

# 1. Parish: Brent Eleigh

**Meaning:** Possible meaning is Ilega's meadow which was burnt pre 1254

2. **Hundred:** Babergh

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

**Union:** Cosford

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

## Other administrative details:

Melford Petty Sessional Division  
Hadleigh County Court District

3. **Area:** 1,684 acres (1912)

4. **Soils:**

### Mixed:

- a. Some slowly permeable calcareous/non calcareous clay soils, slight risk erosion
- b. Small amount deep well drained fine loam, coarse loam and sandy soils, locally flinty and in places over gravel

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, oats, turnips
1969	Trist:	More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet

6. **Enclosure:**

7. **Settlement:**

1977 Small well spread development on edge of area called 'the Wilderness'. Church situated on extreme edge of settlement. Line of Roman road crosses parish W-E. Some scattered farms.

**Inhabited houses:** 1674 – 16, 1801 – 27, 1851 – 61, 1871 – 58, 1901 – 50, 1951 – 54, 1981 – 63

## 8. Communications:

**Roads:** To Lavenham, Monks Eleigh and Milden  
1891 Carriers to Lavenham on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

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

**Water:** Tributary of River Brett

## 9. Population:

1086 – 61 recorded (includes Monks Eleigh)

1327 – 23 taxpayers paid £2 11s. 6d.

1524 – 28 taxpayers paid £1 19s.

1603 – 160 adults

1674 – 20 households

1676 – 66 adults

1801 – 243 inhabitants

1831 – 290 inhabitants

1851 – 260 inhabitants

1871 – 219 inhabitants

1901 – 182 inhabitants

1931 – 195 inhabitants

1951 – 190 inhabitants

1971 – 134 inhabitants

1981 – 155 inhabitants

## 10. Benefice: Rectory

1254 Portion of the parson £12

Portion of the vicar £1

Lay fee of Abbot of St Osithe £2 £15 0s. 0d.

1291 Valued £10

To vicar of the same £8 13s. 4d. £18 13s. 4d.

1535 Valued £8

1831 1 curate, stipend £75 p.a. Glebe House. Gross Income £374 p.a.

Modus of £393 15s. p.a. in lieu of tithes 1838

1844 Good residence. 9 acres glebe

1912 Nett value £349. 9 acres glebe and residence

**Patrons:** Mr Roper (1603), Incumbent (1831), Brown family (1844)

## 11. Church: St Mary (Chancel, nave, S aisle, S porch, modern vestry, W tower)

14<sup>th</sup> cent. Main structure

14/15<sup>th</sup> cent. Tower

Scratch dial on S porch

1928 Amalgamated with Milden

**Seats:** 300 (1873)

**12. Nonconformity etc:**

**13. Manorial:**

1066 Manor of 2 carucates held by Holy Trinity with full jurisdiction  
1086 Manor of 2 carucates belonging to Archbishop Lanfranc for the monks supplies  
1066 Manor of 3 carucates held by Wulfward, a free man under Stigand  
1086 Manor of 3 carucates belonging to Tihel of Hellean

**Brent Eleigh Manor:**

No date Belonging to Illeigh/Ely family  
16<sup>th</sup> cent. Shelton family who had held manor since 13<sup>th</sup> cent. (linked to Milden)  
17<sup>th</sup> cent. Maurice Shelton owns (annexed to Barningham)  
1844 Thomas Brown DD acquired  
Services and customs in MSS held in British Museum Collection

**Sub-Manors:**

**Abbot's Hall**

1257 Gift of Nicholas Shelton to Abbey of St Osyth, Essex  
1542 Granted to Robert Goodwin  
1594 Edward Colman owns (linked to Gt Waldingfield and Milden)  
c.1606 Paul D'Ewes owns (linked to Milden, Long Melford, Lavenham and Stowlangtoft)  
1649 Robert Canham owns (linked to Milden)  
19<sup>th</sup> cent. Brown family owns (absorbed by main manor)

**Fenhall**

1312 Peter de Denarston has free warren  
1560 Robert Thorpe owns  
16/17<sup>th</sup> cent. Appears absorbed by Abbot's Hall

**14. Market/Fair:**

Grant of market to Shelton family 13<sup>th</sup> cent.  
Market/fair in existence 1260  
Obsolete well before 1844

**15. Real Property:**

1844 – £2,200 rental value  
1891 – £1,737 rateable value  
1912 – £1,346 rateable value

**16. Land ownership:**

1844 Thomas Brown, William Adair, principal owners  
1891 Land sub-divided  
1912 Edward Colman Brown, principal owner

**17. Resident gentry:**

Ralph Shelton, High Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk 1487  
Sir John Shelton, High Sheriff of Norfolk 1504  
Sir John Shelton the younger, High Sheriff of Norfolk 1522/1525  
1680 2 gents recorded  
1686 Richard Coleman and William Gilbert  
1912 Major F.C. Pearson JP

**18. Occupations:**

1500–1549 1 shearman (one who cuts wollen cloth), 2 yeomen, 1 weaver,  
2 clothmakers (additional information for this group from 'The  
Springs of Lavenham' by B McClenaghan  
1550–1599 1 yeoman, 2 labourers, 1 smith, 1 husbandman, 1 inn holder  
1600–1649 4 yeomen, 1 blacksmith, 1 carpenter, 1 husbandman  
1650–1699 5 yeomen, 1 husbandman, 1 wheeler (wheelwright/one who  
attends to wheels on spinning machines)  
1831 52 in agriculture, 14 in retail trade, 2 professionals, 5 in labouring,  
9 in domestic service, 1 other  
1844 7 farmers, carpenter, wheelwright, shoemaker, blacksmith, miller,  
beerhouse keeper  
1912 6 farmers, shopkeeper, sub-postmaster, teacher, miller, publican,  
Carpenter, 3 farm bailiffs, blacksmith

**19. Education:**

1818 1 day school (30 attend), 1 Sunday school (40 attend)  
1833 1 daily school (24 attend), 1 Sunday school (60 attend)  
National school built 1876 (35 attend), average attendance  
1912 45  
Endowment by Edmund Colman 1698 provided for apprenticing

**20. Poor relief:**

1776 £92 17s. 11d.  
1803 £177 15s. 1½d.  
1818 £398 12s.  
1830 £448 11s.  
1832 £396 2s.  
1834 £312 13s

## 21. Charities:

### Almhouses:

1736 Edward Colman built 6 tenements to house the poor and to provide clothing and wood + medical attendance from 77 acres in Preston let at £72 p.a. This was also applied to the repairs to same.

### Colman's Charity:

1698 by will of Edward Colman: Apprenticeship of one poor boy from either Brent Eleigh, Milden or Lavenham

### Poors Land:

1840 ½ acre called Monks Eleigh Mead let at 18s. p.a. distributed among poor not receiving relief

### Poors House:

1840 5 tenements

## 22. Other institutions:

Parochial library built and furnished by Dr Colman in the church 1700.  
Moved to building in churchyard 1859

## 23. Recreation:

1550–1599 1 inn holder  
1844 1 beerhouse  
1912 The Cock Inn public house

## 24. Personal:

Sir David Barran: owner of Brent Eleigh Hall, Chairman of BOAC, former Chairman of Shell plc and the Midland Bank 1970

## 25. Other information:

Brent Eleigh Hall: basically Elizabethan. Lutyens undertook alterations 1933/34

Wells Hall: 16<sup>th</sup> cent. moated house with gatehouse

Church contains unique medieval paintings (preservation undertaken by The Pilgrim Trust 1961)

St Margarets Gospel Book 11<sup>th</sup> cent. found in parish library c.1886, now housed in Bodleian library

'Brent Eleigh Church: An Illustrated History and Guide' by Canon J Fitch 1986

Cast iron bridge dated 1813, now disused stands at Bridge Farm