

# 1. Parish : Honington

**Meaning:** Homestead/village of Hunn's people

2. **Hundred:** Blackbourn

**Deanery:** Blackbourn (–1972), Ixworth (1972–)

**Union:** Thetford

**RDC/UDC:** (W. Suffolk) Brandon RD (1894–1935), Thingoe RD (1935–1974), St Edmundsbury DC (1974–)

## Other administrative details:

Abolished ecclesiastically to create Honington with Sapiston 1972  
Blackbourn Petty Sessional Division  
Thetford County Court District

3. **Area:** 1,201 acres (1912)

4. **Soils:**

**Mixed:**

- a. Deep well drained sand and coarse loam, some with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Risk wind erosion
- b. Deep fine loam soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Some fine/coarse loams over clay. Some deep well drained coarse loam over clay, fine loam and sandy soils
- c. Deep permeable sand and peat soils affected by groundwater. Risk of winter flooding and wind erosion near river.

5. **Types of farming:**

1086		8 acres meadow, wood for 2 pigs,
1283		184 quarters to crops (1,472 bushels), 40 head horse, 97 cattle, 25 pigs, 197 sheep*
1500–1640	Thirsk:	Sheep-corn region where sheep are main fertilising 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, barley, oats, roots



1603 – 63 adults  
 1662 – 11 households paid £2 6s. 7 poor\*  
 1674 – 26 households  
 1676 – 60 adults  
 1801 – 176 inhabitants  
 1831 – 248 inhabitants  
 1851 – 331 inhabitants  
 1871 – 315 inhabitants  
 1901 – 236 inhabitants  
 1931 – 247 inhabitants  
 1951 – 1,286 inhabitants  
 1971 – 1,264 inhabitants  
 1981 – 840 inhabitants

\* 'The Hearth Tax Return for the Hundred of Blackbourn 1662',  
 transcribed by S. Colman. PSIA Vol. XXXII part 2, p.168

**10. Benefice: Rectory (1831), Discharged Rectory (1844), Rectory (1912)**

1254 Valued £5 6s. 8d.  
 1291 Valued £6 13s. 4d.  
 1341 Valued £8 1s. 10d.  
 1535 Valued £7 13s. 4d.  
 1831 1 curate, stipend £51 p.a. No glebe house, gross income £339 p.a.  
 1839 Modus of £333 p.a. in lieu of tithes  
 1863 Residence taken in exchange for 18 acres glebe  
 1887 10 acres 3R 23P glebe, gross income £24  
 1891 12 acres glebe. Rent charge of £335 p.a. in lieu of tithes, £20 paid to rector of Fakenham Magna  
 1912 Net value £200 p.a. 13 acres glebe and residence

**Patrons:** The Crown (1831), Lord Chancellor (1891)

**11. Church All Saints**  
 (Chancel, nave, S. porch, vestry, W. tower)

1086 Church plus 20 acres free land  
 Norman S. doorway, chancel arch  
 14/15<sup>th</sup> cent. Main structure, including tower  
 1986 Slightly damaged by fire

**Seats:** 76 appropriated, 62 free (1873)

**12. Nonconformity etc:**

1845 1 house set aside for worship  
 1853 Primitive Methodist chapel built  
 1866 Wesleyan chapel built  
 1964 'Honington Methodist Church', by J. Duncan

**13. Manorial:**

1086	Estates owned by Abbot of St. Edmunds but not as a manor
1536	Crown property
1757	Charles, Duke of Grafton owns with whom it remains (linked to Euston, Fakenham Magna and Sapiston)

**14. Markets/Fairs:**

**15. Real property:**

1844	£1,500 rental value
1891	£1,669 rateable value
1912	£1,351 rateable value

**16. Land ownership:**

1884/1891	Land sub-divided
1912	Duke of Grafton and Samuel Death, principal owners

**17. Resident gentry:**

1891	Rev. W.E. Hind LID
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**18. Occupations:**

1500–1549	1 carpenter
1550–1599	4 yeomen, 1 husbandman
1600–1649	8 yeomen, 1 blacksmith, 1 tailor, 1 husbandman, 1 labourer, 1 clerk
1650–1699	3 yeomen, 2 linen weavers, 2 blacksmiths, 2 tailors, 1 shoemaker, 1 husbandman, 1 labourer
1831	44 in agriculture, 8 in retail trade, 8 in labouring, 12 in domestic service, 2 others
1844	2 shoemakers, baker, blacksmith, corn miller, wheelwright, victualler, 4 farmers, 2 grocery/drapers. Honington Maltings: probably built c.1775, remembered in street name 'Malting Row'
1912	Sub-postmistress, schoolmaster, police officer, carrier, market gardener, hurdle maker, thatcher, blacksmiths shopkeeper, 2 farmers, grocer, publican, farm bailiff, bootmaker/insurance agent

**19. Education:**

1794	School at house of John Bolingbroke mentioned in murder trial
c.18 <sup>th</sup> cent.	Small school run by mother of Robert Bloomfield (poet)
1818	1 day school (35 attend), 1 Sunday school (40 attend)

1833 2 daily schools (32 attend), 1 evening school (12 boys attend), 1 Sunday school (54 attend)  
1863 National school built, average attendance 1912 62

**20. Poor relief:**

1776 £20 12s. 8d.  
1803 £72 17s. 10d.  
1818 £54 3s.  
1830 £140 12s.  
1832 £166 3s.  
1834 £100 8s.

**21. Charities:**

**Charity Estate:**

1840 48 acres 2 R let at £63. 18s p.a to purchase of wool/furze for fuel for distribution among poor  
£18 18s. p.a. to purchase of bread distributed weekly on Sunday among poor  
£35 p.a. to purchase of coals for distribution among poor

**22. Other institutions:**

1891 Police constable listed

**23. Recreation:**

1794 The Fox public house referred to in murder trial  
1844–1912 The Fox public house

**24. Personal:**

John Williams: 1582–1650, a Welshman by birth, presented to living of Honington c.1605 became known as 'The Archbishop of Honington'— see article by W.W. Wickett in Suffolk Fair (August 1980), pages 9, 51 and 68.

Robert Bloomfield: 1766–1823 Pastoral poet, native of parish. Author of 'Farmers Boy'. Published collection of his poems in 'Wild Flowers'. Patronised by Duke of Grafton.

John and Nathan Nichols (father and son) of Honington murdered Sarah Nichols (daughter/sister aged 17 years) having been beaten and strangled. Crime committed at Thetford Lane Gate, Honington 1794. They were executed at Bury St Edmunds. Account in Bury Trials Vol. 2 (1794 and 1798).

**25. Other information:**

Early manuscript map 1758.

Fire destroyed parsonage and 5/6 village dwellings 1782.

'Elegy on the enclosure of Honington Green' written by R. Bloomfield in 'Bloomfields Poems', p.29 1803.

Ridley Hall: includes cottage converted from windmill 1924.

Honington Hall: damaged by fire 1984.

Pair wooden doors: (from former rectory) survived fire of 1783. Form main entrance to post office 1984.

Skeleton: in Gibbet cage found during excavations for air base 1936. Believed to be the body of John Nichol whose body was hung in cage at site of the murder of his daughter (mentioned above) in 1794 after his execution by hanging. The body of his son and accomplice was sent to Bury for dissection and anatomising.

Noise insulation grants awarded to approx. 250 houses near Honington airfield 1980's.

Queen visited RAF Honington 1979.

'50th Anniversary RAF Honington 1987' magazine in parish folder.

Copies of 'The Honington Herald – the Magazine of RAF Honington' 1987/88.

\*'A Suffolk Hundred in 1283', by E. Powell 1910. Concentrates on Blackbourn Hundred. Gives land usage, livestock and the taxes paid.