

1. Parish : Hopton

Meaning: Homestead/settlement in a valley or settlement in the midst of fens

2. **Hundred:** Blackbourn

Deanery: Blackburne (–1932), Ixworth (1972-)

Union: Thetford

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

Other administrative details:

Blackbourn Petty Sessional Division
Thetford County Court District

3. **Area:** 1,397 acres (1912)

4. **Soils:**

Mixed:

- a. Deep fine loam soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Some fine/coarse loam over clay. Some deep well drained coarse loam over clay, fine loam and sandy soils
- b. Deep well drained sandy soils, some very acid especially under heath or woodland. Risk wind erosion
- c. Deep permeable sand and peat soils affected by ground-water. Risk of winter flooring and wind erosion near river.

5. **Types of farming:**

1086		4 acres meadow, wood for 2 pigs, 1 mill
1283		340 quarters to crops (2,720 bushels), 72 head horse, 243 cattle, 45 pigs, 305 sheep*
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 Also has similarities with sheep-corn region where sheep are main fertilizing agent, bred for fattening, barley main cash crop.
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, roots, barley, hay
1969 Trist: More intensive cereal growing and sugar
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* 'A Suffolk Hundred in 1283', by E. Powell 1910. Concentrates on Blackbourn Hundred. Gives land usage, livestock and the taxes paid.

6. Enclosure:

1827 517 acres enclosed under Private Act of Lands, 1826

7. Settlement:

1958 Compact development along line of Barningham-Garboldisham road. Some development also extends along road to Knettishall. Church situated to south of main settlement. Secondary settlement at Fen Street. Little Ouse river forms natural parish and county boundary to the north. Airfield intrudes into parish in western sector.
Few scattered farms.

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 49, 1801 – 63, 1851 – 142, 1871 – 137, 1901 – 118, 1951 – 135, 1981 – 184

8. Communications:

Roads: Roads to Garboldisham, Market Weston, Barningham, Thelnetham and Knettishall
1844 Carriers to Norwich on Monday and Thursday, to Bury St Edmunds on Wednesday and Saturday, to Diss on Friday
1891/1912 Carrier to Bury St. Edmunds on Wednesday and Saturday
1891/1912 Carrier to Thetford on Friday

Water: Little Ouse River, made navigable by Acts designed to improve navigation 1670 although there is some evidence to suggest the river was used for trade purposes earlier than this.
Declined due to rail transport and general silting of the river c.1850's

Air: Knettishall airfield, built (1942-43), designed as Class 'A' heavy bomber station for USAF.
Reverted to RAF (1945), closed (1957)

9. Population:

1086 – 28 recorded
1327 – 35 taxpayers paid £2. 18s.

1524 – 64 membrane illegible
 1603 – 160 adults
 1662 – 52 householders paid £6. 2s.*
 1674 – 71 households
 1676 – 86 adults
 1801 – 433 inhabitants
 1831 – 581 inhabitants
 1851 – 674 inhabitants
 1871 – 604 inhabitants
 1901 – 488 inhabitants
 1931 – 417 inhabitants
 1951 – 426 inhabitants
 1971 – 438 inhabitants
 1981 – 524 inhabitants

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

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

1254 Valued £10.
 1291 Valued £13. 6s. 8d.
 1341 Valued £13. 8s. 4d.
 1535 Valued £13. 4s.
 Parsonage house unfit for residence (1818)
 1831 Glebe house. Gross income £284 p.a. Incumbent also holds Rectory of Bunwell, Norfolk
 Valued £384 (1835)
 Rent charge of £270 p.a. in lieu of tithes (1846)
 Rent charge of £281. 1s. 6d. in lieu of tithes. 31 acres glebe, gross income £33. (1887)
 1891 Good residence + 32 acres 2P glebe. Receives rent charge of £50 from 100 acres in Thelnetham
 1912 Nett value £195 p.a. 32 acres glebe and residence

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

11. Church All Saints
(Chancel, nave, aisles, S. Porch, W. tower)

1086 Church + 13 acres free land in alms
 12th cent. Tower arch,
 Late 13th cent. S. aisle, chancel (circa 1300)
 14th cent. Main structure with 15th cent. Addition
 Tower (14th cent.), modern upper section (circa 18th cent.)
 1870 Restoration
 Note: Coping to churchyard wall contains fragments of old spire which blew down (date unknown)

Seats: 200 appropriated, 150 free (1875)

12. Nonconformity etc:

1606	1 person negligent in receiving communion
1676	6 nonconformists
1707-1835	4 houses set aside for worship Chapel established in former liquor warehouse (1824) Quaker burial ground existed in parish circa 1739-1859 when it was disposed of by 99 year lease. Wesleyan chapel built (1836) Primitive Methodist chapel built
1891	Plymouth Brethren have meeting room

13. Manorial:

1086	Estates owned by Abbot of St. Edmunds but not as manor
1345	Thomas de Lovayne died seised
1365	Sir William Bourchier owns (linked to Shelland)
1516	John Cockett died seised (linked to Knettishall and Lt. Livermere)
Late 16 th cent.	Sir Robert Drury owns (linked to Somerton, Cockfield, Chedburgh and Barnham)
1826	Thomas Thornhill owns (linked to Hepworth and Knettishall)
1905	William Needham Langden Champion of Riddlesworth Hall owns (linked to Knettishall)

14. Markets/Fairs:

15. Real property:

1844	£1,389 rental value
1891	£1,796 rateable value
1912	£1,606 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844	T. Thornhill and J. Goodrich + small owners
1891	Sir T. Thornhill and C. Goodrich + small owners
1912	W.N.L. Champion, principal owner

17. Resident gentry:

1680	1 gent
1891	Rev. O.G. Young MA
1912	Rev. H.E. Roberts MA

18. Occupations:

1500-1549	2 husbandmen, 1 carpenter, 1 tailor
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1550-1599	4 yeomen, 3 husbandmen, 1 blacksmith, 1 collar maker, 1 weaver
1600–1649	14 yeomen, 5 linen weavers, 7 husbandmen, 2 labourers, 1 miller, 1 cordwainer, 1 tailor, 1 shearmen*, 2 weavers, 1 grocer, 1 spinster
1650–1699	13 yeomen, 3 linen weavers, 1 husbandman, 1 miller, 2 cordwainers, 1 blacksmith, 1 carpenter, 1 baker, 1 cooper, 1 wheelwright, 1 grocer, 1 spinster *Shearmen – one who cuts woollen cloth
1831	68 in agriculture, 38 in retail trade, 5 professional, 28 in domestic service, 14 others
1844	Miller/baker, corn and seed merchant/maltster, cloth/watch make, land agent, blacksmith, vet, solicitor, wheelwright, gardener, cooper, surgeon, machine maker, thatcher, cook/confectioner, toy dealer, plumber/glazier, schoolmaster, butcher, 3 inn keepers, 6 boot/shoemakers, 4 bricklayers, 3 carpenters, 2 collar/harness makers, 7 farmers, 2 grocers/drapers, 2 shopkeepers, 4 tailors
1912	Sub-postmaster, fire brigade (compliment of Capt. And 5 men), police officer, 2 schoolmistress, 2 threshing machine owners, 2 shopkeepers, 4 publicans, tailor farm bailiff, 2 blacksmiths, grocer/drapper/wine merchant/hardware and general house furnisher, 2 solicitors, carrier, harness maker, chimney sweep, boot maker/hairstylist, baker, 4 farmers, grocer, surgeon, grocer/drapper, 2 butchers, miller, market gardener, hawker, carpenter, plumber/painter insurance agent C.E. Petoh & Sons (fleet of buses) established (1922)

19. Education:

1833	4 daily schools (66 attend), 1 Sunday school (87 attend)
1944	schoolmaster listed National school built (1855), enlarged (1898) average attendance (!912) 90, closed (1972). Building converted to dwelling house

20. Poor relief:

1776	£52. 7s.	spent on poor relief
1803	£67. 8s. 6d.	spent on poor relief
1818	£535. 3s.	spent on poor relief
1830	£422. 17s.	spent on poor relief
1832	£548. 10s.	spent on poor relief
1834	£459. 16s.	spent on poor relief

21. Charities:

Town Estate:

1827 20 acres awarded at enclosure let at £16 p.a.
One third applied to church use, residue
expended, together with 6s. 8d. from Mr.
Thornhill's farm, on behalf of poor.

22. Other institutions:

Guild of St. Peter and All Saints (1525)
Guild of St. Peter of Nethergate alias Northgate
(1473)
1803 2 Friendly Societies (72 members)
1891 Fire Engine kept at the Commercial Inn
Town House sold and new workhouse built
(circa 1792)
1912 Police officer listed
Fire Brigade of capt. and 5 men. Disbanded (1940)
Ancient Order of Foresters

23. Recreation:

1739 The Chequers public house recorded, closed
The Greyhound public house recorded (1737)
began life on different site, closed
1761 The Cherry Tree or The Cherry Tree and Fen
public house recorded, occupied site of The
Greyhound
1790 The Commercial Inn recorded
1820 The Bell public house recorded in 1710 is renamed
The Vine by 1820
1926 Football Club

24. Personal:

Thomas Remond: (d.1680) memorial is in Hopton Church. 1st sole
Keeper of the Papers of State and Council to King Charles II in
Whitehall. Nephew of the Hon. Sir William Boswell

25. Other information:

'Hopton Happenings' edited by R.D. Gadsby contains some field names from
map of 1741

Hopton Fen designated site of Special Scientific Interest by Nature
Conservancy

'Hopton Lights' composed by Frank Hart (the blacksmith) (late 19th cent.)

War memorial erected in churchyard (1919)

Parish wins Suffolk Community Council's Best Kept Village competition (1984)

Village Hall built (circa 1960's)

Hopton Sports Days held (circa 1939)

Hopton Hall built circa 1825

Wall surrounding church yard constructed in part by materials from church spire which was demolished (date unknown)

Archaeological Sites:

Scatter finds: Med. pottery (CRN 7446, 7447, 2515)
 Neo. flint axe and bone implement (CRN 7448)
 Rom. coin and pottery (CRN 2511)
 Sax. pottery (CRN 2514)