

1. Parish: Polstead

Meaning: Place by a pool

2. **Hundred:** Babergh

Deanery: Sudbury (–1864), Sudbury (Eastern) (1864–1884),
Hadleigh (1884–)

Union: Cosford

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

Other administrative details:

Ecclesiastical boundary change to create Leavenheath
1863, repeated 1930

Civil parish boundary change 1884 parts transferred to
Assington and Stoke by Nayland

Part of Boxford annexed to Polstead 1885, repeated 1935
and 1952 to create Leavenheath

Boxford Petty Sessional Division

Hadleigh County Court District

3. **Area:** 3,414 acres (1912)

4. **Soils:**

- Mixed:**
- a. Deep fine loam over clay and clay soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loam over clay soils. Calcareous subsoils in places.
 - b. Coarse loam and sandy soil, locally flinty and in places over gravel. Slight risk water erosion.

5. **Types of farming:**

1086 1 mill, wood for 80 pigs, 8 horses at hall, 28 cattle, 40 pigs, 150 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 Marshal: Course of crops varies usually including summer fallow as preparation for corn products.

1937 Main crops: Barley, beans, wheat, oats. Celebrated for its cherries.

1969 Trist: More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet

6. Enclosure:

1817 408 acres in Polstead, Nayland with Wiston, Assington and Stoke by Nayland enclosed under Private Lands Act 1815.

7. Settlement:

1953/77 Small well spaced development on the edge of Polstead Park. Church situated in Park. Secondary centres at Mill Street (Polstead Mill), Polstead Heath (Methodist Chapel) Bower House Tye (Brewers Arms Inn) and Hadleigh Heath. Scattered farms

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 84, 1801 – 101, 1851 – 196, 1871 – 198, 1901 – 165, 1951 – 188, 1981 – 257

8. Communications:

Road: A1071 crosses the parish NE–NW. Roads to Stoke by Nayland, Boxford, Kersey. Hadleigh, Shelley
1844 Carrier to Ipswich on Monday and Friday
To Sudbury on Tuesday and Saturday
1891 Carrier to Colchester on Wednesday and Saturday

Rail: 1891 5 miles Hadleigh Station. Colne Valley line opened 1847

Water: River Box

9. Population:

1086 – 52 recorded
1327 – 32 taxpayers paid £2 11s. 2d.
1524 – 55 taxpayers paid £6 12s. 6d.
1603 – 228 adults
1674 – 103 households
1676 – 170 adults
1801 – 655 inhabitants
1831 – 960 inhabitants
1851 – 943 inhabitants
1871 – 853 inhabitants
1901 – 669 inhabitants
1931 – 618 inhabitants
1951 – 544 inhabitants
1971 – 615 inhabitants
1981 – 692 inhabitants

- 10. Benefice: Rectory**
- 1254 Portion of Rector £13 6s. 8d.
 Portion of parson of Boxford 10s. £13. 16s. 8d
- 1291 Valued £3 6s. 8d.
- 1535 Valued at £22
 'One fair parsonage house newly builded' (1636) extract from 'Glebe Terrier transcript'
- 1831 Glebe house. Gross income £630 p.a.
 Valued £627 1835
 Good residence. 17 acres glebe. Modus of £871 p.a.1841
 Chuurchyard enlarged by ¼ acre 1883
- 1912 Nett value £520. 17 acres glebe and residence
- Patrons:** John Brande (1603), F.R. Reynolds (1831), St. Johns College Oxford (1873—)

- 11. Church St. Mary (stands in Polstead Park)**
 (Chancel, nave, aisles, N.and S. porches, W. tower with spire)

11/12th cent. Piers of nave, tower arch
 c.1300 Main tower structure with later spire
 14th cent. Aisles
 1643 Puritanical Vandals (William Dowsing) destroyed 45 superstitious pictures

Seats: 200 appropriated, 200 free (1873)

- 12. Nonconformity etc.:**

1676: 10 nonconformists
 1730–1838 8 houses set aside for worship
 Chapel in existence 1839
 Baptist chapel built 1849 at Hadleigh Heath
 Primitive Methodist chapel at Polstead Heath 1908

- 13. Manorial:**

Polstead Manor

1066 Manor of 4 carucates held by Robert Sweins father
 1086 Manor of 4 carucates belonging to Swein of Essex
 12th cent. Henry of Essex owns
 13th cent. Sir Hugh de Polstead owns
 1361 Thomas de Lambourne owns passing to de Cheyne Family
 1406 Sir Richard Waldegrave owns (linked to Boxford, Acton, Assington, Stoke by Nayland, Preston, Monks Eleigh, Edwardstone and Bures)

Sub-manors:

Sprotts

1573 Sir Thomas Rivett owns (linked to Stoke by Nayland)
18th cent. Sir Joshua Rowley owns (linked to Stoke by Nayland)

Casteles:

15th cent. Sir Robert Chamberlain owns (linked to Lt. Waldingfield and Stoke by Nayland)
17th cent. Richard Brand owns (linked to Edwardstone, Gt. Cornard, Bures and Boxford)

Newstead/Newstead Hall

1523 Thomas Spring owns (linked to Gt. Waldingfield, Cockfield, Preston, Milden and Long Melford)
17th cent. Richard Brand owns (absorbed by Casteles)

14. Markets/Fairs

Fair held on June 16th for toys 1759, held on Polstead Green, abolished 1872

15. Real property:

1844 £3,936 rental value
1891 £3,951 rateable value
1912 £2,885 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844/191 Land sub-divided

17. Resident gentry:

1680 1 gent recorded
1844 C. Tyrell and Rev. J.Coyte
1912 E.B. Cooke JP

18. Occupations:

1550–1549 7 husbandmen, 1 miller
1550–1599 10 yeomen, 16 husbandmen, 1 tailor, 2 carpenters, 1 clerk, 1 miller, 1 weaver
1600–1649 12 yeomen, 5 husbandmen, 1 tailor, 1 clothier, 1 blacksmith, 1 miller, 1 basketmaker

1650–1699	12 yeomen, 3 husbandmen, 1 say weaver, 1 carpenter, 1 clothier, 1 clerk, 1 miller, 1 weaver
1831	137 in agriculture, 47 in retail trade, 2 professionals, 26 in domestic service, 15 others
1844	2 shopkeepers, steam/watermill, tailor, blacksmith, beerhouse keeper, 2 publicans, grocer/cabinet maker, plumber/glazier, teacher, butcher, 18 farmers, 2 joiner/wheelwrights, 6 shoemakers
1912	Sub-postmistress, teachers, 13 farmers, 2 shopkeepers, millers, butcher, 3 publicans, blacksmith, baker, grocer, brewer, builder, 3 thatchers, head gardener

19. Education:

1818:	3 day schools for girls, 1 for boys (72 attend), 1 Sunday school.
1833	4 infant schools (40/50 attend), 2 day and Sunday schools (60 attend, 10 paid for by parish)
1844	Mr Tyrell supports school for poor girls School Board established 1875 School built 1876 (130 attend), enlarged 1902, average attendance 1912 137 'Polstead School 1876–1976' bound typescript in RO

20. Poor relief:

1776	£332 18s. 9d.
1803	£313 5s. 22½d.
1818	£1,596 1s.
1830	£1,335 8s.
1832	£1,626 17s.
1834	£1,070 7s.

21. Charities:

1840	Interest on various bequests distributed on St. Thomas's Day among the poor
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22. Other institutions:

1776	Workhouse (30 inmates)
1803	Friendly Society (41 members) Guild of Holy Trinity 1524

23. Recreation:

1844	1 beerhouse, 2 public houses
1891/1912	1 brewer, 3 public houses, Womens Institute 20 th cent.

24. Personal:

Red Barn Murder: of Maria Martin b.1801 occurred in this parish 23.2.1827. William Corder was executed for the murder August, 1828. The Red barn burned down 1824. Memorabilia of the murder held at Moyses Hall Museum, Bury St. Edmunds.

25. Other information:

Corders House: 15th cent. incorporates ships timbers within its construction (home of William Corder). Grade II listed.

Four incidents of incendiaries provoked by agrarian unrest 1843/44.

Two cases of arson provoked by the Swing Riots 1830.

Polstead Hall: parts date from 16th cent. Rebuilt late 18th cent. White brick mansion. Park of 100 acres well stocked with deer.

Gospel Oak collapsed 1953: traditionally believed to be nearly 1300 years old. Earliest use attributed to Saxon missionaries led by Bishop Cedd (7th cent.). Gospel Oak Services held around the tree every August (continued at Polstead hall after 1954). Young oaks reported as growing around base of old tree 1961.

Polstead Bridge built 1814.

Community Shop opened 1984.

Polstead's famous cherries are called 'Polstead Black'.

'Polstead church and parish', by L.S. Harley.

'Polstead Church', PSIA Vol. XI, p.220.