with
Liberators. Non-operational from August 1945. Sold to
Alston family 1958.
David Ince set British straight line distance gliding record of
315 miles from Lavenham to Sennen, Cornwall 1958
John Roasts aviation museum occupied site 1960's.
Control tower private house 1977. Sunday market began
trading from airfield 1977)

9. **Population:**

1086 – 67 recorded
1327 – 44 taxpayers paid £5 3s. 2d.
1524 – 196 taxpayers paid £179 13s. 10d.
1603 – 711 adults
1674 – 266 households
1676 – approx. 915 adults
1801 – 1,776 inhabitants
1831 – 2,107 inhabitants
1851 – 1,811 inhabitants

1871 – 1,886 inhabitants
 1901 – 2018 inhabitants
 1931 – 1,451 inhabitants
 1951 – 1,489 inhabitants
 1971 – 1,480 inhabitants
 1981 – 1,696 inhabitants

10. Benefice: Rectory

1254 Portion of Rector £16 13s. 4d.
 Portion of monks of Colum (Earls Colne) £4
£ 20 13s. 4d.

1291 Valued £18 13s. 4d.
 Portion of Colum £5 £23 13s. 4d.

1535 Valued £20 2s. 11d.

1831 1 Curate, stipend £153 p.a. Glebe house. Gross income
 £709 p.a. Valued £658 1835
 Good residence, 144 acres glebe. Tithe commuted for
 £850 p.a. 1842

1912 Nett value £504. 144 acres glebe and residence

Patrons: Thomas Skynner (1603), Gonville and Caius College,
 Cambridge (1831–)

11. Church: St. Peter and St. Paul

(Chancel, N. & S. chapels, nave of 6 bays, lofty
 clerestory, S. porch, W. tower (141'))

Erected between 1480 and 1530 by John de Vere, Earl of
 Oxford and a family of Lavenham clothiers called Spring.
 Including the tower, the church measures 200' x 68'

1530 Chapels erected by Simon Branch (the northern) and
 Thomas Spring the younger (the southern)

1486–95 Lower part of tower. Upper section 1520–25

16th cent. N. and S. chancel aisles

1861–1867 Restoration

Seats: 400 appropriated, 400 free (1873)

12. Nonconformity etc.:

1606 1 papist, 3 persons not receiving communion for 7 years

1611 1 popish recusant

1676 2 papists, approx. 13 non conformists, 1 professed and
 1 suspected recusant
 Independent chapel 1697

1708–1838 11 houses set aside for worship
 Independent chapel built 1827
 Congregational chapel endowed with good house for
 minister 1908
 Wesleyan chapel, Primitive Methodist chapel and

Salvation Army Hall

13. Manorial:

1066	Manor of 6 carucates held by Wulfin, a thane of King Edwards
1086	Manor of 6 carucates belonging to Aubrey de Vere
1066	Manor of 2 carucates held by Alwy under St. Edmunds
1086	Manor of 2 carucates belonging to Frodo the Abbots brother

Lavenham Manor

1086	Held by the de Vere family
1604	Sir Thomas Skinner owns
1611	Paul D'Ewes owns (linked to Milden, Long Melford, Brent Leigh and Stowlangtoft)
1731	John Moore owns (linked to Cavendish, Long Melford, Glemsford and Cockfield) Custom of Borough English prevails

14. Market/Fairs

	Charter for market and fair 1248/49
	Charter for fair granted to Robert de Vere 1289/90 held on Whit Sunday
	Good market held on Tuesday 1686, obsolete by 1844
1732–1734	Fair held on October 10 th for butter and cheese (obsolete by 1891)
	Fair held on Shrove Tuesday and October 10 th 1792
	Fair held on Shrove Tuesday for horses 1885
	Sale for cattle 1 st Monday every month 1891
	Sunday market began trading from airfield 1977

15. Real property:

1844	£3,755 rental value
1891	£5,804 rateable value
1912	£5,720 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

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

1674	Lady Vere
1680	2 gents recorded
1686	Child MD
1844	T.B. Branwhite and W. Peck

1912 Councillor E.W. Roper, Major F.C. Pearson and C.S. Wolton JP

18. Occupations:

- 1446–1485 1 barker (tanner/one who strips bark from trees), 1 weaver, 1 smith, 1 fuller, 1 shoemaker.
- 1500–1549 1 yeoman, 1 cordwainer, 1 clothier, 1 priest, 1 butcher, 35 clothmakers, 3 dyers, 1 servant, 15 weavers, 1 husbandman, 3 fullers, 1 baker, 2 shearmen (one who cuts woollen cloth) (additional information for this group from 'The Springs of Lavenham' by B. McClenaghan)
- 1550–1599 2 carpenters, 2 tailors, 1 blacksmith, 5 yeoman, 5 clothiers, 1 priest, 1 mason, 2 butchers, 1 clothmaker, 1 miller, 1 haberdasher, 1 weaver, 1 draper, 2 husbandmen, 1 beer brewer, 1 fuller, 1 tiler, 1 parson, 3 shearmen, 1 tanner, 1 chandler
- 1600–1649 1 ploughwright, 2 carpenters, 2 tailors, 1 blacksmith, 15 yeomen, 1 cordwainer, 1 wool comber, 3 clothiers, 3 butchers, 1 miller, 1 weaver, 2 drapers, 1 physician, 1 labourer, 1 felt maker, 1 joiner, 1 mercer, 1 husbandman, 1 bay maker, 1 maltster, 1 shoemaker, 1 baker, 1 shearman, 2 inn holders, 1 bricklayer, 1 clothworker
- 1650–1699 2 carpenters, 1 gardener, 4 tailors, 1 blacksmith, 10 yeomen, 3 cordwainers, 1 linen draper, 3 wool combers, 15 clothiers, 5 butchers, 3 millers, 3 grocers, 1 glover, 1 barber, 6 say makers, 2 fellmongers (dealers in skins/hides especially sheepskin), 2 weavers, 1 physician, 2 labourers, 1 feltmaker, 1 plumber, 1 glazier, 2 husbandmen, 1 hosier, 2 collarmakers, 3 maltsters, 2 clerks, 1 chapman (a buyer), 3 inn holders, 6 spinsters, 1 clothworker, 1 comber, 1 doctor of medicine, 3 say weavers, 1 comb maker.
- Once famous for manufacture of blue cloth. When this declined parish continued manufacture of serges, shalloon, says, stuffs, calimancoes, hempen cloth and fine worsted yarns
- 1831 135 in agriculture, 155 in retail trade, 14 in manufacturing, 14 professionals, 13 in labouring, 38 in domestic service, 65 others
- 1844 2 woolstaplers, silk mill, many employed in spinning fine worsted yarn and in making straw plait as a domestic industry.
- Surgeon, straw plait and hat manufacturer, organist, vet, miller, overseer, silk throwster, chemist/druggist, coach-maker, cabinet maker, brazier/tinner, watchmaker, 9 publicans, 7 teachers, 5 bakers, 3 blacksmiths, 7 boot/shoe makers, 2 bricklayers/plasterers, 3 butchers, 2 coopers, 13 farmers, 2 glass/china dealers, 3 grocer/drapers, 2 hairdressers, 1 ironmonger/wood shovel manufacturer, 3 joiners, 3 maltsters, 2 milliners, 3

painters/plumbers/glaziers, 3 saddlers, 6 tailors, 1
 wheelwright, 3 worsted and poplin yarn manufacturers
 Sugar Beet factory built 1868 (1st in England), closed
 1871
 Horse hair seating manufacturers 1891
 Malting and steam corn mills established 1865
 Straw plaiting for bonnets employed 300 women 1851 but
 by 1861 industry was in decline with only 100 workers
 employed
 Manufacture of horsehair seating and coconut fibre
 matting established 1861
 1912 Postmaster, factory surgeon, parish clerk, police officer,
 fire brigade, teachers, station master, watchmaker,
 stationer, 4 farmers, millers, 2 banks, 5 butchers, relieving
 officer, land agents, chimney sweep, saddler, hairdresser,
 plumbers, 7 publicans, 2 bootmakers, 2 surgeons,
 seedsman, hardware dealer, 5 bakers, wheelwright,
 grocer/draper, egg receiving station, 2 shopkeepers, pork
 butcher, road surveyor, vet, plumber, fruiterer, tailor,
 draper, builder, joiner, gas works, coal merchant, chemist,
 3 farm bailiffs, seed merchant, second hand clothes
 dealer, smith, carrier, 2 cycle agents, 4 grocers, 2 horse
 hair seating manufacturers, tobacconist, beer retailer,
 commercial traveller, hair cloth manufacturer, coal dealer,
 dealer in game, tailor, fishmonger, boot repairer, cattle
 dealer, cabinet maker, solicitor, insurance agent, builder,
 pig dealer, blacksmith, saddler.
 E.R. Holloway Ltd., cosmetics manufacturers moved to
 Lavenham from Glemsford 1966

19. Education:

1696–1776 8 schoolmaster/tutors recorded
 Free Grammar School: of ancient origins, endowed
 c.1647 by Richard Peacock. Situated in Barn Street,
 rebuilt 1699 said to be in decline 1818, 20 boarders, 5
 boys attending free 1833, closed 1887, sold 1890 for
 £370 which was invested for educational purposes
 1818 2 National schools supported by charity.
 4 boys schools (116 attend), 8 girls schools (129 attend).
 Dissenters Sunday school (80 attend)
 1833 2 daily schools supported by Stewards Charity (54 attend)
 3 infants schools (46 attend)
 2 day and Sunday National schools (150 attend)
 1 Independent Sunday school (75 attend) and 1
 Methodist Sunday school (73 attend)
 Boys and Girls National schools built 1839 (150 attend),
 enlarged 1857 200 attend
 1844 280 Sunday scholars, 4 academies
 1891 1 music/day school music teacher

British school established 1852, new building erected
1861 (162 attend), demolished 1964
Public Elementary school built to accommodate 438
1896, average attendance 1912 275 + 126 infants
School Council formed 1903

20. Poor relief:

1776	£728 0s. 11d.
1803	£1,508 6s. 2d.
1818	£2,985 16s
1830	£2,806 10s.
1832	£2,534 10s.
1834	£1,625 1s.

21. Charities:

1702 4 tenements with gardens repaired at parish expense. Sold
1915 and money applied to charity
1887 Bequest of Charles Warters: Interest of £200 distributed
annually in coals at Christmas.
'Inquiries into Charities of Lavenham' 1829

Grammar School:

Origins ancient but dates not known
1647 by will of Richard Peacock: (earliest known bequest).
Annuity for teaching of 5 children.

Old Town Lands:

Part devised 1573 by will of William Lummas.
Diverse lands and tenements let at £186 p.a. applied to repair
and maintenance of cottages or almshouses, purchase of
hempen cloth for shirts and in donations to the poor in distress

Bell Rope Land

1840 1R 32P rents applied to church rate

Copingers Charity

1621 by will of Rev. Henry Copinger: 5 acres 2R 6P let at £25.
10s p.a. divided between 4 poor aged persons.

Corder's Charity

1840 £2 10s. p.a. to the funds for relief of poor lying-in women.
40s. p.a. for distribution among poor.

Crème's Charity

1655 by will of Isaac Creme: 57 acres 3R 37P let at £61 5s.p.a.
distribution among 24 poor persons

Stewards Charity

1806 by will of Henry Steward: Dividends of £53 17s. 6d p.a.
applied to support of two national schools

Disters Charity/ Blowers Charity

1534 Allen Dister and will of Peter Blower 1654: Moneys left for
poor relief (discontinued 1840)

22. Other institutions:

Guilds of Holy Trinity, St. Peter and Our Lady 1524
Guild of Corpus Christi acquired its Charter from John de Vere
1529
Guildhall of Corpus Christi built c.1529
1776 Workhouse (80 inmates)
1803 4 Friendly Societies (105 members)
County Bridewell and House of Correction situated within
Guildhall 1689
1891 Gas works, police officer
Lloyds Bank opened in Georgian house 1905
1912 Police station, Fire Brigade
Town lock-up built 1833
Lavenham Preservation Committee formed 1944

23. Recreation:

1550–1599 1 beer brewer
1600–1649 2 inn holders
1650–1699 3 inn holders
The Anchor public house in existence 1425 as were the
Swan and the White Horse
1844 9 public houses
1891 2 hotels, 6 public houses, public bakehouse.
Oddfellows Lodge established 1842
Court of Foresters established 1873
1912 7 public houses, 1 beer retailer
Salvation Army established 1884
20th cent. Royal British Legion, Cub Scouts,
Lavenham Weavers Club established 1984 (30 members)
Women's Institute formed 1919
Over 60's Club formed 1957, 20 members 1984
Flower Festival with craft market 1977

24. Personal:

Sir T. Skinner: Lord Mayor of London 1608
John de Vere, 13th Earl of Oxford 1485 led vanguard of Kings army at
Battle of Bosworth
Thomas Spring: 13th cent. rich clothier much involved with the
prosperity of Lavenham. 'The Springs of Lavenham' by Barbara
McClenaghan 1924

Jane Taylor: 1783–1824 author of 'Original Poems' and Rhymes for the Nursery' (Twinkle Twinkle Little Star is one)

'The Smithy: The Story of the Huffeys, Blacksmiths of Lavenham', by K. Carter, Suffolk Fair Vol.5 p.24.

John Constable (landscape painter) and Arthur Young (agricultural journalist) were both once pupils at the grammar school 18/19th cent.

Notable people of Lavenham (see p.60 of 'Lavenham' by F. Lingard Ransom)

Col. Thomas Gayer-Anderson CMG, DSO 1881–1960 and Major R.G. Gayer-Anderson 1881–1945 founded and organised Lavenham Preservation Committee.

Thomas Lavenham: 15th cent. author

Richard de Lanham 14th cent. 50 of his works held in British Museum. Born Lavenham, beheaded during Wat Tylers insurrection 1381.

Mrs. Ann Smythies: 18th cent. reputation for the cure of the 'Kings evil' –granted licence by Bishop of Norwich 1743 to practice her art.

25. Other information:

'Lavenham, 700 years of Textile Making' by D. Dymond and A. Betterton.

'Lavenham Past, Present and Future' by D.W. Insall.

'Lavenham; Buildings of Architectural and Historical Importance' 1961.

'Lavenham in War Time 1914–18', by Rev. G.H. Lenox-Conyngham

Market Place: formed in 13th cent. At this time it is said large brick culverts were built under main streets (some remain).

Edward III gave special charter 1330 authorising his tenants in Lavenham to pass free of tolls throughout England.

Tradition states Flemish weavers settled in town 14th cent.

Riots provoked by heavy taxation 1524/25.

Weaving of blue cloth had almost ceased 1618.

Town hit by plague and small pox 1699, 27 died. 180 died in 1712, 282 in 1713, over 500 contracted the disease 1778.

The Guildhall of Corpus Christi built c.1529. Used as County Bridewell and House of Correction 1689, closed 1787. Then used as workhouse, wool store, town hall, almshouses and accommodation for evacuees 1939–45.

'The Guildhall, Lavenham', by Rena Gardiner for the National Trust 1975. National Trust acquired property in 1951.

'The Corpus Christi Guildhall, Lavenham', by S.P. Andrews, Suffolk Fair Nov.1979, p.11.

Whipping post and stocks stood close to Bridewell 1689.

Town government by 6 Burgesses (known as Headboroughs) ceased 1775. Town was never issued with Borough Charter.

Coach known as 'The Lavenham Machine' operated from The Swan c.1764.

Bull-baiting took place of market place every 5th November until stopped by Rev. Buck c.1792. Continued however on Washmere Green, finally ending 1842.

Gas Works opened 1863.

Guildhalls of Holy Trinity in Prentice Street and of St. Peters Guild in the High Street were demolished 1879 and 1896.

Electric and water supplies installed 1934/36.

Telephone Exchange opened 1925.

Old fire station, which stood next to Guildhall, demolished 1954. Fire engine (first acquired 1725) displayed in Guildhall.

Swan Hotel: incorporated an adjoining wool hall in its extension 1965. Date of original inn unknown. John Girling was its first landlord in 1667.

Parish contains 220 listed buildings.

The Priory: built 1536, Grade 1 listed building. Open to public

Residential conversion of mill and maltings in Prentice Street 1986.

Exterior of Guildhall used as film set for 'The Luck of Barry Lyndon', 'Witchfinder General', 'Canterbury Tales' and other TV period dramas 1974.

Lavenham Conservation and Village plan produced 1972.

Architectural view of proposed by-pass 1973, in parish folder (RO).

Preservation Committee responsible for restoration of the Great House, Toll Cottage, High Hall House and others.

High Hall House endowed as hostel for arts students (The Gayer–Anderson Hostel for Art Students).

Little Hall: built 1450, opened as HQ for Suffolk Preservation Society 1975.

Med. market cross, said to have replaced timber cross 1501.

'Account of Roman Silver Coins found at Lavenham, Suffolk in June 1874, by C. Babington. PSIA Vol.IV, p.414.

The Guildhall of Corpus Christi, Lavenham', by J.S. Corder. PSIA Vol.III p.113.

'Lavenham Church Tower', by H.C. Malden. PSIA Vol.IX p.370.

'Notes on Lavenham Church and Parish', by E.M.Dewing. PSIA Vol.VI p.105.

'Further notes upon Lavenham Church', PSIA Vol. VI p.225.

'Restorations at Lavenham', PSIA Vol. XV, p.82.

'The Airmans Valhall', by C. Elliott. Suffolk Fair (April 1983) p.58.

'This was Lavenham', by K.M.A. Carter. Suffolk Review Vol. 4, p.247.

'Focus on Lavenham', by E. Rayner. East Anglian Magazine Vol.31 ,p.343.

'Lovely Lavenham In Summer', by J. Walker. East Anglian Monthly (June 1984), p.23.

Lavenham Uncluttered'. East Anglian Life Vol.9 (July 1967).