

1. Parish: Westhall

Meaning: Western valley

2. **Hundred:** Blything

Deanery: Dunwich (–1868), Dunwich (North) (1868–1914), North Dunwich (1914–1972), Halesworth (1972–)

Union: Blything

RDC/UDC: (E. Suffolk) Blything RD (1894–1934), Wainford RD (1934–1974), Waveney DC (1974–)

Other administrative details:

Blything Petty Sessional Division
Halesworth County Court District

3. **Area:** 2,318 acres (1912)

4. **Soils:**

Mixed:

- a. Slowly permeable calcareous/non-calcareous clay soils, slight risk of water erosion.
- b. Slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged, fine loam over clay soils.
- c. Some deep peat soils associated with clay over sandy soils, high groundwater levels, risk of flooding by river.

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 crop:	Wheat, barley, beans.
1969	Trist:	More intensive cereal growing and sugar beat.

6. **Enclosure:**

1853 112 acres of Westhall Common in Westhall enclosed under General Acts 1853

7. **Settlement:**

1958 Railway runs across parish from north-east to south-west. Airfield intrudes into southern sector of the parish. Small dispersed settlement with habitation at the church, Mill Common and Cox Common. Possible area of former settlement at Bacons Green. Few scattered farms.

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 41, 1801 – 48, 1851 – 99, 1871 – 107, 1901 – 95, 1951 – 94, 1981 – 110.

8. Communications:

Road: Roads to Spexhall, Sotherton and Brampton.

Rail: 1891 2¹/₂ miles Brampton station and 3 miles Halesworth station.

Brampton: East Suffolk line, opened 1854, closed for goods 1964, station demolished 1978.

Halesworth: Southwold–Halesworth line, opened 1879, closed 1929.

Halesworth–Beccles–Haddiscoe line opened 1854, closed 1959.

Air: Halesworth airfield: operational as American air base 1943, taken over by RAF 1945, closed 1946, site of turkey farm 1979

9. Population:

1086 – Not recorded

1327 – 24 taxpayers paid £2 2s. 6d.

1524 – 45 taxpayers paid £4 7s. 2d.

1603 – 133 adults

1674 – 46 households

1676 – Not recorded

1801 – 373 inhabitants

1831 – 442 inhabitants

1851 – 496 inhabitants

1871 – 474 inhabitants

1901 – 413 inhabitants

1931 – 342 inhabitants

1951 – 318 inhabitants

1971 – 260 inhabitants

1981 – 328 inhabitants

10. Benefice: Vicarage

1254 Valued £26 13s. 4d.

1291 Valued £26 13s. 4d. Portion of Homeston £1. £27 13s.

4d.

1535 Valued £10 2s. 3¹/₂d.

1603 Curate, stipend £10 2s. 3³/₄d.

1650 Valued £60
 1831 Curate, stipend £55. Glebe house unfit for occupation.
 Gross income £195 pa.
 1844 Rectorial tithes commuted for £478 10s., vicarial tithes for
 £150 pa
 1891 Neat residence.
 1912 Nett value £167. 82 acres glebe and residence.

Patrons: Dean and Chapter of Norwich (1603), Dean and Chapter of
 Ipswich (1650), Dean and Chapter of Norwich (1831–)

11. Church **St Andrew** (formerly apsidal)
 (Chancel, nave, south aisle, north porch, south-west
 tower)

Norman Nave (south aisle has traces of apse), west and south
 doorways.
 13th cent. Building enlarged and extended to north side, north aisle,
 lower stages of tower.
 14th cent. Chancel added.
 14/15th cent. South aisle
 1597 Pavement in chancel is decayed.
 17th cent. Upper stages of tower and north porch built.
 1882 Restoration

Seats: 350 (1915)

12. Nonconformity etc:

1597 Curate does not wear the surplice or catechise the youth.
 1878 Primitive Methodist chapel built, enlarged 1898.

13. Manorial:

Westhall Hall

13th cent. Crown property granted to Nicholas de Donewic/Dunwich
 c.1243 Hugh de Burgh owns (linked to Sotherton and Haughley)
 1376 Sir Robert de Swillington owns (linked to Westleton,
 Wissett, Yoxford, Blythburgh, Middleton and Walsham le
 Willows).
 1428 Inquisition post mortem of Sir George Hopton (linked to
 Westleton).
 1589 Thomas Feltham owns
 1613 Edmund Knevitt owns
 1622 Edmund Bohun owns
 c.1806 Alexander Adair owns (linked to numerous manors
 throughout Suffolk).
 1909 Capt Sir Frederick E.S. Adair owns (linked to Naughton,
 Fressingfield, Syleham, Wingfield, Creeting St Olave,
 Mickfield and Ringshall).

Custom of gavelkind prevails.

Sub-manors:

Empoles

No dates	William le Parker owns
1328	Bartholomew Empole owns
1423	Thomas Crofts owns
1533	Nicholas Bohun owns (subsequently absorbed into main manor).

Barringtons

1375	Sir John Barrington owns.
1562	Francis Bohun owns (subsequently absorbed into main manor). Consisted of 20 messuages, 4 tofts, 60 acres land, 10 acres meadow 40 acres pasture and £10 rents.

Bacon's at Wingfield

c.1305	Simon Bacon owns.
15 th cent.	Wingfield family owns (linked to Iken and Stradbroke).
1534	Andrew Manfeld owns.
1535	Nicholas Bohun owns (absorbed by Empoles).

14. Markets/Fairs:

1229	Grant of market and fair formerly held in Sotherton.
------	--

15. Real property:

1844	£2,300 rental value
1891	£2,929 rateable value
1912	£2,752 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844–1912	Land sub-divided
-----------	------------------

17. Resident gentry:

1674	Mr Bohun owns house with 14 hearths. Sir William Godbold has house with 7 hearths.
1679	Edward Bohun
1891	Rev. G. Girling MA

18. Occupations:

1500–1549	1 tailor, 2 husbandmen, 1 yeoman
-----------	----------------------------------

1550–1599	1 husbandman, 2 yeomen, 1 carpenter
1600–1649	1 tailor, 9 yeomen, 2 linen weavers
1650–1699	2 husbandmen, 12 yeomen, 1 blacksmith, 2 coopers, 1 carpenter, 1 linen weaver
1831	97 in agriculture, 11 in retail trade, 19 in domestic service, 12 others.
1844	Tailor, corn miller, victualler, 2 shoemakers, tinner/blacksmith, brewer/victualler, 2 wheelwrights, blacksmith, 23 farmers.
1912	Police officer, school mistress, 22 farmers, fruit grower, shoemaker, publican, blacksmith, higgler, wheelwright, miller, carpenter, grocer, shopkeeper.

19. Education:

1717 and 1726	Endowments by Rev Gregory Clarke and his wife for education.
1833	1 daily school (12 attend)
1844	Schoolmistress teaches 5 children to read.
1855	National school built, average attendance in 1912 of 78.

20. Poor relief:

1776	£89 9s. 10d.
1803	£166 6s. 9d.
1818	£412 2s.
1830	£559 6s.
1832	£656 5s.
1834	£666 15s.

21. Charities:

Clarke's Charity

1717	by will of Ann Clarke: £1 6s. for education.
1726	by will of Rev Gregory Clarke: £1 12s. for education. Cottage and 2 acres land for church repairs.

22. Other institutions:

1776	Workhouse (10 inmates)
1912	Police officer recorded

23. Recreation:

1844–1912	The Greyhound and The Racehorse public houses.
-----------	--

24. Personal:

1644/1699 Edmund Bohun: lived at Old Hall, author of 'A Geographical Dictionary' and 'A History of King James the Second's Desertion'.
Chief Justice of South Carolina.
Diary and autobiography in Dictionary of National Biography Vol V, p.306.

25. Other information:

Westhall Hall: built c.1570, part demolished 1808, rebuilt 1860/70.

Paradise Farm: 16th cent., north side of Cox Common.

Parish, pre 1859, held 4 greens/commons extending to 125 acres.

'Horse-trappings found at Westhall', by H. Harrod, Archaeologia, Vol. 36, p. 454.

'Westhall St Andrew', PSIA Vol. IV, p.447.

'Shards of a Belgic Vessel from Westhall', PSIA XXIX, p.223.