

1. Parish: Preston (renamed Preston St. Mary (1957))

Meaning: The homestead of the priests

2. **Hundred:** Babergh

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

Union: Cosford

RDC/UDC: (W. Suffolk) Cosford R.D. (–1974), Babergh D.C. (1974–)

Other administrative details:

Civil boundary change 1885 part transferred to Kettlebaston
Melford Petty Sessional Division
Sudbury County Court District

3. **Area:** 2,006 acres (1912)

4. **Soils:**

Mixed: Some slowly permeable calcareous/non calcareous clay soils. Some fine loam over clay with slowly permeable subsoil, slight risk seasonal waterlogging or 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:	Wheat, beans, barley, peas, turnips
1969	Trist:	More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet. Better loams attract orchard and soft Fruit growers.

6. **Enclosure:**

7. Settlement:

1953 Small well spaced community with church situated at eastern extremity. River Brett flows across NE of parish. Scattered farms.

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 23, 1801 – 39, 1851 – 74,
1871 – 72, 1901 – 71, 1951 – 71,
1981 – 69

8. Communications:

Road: To Thorpe Morieux, Kettlebaston and Brent Eleigh

Rail: 1891 2 miles Lavenham station: Bury St. Edmunds–Long Melford line opened 1865, closed for passengers 1961, closed for goods 1965

Water: River Brett

9. Population:

1086 – 33 recorded
1327 – 18 taxpayers paid £1 18s. 8d.
1524 – 25 taxpayers paid £0 19s. 8d.
1603 – 120 adults
1674 – 28 households
1676 – 109 adults
1801 – 309 inhabitants
1831 – 321 inhabitants
1851 – 386 inhabitants
1871 – 354 inhabitants
1901 – 288 inhabitants
1931 – 240 inhabitants
1951 – 243 inhabitants
1971 – 176 inhabitants
1981 – 208 inhabitants

10. Benefice: Vicarage (–1660), Rectory (1660–)

1254 Portion of Rector £10
Portion of Prioress of Wix, Essex 13s. 4d.
Portion of Sees (St. Martin de Sees in Normandy) 6s. 8d.
Portion of the vicar 13s. 4d.
Lay fee of St. Trinity £3

£14 13s. 4d.

1291 Valued £12
Portion of Wix 15s.
Portion of Sees 8s.

£13 3s. 0d.

1535 Valued £5 6s. 3d.

1831 Consolidated 1660
 Glebe house unfit for occupation. Gross income
 £572 p.a. New rectory house built 1835. 6 acres glebe.
 Modus of £514 15s. p.a. in lieu of tithes 1838
 1912 Nett value £320. 8 acres glebe and residence

Patrons: Robert Ryce (1603), Emmanuel College, Cambridge (1660–)

11. Church St. Mary
 (Chancel, nave of 3 bays, clerestory, aisles, N. porch,
 W. tower)

1086 Church + 7 acres land
 14th cent. Chancel, remainder 15th/16th century
 1868 Tower rebuilt. General restoration.
 Chancel rebuilt because of 'almost hopeless delapidation'
 (Cautley)

Seats: 60 appropriated, 182 free (1873)

12. Nonconformity etc:

1627 1 popish recusant
 1644 Rector accused of being 'popishly affected' by
 The Suffolk Committee for Scandalous Ministers
 1 house set aside for Methodist worship (1822)
 1823–1841 2 houses set aside for worship

13. Manorial:

1066 Manor of 2 carucates held by Wulfward a free man under
 Stigand
 1086 Manor of 2 carucates belonging to Roger of Poitou

Preston Hall/Church Hall

1155 Aubrey de Vere, Earl of Oxford owns (annexed to Earls
 Manor, Cockfield and linked to Somerton and Lavenham)
 17th cent. Sir Thomas Skinner owns (linked to Lavenham)
 1689 Henry Copinger owns
 1833 200 acres, 10 acres wood sold for £6,510 to
 Sir Benjamin Collins Brodie
 1885 Mrs. Calvert owns

Sub-manors:

Swifts

1480	Suggested as a division of lands of Earls of Oxford John Smith vested manor in the Guild of Jesus College, Bury St. Edmunds
1548	Richard Corbet owns passing to Poley family (linked to Boxford, Somerton and Hartest)
1588	Waldegrave family own (linked to Boxford, Acton, Assington, Stoke by Nayland, Monks Eleigh, Edwardstone, Bures and Polstead)
1833	Consists of 150 acres farm and timber
1849	Sir B. Brodie owns (absorbed by main manor)

Maisters

1316	Gilbert de Kentwell gave 1 carucate to Masters of Commandry of Knights Hospitallers or Knights of St. John of Jerusalem of Battisford in Frankalmoign
1572	Robert Rookwood owns (linked to Acton, Stoke by Nayland)
1615	Ownership disputed between Edmund Cooke and James Alington
1715–1856	John Wright owns

Mortimers

c.1297	Sir William de Mortimer owns
c.1556	Poley family owns (absorbed by Swifts)
1565	Rookwood family owns (absorbed by Maisters)
1752	Elizabeth Gage owns

Priory

1219	Thomas de Mendham granted manor to Prior of Holy Trinity, Ipswich
1609	Sir Robert Jermyn owns (linked to Gt. Waldingfield)
1836	John Green owns
1905	Manor described as extinct

14. Markets/Fairs

15. Real property:

1844	£2,111 rental value
1891	£2,251 rateable value
1912	£1,604 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844	Land sub-divided
1891	Mr. J.E. Wright of Maisters, principal owner
1912	Trustees of J.E. Wright and Sir T.C.T. Warner of Brettenham Hall, principal owners

17. Resident gentry:

1680	2 gents recorded
1686	Gooday
1844	Rev. W.H. Shelford MA
1912	Rev. L.O. Asplen MA

18. Occupations:

1550–1599	4 yeomen, 1 carpenter, 1 husbandman, 1 wheelwright, 1 labourer
1600–1649	13 yeomen, 1 carpenter, 2 husbandmen
1650–1699	11 yeomen, 1 husbandman
1831	71 agriculture, 5 in retail trade, 2 labourers, 4 in domestic service
1844	9 farmers, 2 corn millers, blacksmith, wheelwright, shoe-maker, publican
1912	Sub-postmaster, teacher, 8 farmers, 3 shopkeepers, 4 farm bailiffs, publican, miller

19. Education:

1833	1 Sunday school (50 attend)
18	National school built 1843, enlarged 1889, 62 attend 1891
1912	Public Elementary school (74 attend)

20. Poor relief:

1776	£128 7s. 5d.
1803	£308 15s. 6½d.
1818	£595 11s.
1830	£649 14s.
1832	£603 15s.
1834	£391 12s.

21. Charities:

Ryce's Charity:

1637 by will of Robert Ryce: £5 p.a. to clothe 2 poor boys and their apprenticing

Green's Charity:

1814 by will of Mary Green: Dividends of £8 13s. 8d. p.a. applied to bread and fuel distributed among poor

22. Other institutions:

1776 Workhouse (16 inmates)

23. Recreation:

1844/1912 The Six Bells public house

24. Personal:

Robert Ryce 17th cent. Antiquary and Student of heraldry and philanthropist. Author of 'Breviary of Suffolk'.

25. Other information: