

1. Parish: METFIELD

Meaning: Meadow field

2. Hundred: Hoxne

Deanery: Hoxne

Union: Hoxne (1835–1907), Hartismere (1907–1930)

RDC/UDC: (E. Suffolk) Hoxne RD (1894–1934), Hartismere RD (1934–1974), Mid Suffolk DC (1974–)

Other administrative details:

Civil boundary change 1885, gains part of Withersdale
Hoxne Petty Sessional Division
Harleston County Court District

3. Area: 2,338 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.

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:	Course of crops varies usually including summer fallow as preparation for corn products.
1937	Main crops:	Not recorded
1969	Trist:	More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet.

6. Enclosure:

7. Settlement:

1975 Airfield occupies large portion of eastern sector of parish. Small compact development around central church. Metfield Common situated to east of settlement. Scattered farms.

Inhabited houses:

1674 – 54, 1801 – not recorded, 1851 – 143, 1871 – 142,
1901 – 104, 1951 – 136, 1981 – 114

8. Communications:

Road: To Mendham, Fressingfield, Linstead Magna and S. Elmham
St James
1891 Carrier to Harleston daily
1912 Carriers to Harleston

Rail: 1891 5 miles Harleston station: Waveney Valley line opened
1855/60, closed to passengers 1953, closed for goods 1966

Air: Metfield airfield: built 1943 as USAF base. Returned to RAF
1945 although active use curtailed. Sold 1964/5 returned to
agriculture

9. Population:

1086 – Not recorded
1327 – 68 taxpayers paid £4. 18s. 8d.
1524 – 38 taxpayers paid £5. 6s. 10d.
1603 – 176 adults
1674 – 74 households
1676 – Not recorded
1801 – 558 inhabitants
1831 – 733 inhabitants
1851 – 651 inhabitants
1871 – 670 inhabitants
1901 – 437 inhabitants
1931 – 357 inhabitants
1951 – 435 inhabitants
1971 – 282 inhabitants
1981 – 313 inhabitants

10. Benefice: Donative (1570–), Vicarage (1831)

1254 Not recorded
1291 Not recorded
1535 Not recorded
1603 Curate, stipend £13 6s. 8d.
1831 Glebe house, gross income £76
1844 45 acres glebe. Neat parsonage house approximately 1
mile from church.
Modus of £11 p.a. in lieu of small tithes.
Great tithes commuted for £450 1843
1891 47 acres glebe
1912 Nett value £80. 47 acres glebe and residence.
Tithes commuted for £380 4s. 6d.

Patrons: Parishioners (1831–)

11. Church: St John Baptist
(Chancel, nave, S. porch, W. tower)

14th cent. Tower with 15th cent. upper stage topped by 4 stone figures 1712
15th cent. Main structure
1643 Puritanical Vandals (William Dowsing) destroyed Peters Keys and Jesuits Badge in windows and inscriptions in brass and ordered steps to be levelled
19th cent. W. gallery

Seats: 280 (1915)

11a. Other religious institutions:

12. Nonconformity etc:

Primitive Methodist chapel built 1866, seats 220

13. Manorial:

Formerly considered a hamlet of Mendham and was included as part of Mendham Manors of Kings Hall, Walsham Hall, Mendham Priory, Thorpe Hall and Mendham Hall.

Metfield/ Metfield Jermy

c.1325 Sir John Jermy owns
1682 Francis Sancroft owns (linked to Fressingfield and Withersdale)
1724 Walter Plumer owns (linked to Weybread, Withersdale, Chediston, Cookley and Halesworth)
c.1833 William Rayley owns
1885 Chauncy Arthur Taylor owns (linked to Withersdale)

14. Markets/Fairs:

15. Real property:

1844 £3,001 rental value
1891 £2,753 rateable value
1912 £1,878 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844–1912 Land sub-divided

17. Resident gentry:

18. Occupations:

1500–1549	1 yeoman
1550–1599	3 yeomen, 1 husbandman, 1 weaver
1600–1649	4 yeomen, 1 linen weaver, 2 carpenters, 1 wheelwright, 1 labourer
1650–1699	7 yeomen, 2 linen weavers, 1 carpenter, 2 husbandmen
1831	117 in agriculture, 25 in retail trade, 3 professionals, 25 in labouring, 40 in domestic service, 12 others
1844	Surgeon, tailor/drapery, schoolmaster, bricklayer, 2 beerhouse keepers, victualler, 2 blacksmiths, 3 boot/shoemakers, 2 butchers, 3 corn millers, 3 grocer/drapers, 4 wheelwright/carpenters, 23 farmers, brick/tile maker
1912	Sub-postmaster, 3 school teachers, boot/shoemaker, 17 farmers, blacksmith, 3 builders, miller, grocer/drapery, publican, beer retailer, general dealers/carrier, grocer, farm bailiff

19. Education:

	Schoolhouse in existence (1590)
1818	1 day school (30 attend) 1 Sunday School (63 attend)
1833	4 daily schools (68 attend), 1 Sunday School (63 attend)
1844	Schoolmaster recorded
	Church of England schools built 1874 to accommodate 124, enlarged 1893, average attendance 1912 100
	Night school with average attendance 1912 of 16

20. Poor relief:

1776	£196 11s. 5d.
1803	£450 0s. 5½d.
1818	£1,070. 10s.
1830	£1,111 19s.
1832	£1,134 12s.
1834	£942. 13s.

21. Charities:

Rent Charges:

1541	by will of Thomas Maplehead: 62. [sic] 8d. p.a. to church repairs
1600	by will of James Scarlet: 20s. p.a. distributed in bread at Christmas
1762	by will of Richard Knapp: applied to distribution of bread

Welton's Charity

1556 by will of John Welton: 6 acres let at £6 p.a. applied to poor relief

22. Other institutions:

Town house occupied by poor persons in existence 1692
1776 Workhouse (30 inmates)
1803 Friendly Society (19 members)
Guildhallin existence 1556
1912 Attached to the school are:
Savings bank for the children
Library and miniature rifle range
provided by the schoolmaster

23. Recreation:

1844 2 beerhouses, The Huntsman and Hounds public house
1891/1912 1 beerhouse/retailer, The Huntsman and Hounds public house

24. Personal:

25. Other information:

Metfield Hall: moated farmhouse, rebuilt c.1838/50 on site of earlier houses believed destroyed by fire.
Churchyard said to hold large boulder stone of the ice age 1908.
Visual map of settlement history. 'A History of Suffolk', by D. Dymond and Peter Northeast, p.23.
Published parish registers 1559–1837 'Suffolk Parish Registers: Marriages', Vol. III, p.105.
'Extract from Metfield churchwardens account books' by N.M. Bower. PSIA Vol. XXIII, p.128.
'Makynge ye butts' 1551.
Parish contains common of 41 acres 1844.
Fieldwalking. PSIA Vol.36, p.48.