

1. Parish: Bentley

Meaning: Clearing overgrown with bent grass (Ekwall)

2. Hundred: Samford

Deanery: Samford

Union: Samford

RDC/UDC: Samford RD (- 1974), Barbergh DC (1974 -)

Other administrative details:

Samford Petty Sessional Division
Ipswich County Court District

3. Area: 2,875 acres (1912)

4. Soils:

- Mixed:**
- a) Deep well drained fine loam and sandy soils, locally flinty and in places over gravel. Slight risk water erosion
 - b) Deep often stoneless coarse loam. Some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged coarse and fine loam over sand

5. Types of farming:

1086		12 acres meadow, woodland for 42 pigs, 8 cattle, 7 pigs, 42 sheep, 1 mill at Dodnash
1500–1640	Thirsk:	Sheep-corn region, where sheep are main fertilizing agent, bred for fattening. Barley main cash crop. Also has similarities with wood-pasture region with pasture, meadow, dairying and some pig-keeping.
1818	Marshall:	Wide variations of crop and management techniques including summer fallow in preparation for corn and rotation of turnip, barley, clover wheat on lighter lands
1937	Main crops:	Wheat and barley
1969	Trist:	More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet

6. Enclosure:

7. Settlement:

1953 Section of Roman road forms N.W. boundary. Railway crosses parish S-E with junction travelling W. Settlement well spaced with no obvious centre of development. Church isolated. Scattered farms

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 39, 1801 – 55, 1851 – 94, 1871 – 94, 1901 – 96, 1951 – 157, 1981 – 309

8. Communications:

Road: Roads to East Bergholt and Belstead
1891 Carrier passes through to Ipswich Tuesday and Friday
Rail: 1891 Railway station. Bentley – Hadleigh line opened (1847).
Closed for passengers (1932), closed for goods (1965).
Colchester – Ipswich line, opened (1849), closed for passengers (1966), closed for goods (1964)

9. Population:

1086 — 31 recorded
1327 — 16 taxpayers paid £1. 12s. 8d.
1524 — 16 taxpayers paid £2. 2s.
1603 — 141 adults
1674 — 39 households
1676 — Not recorded
1801 — 337 inhabitants
1831 — 363 inhabitants
1851 — 434 inhabitants
1871 — 433 inhabitants
1901 — 451 inhabitants
1931 — 403 inhabitants
1951 — 483 inhabitants
1971 — 808 inhabitants
1981 — 840 inhabitants

10. Benefice: Vicarage (1831) Discharged Vicarage (1844)

1254 Valued £10
1291 Valued £10
1535 Valued £6. 2s. 11d.
1831 1 curate, stipend £71 p.a. Glebe house unfit for occupation. Gross income £182 p.a. Tithes commuted – yearly modeses awarded to lay impropiators of £361. 5s. to Mr. Keene and £85 to Mrs. Deane (1838)
1844 20 acres glebe. £190. 15s. p.a. in lieu of tithes Old Vicarage house exchanged for mansion near church (1843)
1912 Nett value £133 p.a. 15 acres glebe, good residence

Patrons:

Lionel Talmach (1603), B. Keene (1831), C.E.R. Keene (1844), Rev. B. Ruck-Keene (1891)

11. Church St. Mary
(Chancel, nave, N. aisle, S. porch, W. tower)

1086	1 church + 30 acres free land
Norman	S. doorway
14 th cent.	Chancel and nave
15 th cent.	Tower
1856-58	Restoration (N. aisle added)
1883-84	Chancel restored and refitted

Seats: 350 (1831)

Other religious institutions:

Dodnash Priory Dedicated to St. Mary

Circa 1188	Founded by Baldwin de Toeni and his mother Alda for Augustinian Canons Patronage with Earls of Norfolk from (1272) till the dissolution (1525) Endowed with the tithe of Barley in Falkenham, 320 acres in Burstall, Bramford and others, a house and 39 acres in East Bergholt and Free warren, rents and lands in 15 parishes
1291	Interests valued £19. 19s. 5d. Consisted of Prior and 3 canons (5 canons in 1381)
1524	Suppressed and granted to Cardinal Wolsey as part endowment for college at Ipswich. Nett income at that time - £44 Used as farm house (19 th cent.)

12. Nonconformity etc:

1603	1 woman recusant
1606	2 recusants refusing to attend church

13. Manorial:

Pre 1066	Estate held by Earl Gyrth
Post 1066	Estate added to manor of East Bergholt as outlier of 2 carucates belonging to Earl Ralph the Constable
1086	Estate of carucates belonging to the King
1066	Manor of 40 acres held by Edmund

1086 Manor of 40 acres belonging to Count Alan
1066 Manor of 40 acres held by Thurston
1086 Manor of 40 acres belonging to Count Alan

Dodnash:

1066 Manor of 1 carucate held by Edwin under patronage of Edeva
1086 Manor of 1 carucate belonging to Count Alan

Bentley Hall

13th cent. Held by Hugh Talmache by Serjeanty. Extant of manor shows 200 acres arable land, worth 34s. 4p., 4 acres meadow, 30 acres heathland, 10 score acres of woodland and pasture
1571 Linked to Stowmarket, Capel St. Mary, Copdock and Hintlesham (Sir Lionel Tollemache)
1668 John Cudworth owns
1895 Hon. Stanhope Tollemache owns

Sub-Manors:

Old Hall Bentley/Church House

1086 Believed to have been lands belonging to Count Alan
15th cent. Linked to Levington, Nacton, Holbrook and Holton St. Mary (Fastolf family)
Circa 1532 Annexed to main manor (Lionel Talmach)
1662 Sir Philip Meadow owns
1798 Benjamin Keene owns and with which family manor remains

Bentley Falstolfs

1086 Also believed to have been lands belonging to Count Alan
13th cent. Linked to Nacton, Walton and Holbrook (Richard de Holbroke)
14th cent. Links at some point with Old Hall Bentley (Sir John Falstolf)
1529 Sir Richard Broke died seised
1662 Absorbed by Old Hall (Sir Philip Meadow)

Dodnash

1292 William Charles owns
14/15th cent. Dodnash priory
1525 Links with Falkenham, Felixstowe, Nacton, Burstall, Chattisham, Hintlesham, Wherstead, (Cardinal Wolsey who made it part of foundation of his college at Ipswich)
1530 Annexed to main manor (Lionel Talmache)

1662 Absorbed by Old Hall (Sir Philip Meadow)

14. Markets/Fairs

15. Real property:

1844 £3,320 rental value
1891 £4,515 rateable value
1912 £8,552 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844 A.W.J. Deane and J. Gosnall, principle owners
1891/1912 Land sub-divided

17. Resident gentry:

1673 Sir Philip Meadows
1844 Rev. W. Brooke MA

18. Occupations:

1500-1549 2 husbandmen
1550-1599 1 yeoman, 2 husbandmen, 1 miller, 1 labourer
1600-1649 9 yeomen, 4 husbandmen, 1 tailor
1650-1699 6 yeomen, 1 maltster, 1 husbandmen, 1 clerk, 1 brick
striker, 1 labourer, 2 blacksmiths
1831 77 in agriculture, 19 in retail trade, 17 in domestic service
1844 2 shopkeepers, 2 corn millers, victualler, 7 farmers
1912 sub-postmaster, schoolmistress, station master, farm
bailiff, 8 farmers, 3 publicans, 2 gardeners,
blacksmith/wheelwright, shopkeeper, maltsters

19. Education:

1818 1 Sunday school (65 attend)
1833 1 Sunday school (40 attend)
National school built (1854/56) for 123 children (70 attend
- 1891), enlarged (1904), average attendance (1912) -
78

20. Poor relief:

1776	£120	spent on poor relief
1803	£260. 14s.	spent on poor relief
1818	£449	spent on poor relief
1830	£300	spent on poor relief
1832	£300	spent on poor relief
1834	£240	spent on poor relief

21. Charities:

Duke's Charity:

1716 by will of Talmach Duke: £2 p.a. to be distributed in bread annually

22. Other institutions:

Guild has no land, ready money = 40s. Fraternity of Holy Trinity (1458)
1803 Friendly Society (20 members)

23. Recreation:

1844 'THE CASE IS ALTERED' PUBLIC HOUSE
1891/1912 3 public houses (THE RAILWAY TAVERN, THE CASE IS ALTERED and THE TANKARD)

24. Personal:

'The Tollemaches of Bentley' by Mrs. C. Roundell (PSIA Vol. XII p.97)
Couplet said to have been carved in manor house at Bentley:

"Before the Normans in to England came,
Bentley was my seat and Tollemache my name"

Great barn at Bentley Hall believed to have been one of largest historic barns in Britain

Outbuilding of unknown origin beside Bentley Hall is restored with funding by Historic Building Council (1977). Described as late period open hearth barn. Won award for restoration work (1979)

Village sign erected (1980)

25. Other information:

Archaeological Sites

Site of Dodnash Priory

Traces of field system

Linear ditch system

Stray finds: Mes. Tranchet axes

B.A. axe hammer

Rom. Sestertius

Neo. Flint axe

I.A. urn