

# 1. Parish: Gislingham

**Meaning:** The enclosure of Gysela and of his people (Ekwall)

**2. Hundred:** Hartismere

**Deanery:** Hartismere ( -1897), Hartismere (North) (1897-1931), N. Hartismere (1931-1972), Hartismere (1972- )

**Union:** Hartismere

**RDC/UDC:** (E. Suffolk) Hartismere RD ( -1974), Mid Suffolk DC (1974- )

## Other administrative details:

Hartismere Petty Sessional Division  
Eye County Court District

**3. Area:** 2,271 acres (1912)

**4. Soils:**

Fine loam over clay soils. Subject to seasonal waterlogging. Some brick earth in parts.

**5. Types of farming:**

1086		Woodland for 46 pigs
1500–1640	Thirsk:	Wood-pasture region. Mainly pasture, meadow, engaged in rearing and dairying with some pigs 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, barley, beans, peas
1969	Trist:	More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet

**6. Enclosure:**

1804 171 acres enclosed under Private Act of Lands (1802)

**7. Settlement:**

1958 Railway runs through eastern portion of parish.

Elongated settlement with habitation in three centres: a) the church; b) the rectory and Six Bells Inn; c) Little Green. The main concentration being along Mill Street between (a) and (c). Scattered farms.

**Inhabited houses:** 1674 – 43, 1801 – 75, 1851 – 149, 1871 – 134, 1901 – 111, 1951 – 131, 1981 – 211

## 8. **Communications:**

**Road:** Roads to Thornham Magna, Finningham, and Burgate  
1844 Carrier to Ipswich Tuesday and Friday  
1891 Carriers pass through to Botesdale, Redgrave and Walsham le Willows Saturdays

**Rail:** 1891 2½ miles Mellis station: Mellis – Eye line, opened (1867), closed for passengers (1931), closed for goods (1964).  
Ipswich – Norwich line, opened (1849), closed for goods (1964), station closed for passengers (1966)

## 9. **Population:**

1086 — 67 recorded  
1327 — 43 taxpayers paid £2. 16s. 6d.  
1524 — 37 taxpayers paid £3. 6s. 2d.  
1603 — 173 adults  
1674 — 57 households  
1676 — 165 adults  
1801 — 473 inhabitants  
1831 — 660 inhabitants  
1851 — 696 inhabitants  
1871 — 595 inhabitants  
1901 — 438 inhabitants  
1931 — 412 inhabitants  
1951 — 391 inhabitants  
1971 — 410 inhabitants  
1981 — 601 inhabitants

## 10. **Benefice: Rectory**

1254 Valued £12  
Tithes of the Prior of eye 10s.  
£12. 10s. 0d.

1291 Valued £26. 13s. 4d.  
Portion to Prior of Eye 6s. 8d.  
£27. 0s. 0d.

1535 Valued £26. 1s. 5½d.

1831 Glebe house. Gross income £523 p.a.  
Valued £503 (1835)  
Tithes commuted for £624 p.a. 54 acres glebe (1839)

1912 Nett value £400. 54 acres glebe and residence

### **Patrons:**

Michael Bedingfyld (1603), Thomas Collyer (1831), Rev. D.D. Bennett (1912)

### **11. Church      St. Mary** (chancel, nave, north porch, embattled west tower)

14<sup>th</sup> cent.      Chancel  
Old tower fell in (1598)  
15<sup>th</sup> cent.      Main structure  
1639            Tower rebuilt

**Seats:**            376 (1855)

### **12. Nonconformity etc:**

1676            8 papists, 7 nonconformists  
Dwelling house set aside for worship (1707)  
United Methodist chapel built (1860)  
Baptist chapel (no dates)

### **13. Manorial:**

1066            Manor of 30 acres held by Alfgeat under patronage of Alsi  
1086            Manor of 30 acres belonging to Roger Malet  
1066            Manor of 30 acres held by Ringwulf under patronage of Alsi  
1086            Manor of 30 acres belonging to Roger Malet  
1086            Manor of 2 carucates belonging to Gilbert the Crossbowman and held by Alsi

### **Swatshall Hall**

13<sup>th</sup> cent.      William de Gislingham holds  
1380            Richard de Chirche owns (linked to Bedingfield)  
14<sup>th</sup> cent.      Links with Thornham Parva  
1555            John Wiseman owns  
17<sup>th</sup> cent.      Bedingfield family owns (linked to Eye)

### **Sub-Manors:**

#### **Rushes**

13<sup>th</sup> cent.      de Gislingham family owns (linked to main manor if not part of it)  
16<sup>th</sup> cent.      Hobart family owns (linked to Oulton, Trimley St. Mary and Bacton)  
1585            Sir Nicholas Bacon owns (linked to numerous manors throughout Suffolk)

## **Jennies**

14<sup>th</sup> cent. Sir Thomas Geney owns  
1531 Hobart family owns (absorbed by Rushes)

## **Gislingham/Goldingham/Goldingham Hall**

1230 William de Breton owns  
1802 Frere family owns  
1845 Henniker family owns

## **Lawford and Collesford**

1286 Knights Templar believed to have had house here  
Master of Knights Templar was seised, claimed view of  
frankpledge and assize of bread and beer  
1509 Crown property  
1544 Nicholas Bacon owns (absorbed by Rushes)

## **Gislingham and Heighams**

1447 Robert Crane seised (linked to Waldringfield)  
1802 George Wilson owns

### **14. Markets/Fairs**

### **15. Real property:**

1844 £3,091 rental value  
1891 £3,536 rateable value  
1912 £2,828 rateable value

### **16. Land ownership:**

1844-1912 Land sub-divided

### **17. Resident gentry:**

1680 1 gentleman  
1844 Rev. T. Collyer  
1912 Rev. D.D. Bennett MA

### **18. Occupations:**

1500-1549 1 yeoman  
1550-1599 1 parson, 9 yeomen, 1 turner, 1 clerk, 2 carpenters, 6  
husbandmen, 1 brickmaker, 1 locksmith, 1 tanner, 1  
thatcher, 1 wheelwright, 1 glover  
1600-1649 13 yeomen, 2 husbandmen, 1 cooper, 1 basket maker, 1  
thatcher, 1 metalman (worker/dealer in metal)

1650–1699 18 yeomen, 4 linen weaver  
 1831 103 in agriculture, 44 in retail trade, 3 professionals, 6 in labouring, 22 in domestic service, 4 others  
 1844 Grocer/drapers/tailor, 2 millers, beerhouse keeper, 2 blacksmiths, wheelwright, teacher, 2 shoemakers, victualler, carrier, saddler, surgeon, 20 farmers  
 1912 Sub-postmaster, 2 blacksmiths, 19 farmers, (4 cottage farmers), miller, grocer/drapers, publican, builder, surgeon, bootmaker, plumber/painter, 2 shopkeepers, pork butcher, insurance agent, vet, wheelwright, beer retailer

**19. Education:**

Will mentions repairs to school (1636)  
 4 schoolmasters/tutors recorded (1672-1733)  
 1818 1 endowed grammar school (10 attend)  
 1 endowed English school (46 attend)  
 2 small day schools  
 1833 1 endowed school (36 attend, 10 taught free)  
 1 endowed female school (14 attend, 7 taught free, 7 paid for by the rector)  
 1 Methodist Sunday school (110 attend)  
 Free school for teaching 10 boys (1855)  
 Public Elementary school built (18700 (mixed and infants), average attendance (1891) 80, average attendance (1912) 70

**20. Poor relief:**

1776	£195. 9s. 6d.	spent on poor relief
1803	£360. 1s. 9 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> d.	spent on poor relief
1818	£785. 18s.	spent on poor relief
1830	£1,066. 9s.	spent on poor relief
1832	£575. 17s.	spent on poor relief
1834	£578. 14s.	spent on poor relief

**21. Charities:**

**Town Estate:**

1840 House occupied by poor. 32 acres land at Thorndon and Gislingham and 1 house in Thorndon let at £46 p.a. applied to church repairs, education and parish houses for poor.

**Darby's Charity:**

1636 by will of John Darby: 8½ acres. Rents and profits of 10s. p.a. applied to repairs of highway, 10s. p.a. to repair of church paths, 20s. p.a. to repair of school, residue for distribution among poor.

1840 Lands let at £12 p.a. residue applied to cloth for poor

**Small Bequests:**

Of 17<sup>th</sup> cent. to education and poor relief

**22. Other institutions:**

1803 1 guild recorded (1524)  
Friendly Society (41 members)

**Preceptory of Knights Templars:**

Founded (1222-26)  
Brother Thomas de Stamford was Preceptor (1305)  
Changed to Knights Hospitalers 91309)  
Said to have been devastated (1338)  
Dissolved (1553). Granted to John Grene and Robert  
Hall, valued £3. 4s.

**23. Recreation:**

1844-1912 1 beerhouse and The Six Bells public house

**24. Personal:**

**25. Other information:**

Swateshall Hall: allegedly rebuilt by Charles Bedingfield (18<sup>th</sup> cent.).  
Attempted arson suspected (1843). Barn and stables extensively damaged.

Mr. Basil Brown is said to have identified site of Knights Templars Preceptory  
at 13 acres field called Temple Close (1961)

Manor Farm (formerly Brands) identified with Templars' Estate.

'Gislingham murals' PSIA Vol. XX p.110

'Brief history of Gislingham' Suffolk Review Vol. III p.286

**Archaeological Sites**

Med. moated sites (CRN 5561-5564, 5567, 5570, 5571, 5573)

Un. Cropmark (CRN 5566)

Med. toft (CRN 5767)

Stray finds: Sax. Pottery (CRN 5577)  
Rom. ring (CRN 1162)

Scatter finds: Med. pottery kiln (CRN 5565)

Pottery (CRN 5574, 5575, 7566)  
Building material (CRN 7565)  
Rom. burnt flint patch (CRN 5568)  
Pottery (CRN 5569, 5572)  
Sax. Pottery (CRN 5576)