

1. Parish: Hitcham

Meaning: High meadow/enclosure

2. Hundred: Cosford

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

Union: Cosford

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

Other administrative details:

Civil boundary change 1885, 1935. Gained part of Brettenham 1885
Rationalization of boundary with Brettenham 1935
Hadleigh Petty Sessional Division and County Court District

3. Area: 4,308 acres (1912)

4. Soils:

Mixed

- a. Slowly permeable calcareous/non calcareous clay soils. Slight risk of water erosion
- b. Deep well drained fine loam, coarse loam and sandy soils, locally flinty and in places over gravel. Slight risk of water erosion
- c. Fine loam over clay soils with permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Some calcareous/non calcareous slowly permeable clay soils

5. Types of farming:

1086		32 ½ acres meadow, wood for 20 pigs, 11 cobs, 30 cattle, 60 pigs, 175 sheep, 42 goats, 2 beehives
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, barley, beans

1969 Trist: More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet

6. Enclosure:

7. Settlement:

1980 Possible line of Roman road crosses parish NW–S. Large well spaced development along line of ‘Hitcham Causeway’. Church situated at southern extremity of development and slightly to SE. Secondary settlements at Cross Green to the north, Cooks Green to the NW and Water Run. Scattered farms.

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 88, 1801 – 123, 1851 – 222, 1871 – 229, 1901 – 193, 1951 – 200, 1981 – 239

8. Communications:

Road: To Great Finborough, Brettenham, Kettlebaston, Wattisham and Bildeston
1891 Carriers to Stowmarket daily pass through Bury St Edmunds on Wednesday and Saturday
1912 Carriers to Stowmarket daily

Rail 1891 5 miles Lavenham Station: Bury St Edmunds–Long Melford line opened 1865, closed for passengers 1961, closed for goods 1965

9. Population:

1086 – approximately 115 recorded
1327 – 52 taxpayers paid £4 0s. 10d.
1524 – 54 taxpayers paid £6 4s. 2d.
1603 – 200 adults
1674 – 110 households
1676 – Not recorded
1801 – 746 inhabitants
1831 – 1,022 inhabitants
1851 – 1,037 inhabitants
1871 – 974 inhabitants
1901 – 755 inhabitants
1931 – 689 inhabitants
1951 – 632 inhabitants
1971 – 633 inhabitants
1981 – 644 inhabitants

10. Benefice: Rectory

1254 Valued £20
1291 Valued £26 13s. 4d.
1535 Valued £26 13s. 4d.

1831 Glebe house. Gross income £903 p.a.
 Good residence, 26 acres 39p. glebe. Modus of £1,159
 in lieu of tithes 1840
 1912 Nett value £631 p.a., 28 acres glebe and residence

Patrons:

The King (1603), The Crown (1831–)

11. Church

All Saints

(Chancel, nave of 5 bays, clerestory, aisles, S. porch
 W. tower)

1086 Church and 2 acres t.
 14th cent. Nave and chancel; N. doorway
 15th cent. Tower, W. doorway
 1878 Restoration

Seats: 144 appropriated, 292 free (1873)

Note: Site of Saxon? church/chapel found near Brick House Farm
 c.1984

12. Nonconformity etc:

1627 2 persons negligent in attending church and receiving
 communion
 1725–1838 7 houses set aside for worship
 Chapel built at Cross Green 1836
 1844 Baptist and Primitive Methodists chapels listed. Baptist
 chapel converted to Church Mission room 1888
 seats 100

13. Manorial:

1066/1086 Abbot of St Etheldreda held 11 carucates land but not as
 manor
 1066 Manor of 1 ½ carucates held by Leofstan under King
 Edward
 1086 Manor of 1 ½ carucates belonging to Ranulf Peverel
 (jurisdiction over 1 carucate belonging to Holy Trinity
 Canterbury)

Hitcham Manor

–1561 Appears to be in the hands of Abbot of Ely
 1561 Crown property
 1603 Leased to Sir Robert Hitcham for life (linked to
 Witnesham, Levington and Walton)
 1623 Sir Robert Houghton died seised (linked to Brettenham
 and Buxhall)
 1648 Giles Andrews owns
 c.1728 Thomas Buck owns

1762 Ebenezer Maurice owns
 1787 Robert Mapletoft owns
 1909 Charles James Grimwade owns (linked to Brettenham,
 Hadleigh, Whatfield and Kersey, Capel St Mary and
 Wenham Parva)

Sub-manors

Witherton al Witherton's (Barrards)

c.1542 Sir John Clare owns
 c.1542 Edmund Rous acquires
 1561 William Waldegrave owns (linked to Lindsey and Holton
 St Mary)

Manton of Mantons

–c.1536 Abbot of Bury St Edmunds owns
 1543 Edward Elringham owns
 1569 William Honyng owns
 1576 Edmund Withepole owns
 16/17th cent. George Waldegrave owns (absorbed by Withertons)
 (linked to Whatfield)

Loose Hall/Loes Manor

1538 Sir William Wyatt owns
 c.1557 Edward Crofts owns
 c.1580 Nicholas Spring owns
 1899 Consisted of 394 acres 1R 13P in Hitcham and
 Wattisham

14. Markets/Fairs:

15. Real property:

1844 £ 4,126 rental value
 1891 £ 4,919 rateable value
 1912 £ 3,532 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844/1912 Land sub-divided

17. Resident gentry:

1844 Rev. J.S. Henslow MA (Professor of botany at Cambridge)
 1912 Rev. R.R. Cobbald

18. Occupations:

1550–1599	4 husbandmen, 1 sawyer
1550– 1599	6 husbandmen, 4 yeoman
1600–1649	6 husbandmen, 15 yeoman, 1 carpenter, 1 joiner, 1 wheelwright, 1 miller, 1 cook, 1 tailor
1650–1699	3 husbandmen, 13 yeomen, 1 blacksmith, 1 cordwainer, 1 butcher, 2 clothiers, 1 wheelwright, 1 spinster
1831	196 in agriculture, 26 in retail trade, 1 professional, 22 in labouring, 20 in domestic service, 10 others
1844	Gamekeeper, victualler, butcher, thatcher, 2 beerhouse keepers, schoolmistress, 3 blacksmiths, 2 bricklayers, 2 corn millers, 26 farmers, 3 joiners, 4 shoemakers, 3 shopkeepers, 3 tailors
1912	Sub-postmistress, schoolmaster, 20 farmers, grocer, grocer/draper, miller, 2 farm bailiffs, 2 blacksmiths, bricklayer, publican, bootmaker, carpenter, wheelwright, thatcher, asst. overseer, shopkeeper

19. Education:

1818	Day Schools (50–60 attend, 2/3 endowed places)
1833	4 daily schools (96 attend), 1 Sunday school (20 attend)
1844	Schoolchildren listed. Rev. Henslow established a small school opposite to a dame school c.1841. He taught botany to pupils. National school built 1872, 150 attend 1891, average attendance 117 1912 Adult literacy classes for young women begun 1849, 2 schools for young men added by 1858

20. Poor relief:

1776	£415 13s. 11d.
1803	£282 19s. 4 ½d.
1818	£1,316 19s.
1830	£1,443 14s.
1832	£1,343 14s.
1834	£1,242

21. Charities:

Feoffment Estate

1840	3 tenements and 28 acres 3R land at £53 p.a. applied to distribution among poor
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Almshouse

1663	Founded by Sir George Waldegrave: 2 tenements. Rebuilt 1818
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Sparrows Gift

1714 by Benjamin Sparrow: Rent charge of 18s.
p.a. for teaching of 2 poor children

22. Other institutions:

Guildhall: c.1500 adjoins churchyard gate
Workhouse in existence 1776, 30 inmates
Reading Room attached to Church Mission Room
1891: Stoke and Melford Medical Club
Wife's Society
Coal Club
Childrens Shoes Club
Police Officer listed
Rev Henslow directed the establishment of Coal Clubs, Childrens
Clothing Club (22 enrolled), medical club (186 enrolled), wives society,
benefit society (16 enrolled) and ploughing match Society
(22members) 1841
Hitcham Labourers and Mechanics Horticultural Society established
c.1851
Womens Institute records 1948–1970

23. Recreation:

Cricket was established by Rev. Henslow 1841 (23 members)
Rev. Henslow also held firework displays and magic lantern shows
on the rectory lawn c.1841
1844/1912 The White Horse public house, 2 beerhouses 1844

24. Personal:

John Stevens Henslow: 1796–1861, Botanist, educationalist, and
clergyman.
Incumbant of Hitcham 1844, Professor of Botany at Cambridge
University 1825, Professor of Mineralogy 1822. Pioneer in improving
conditions of farm workers in East Anglia.
Volume of letters relating to Rev. Henslow 1843–1859.
'John Stevens Henslow: East Anglia', by R.M. Bennett. East Anglia
Magazine Vol. 33, p. 632.
'Former Suffolk Naturalists' see 'Transactions of the Suffolk Naturalists
Society' Vol. 13, p.406.
'The Farm Labourer's Friend', by R.P. Mander. East Anglian
Magazine Vol. 10, p.537.
'Henslow of Hitcham', by J. Russell-Gebbett.
Typescript article about Prof Henslow, by A.R. Milne.

25. Other information:

'Legends of a Suffolk Farmhouse', by A.Bull. Suffolk Fair (Jan 1985, p.12).
Brick Farmhouse: occupies part of the former early Tudor brick mansion including fragments of 15th cent. chapel. Said to have a priest's hole in top attic stair and smugglers cupboard in living room.

Some evidence to suggest the former mansion was destroyed by fire.

Unsubstantiated references link property to monastic origin.

Traces of medieval water mill exist by river.

Parish contains wood of 102 acres 1R 16P 1844.

Parish said to be in deplorable state of squalor and degradation with high rates of both poverty and crime (poor rate average 27s. per head of population) 1844.

Indexed account of inhabitants giving residence, occupation, state of health, church attendance, private devotions, ability to read/write 1861/62.

Map of Bacons Manor 1737.

Typescript of parish register 1584–1706.

'Muck on my Boots', by Alan Bull 1976 descriptions of rural life around Hitcham pre 1939.

Wetherden Hall: Seat of Waldegrave family: farmhouse 18th cent.

Excavation of Roman settlement close to line of Peddars Way 1926 and 1975.

Indication of Tudor Hall site at Stanstead Hall 1975.

Case of incendiarism due to agrarian unrest 1844.