

# 1. Parish: Mildenhall

**Meaning:** a) Hilda's valley or nook  
b) The middle valley

2. **Hundred:** Lackford

**Deanery:** Fordham (–1884), Mildenhall (1884–)

**Union:** Mildenhall

**RDC/UDC:** (W. Suffolk) Mildenhall RD (–1974), Forest Heath DC (1974–)

## Other administrative details:

Parish divided into 4 hamlets: High Town, Beck Row, Holywell Row and West Row  
Petty Sessions and Polling place for Western Division  
Lackford Petty Sessional Division  
Mildenhall County Court District

3. **Area:** 16,700 acres land, 67 acres water (1912)

4. **Soils:** Fen (west) has earthy peat soils, needing drainage; once north of High Town the soils are brown loam (Cambic clay soils); the Breck (east) has deep, well drained sandy soils, locally stone (Rendzines)

## 5. Types of farming:

1086		20 acres meadow, 3½ fisheries, 31 forest mares, 37 beasts, 60 pigs, 100 sheep, 1 mill
1341		3 water mills, hemp and flax, fishery Medieval warren with lodge: large heath as well as fens of approximately 8,000 acres
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 fertilising agent, bred for fattening, barley main cash crop
1813	Young:	Parish almost utterly open, bare and treeless
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



1905 closed for goods 1966, unmanned  
halt 1967

**Water** River Lark: Lark navigation began in 17<sup>th</sup> cent.,  
refurbished 1890's

**Air:** Mildenhall airfield: opened 1934, Control of  
Research and Development at MAP 1939–1945,  
USAF base 1950. Base population averages  
approximately 2,740 US military, 100 Dept. of Air  
Force civilians, 330 British + 5,000 dependents  
1979. Covers approximately 1,042 acres with  
9,240 feet of runway 1987

## 9. **Population:**

1086 – 75 recorded  
1327 – 73 taxpayers paid £8 15s. 8d  
1524 – 188 taxpayers (membrane incomplete)  
1603 – not recorded  
1674 – 381 households  
1676 – 1,180 adults  
1801 – 2,283 inhabitants  
1831 – 3,267 inhabitants  
1851 – 4,374 inhabitants  
1871 – 3,862 inhabitants  
1901 – 3,567 inhabitants  
1931 – 3,235 inhabitants  
1951 – 6,742 inhabitants  
1971 – 8,350 inhabitants  
1981 – 11,971 inhabitants

**Note:** 20 persons in Clackclose Hundred Norfolk 1086 belong to  
Mildenhall – this possibly refers to part of Burnt Fen which  
crosses the border. These persons are not included in  
Mildenhall population figures for this date.

## 10. **Benefice: Vicarage**

1254	Appropriated to Abbey of St Edmunds (date unknown) Valued £20 To the vicar £20 Portion to Battle Abbey £13 6s. 8d. To the monks of St Edmunds £30	£83 6s. 8d.
1291	Valued £20 Portion to Rector £30 Portion to Battle Abbey £13 6s. 8d.	£60 6s. 8d.
1341	Rector has 50 acres valued 50s.	
1535	Valued £22 18s. 1½d.	

1831 Curate, stipend £180 p.a. Glebe house unfit for occupation. Incumbent also holds Rectory of Great Welnetham.

1835 Nett income of vicar £369

1887 319 acres glebe, rent charge of £450 in lieu of tithes

1912 Nett value £125. 327 acres glebe and residence

**Patrons:** King and Battle Abbey (1095), Abbey of St Edmunds (–1535), Sir H.E. Bunbury (1844), Sir H.C.J. Bunbury (1912)

**11. Church Saints Mary and Andrew**

(Chancel, clerestoried nave, aisles, porches, W. tower)

1086 Church with 40 acres land

1240–1300 Chancel and chapel

1387 Chancel chapel

13–15<sup>th</sup> cent. Main structure, double aisled

1851/1864 Restorations

1856 Cemetery opened with mortuary chapel

Chapel of Our Lady over the porch of church (PSIA Vol. XII, p.82)

**Seats:** 1,000; 477 seats for 'poorer' inhabitants (1912)

**Chapels of Ease**

**Kenny Hill: St James the Great**

(Chancel, naves, porch, spired turret)

Built 1876 as iron church, blown down in gale 1894, rebuilt 1895

**Seats:** 120

**West Row: St Peter**

(Chancel, nave, N. porch, turret)

Constructed 1874 from materials of former National School

**Beck Row: St. John the Evangelist**

(Chancel, nave, S. transept, S. porch, W. turret)

Built 1876

**Seats:** 250

**RAF Mildenhall:**

Chapel dedicated 1960

## 12. Nonconformity etc:

1643/44	Richard Watts, vicar, ejected by Committee for Scandalous Minister
1676	66 non conformists 'Short History of Methodist Chapel, Holywell Row' in parish folder (RO)
1678	Quaker Meeting House, Holywell Row: 'not often used', earliest headstone in cemetery 1698, building in use 1678
1809	Baptist Chapel, West Row: built 1809, 'West Row Baptist Chapel 1815–1965' in parish folder (RO)
	4 Wesleyan Chapels at High Town built 1839, Beck Row built 1829, Burnt Fen built 1839, West Row built 1841
1874	High Town: Baptist Chapel and Calvinist Chapel West Row: Calvinist Chapel Beck Row: Primitive Methodist Chapel
1982	Catholic church built

## 13. Manorial:

### Mildenhall Manor

1066/1086	Manor of 12 carucates belonging to Abbot of St. Edmunds (given to them by Edward the Confessor) 'that the monks might eat wheaten and not as they did before, barley bread'
1259	Manor exchanged for the manor of Southwold, transaction being between Abbot of St. Edmunds and Richard of Clare
1557	Granted to Thomas Reeve and Christopher Ballet
1614	Sir Henry North owns (linked to Boulge) passing by marriage to the Hanmer family and on to
1844	Sir H.E. Bunbury (linked to Great Barton)

### Sub-Manors

#### Aspalls

c.1326	Sir Robert de Aspal owns (linked to Stonham Aspal)
1375	George de Felbrigg owns (linked to Bucklesham)
c.1445	Abbot of St. Edmunds owns 70 acres of land, 14½ acres meadow and 10 acres marsh
1557	T. Reeve and C. Ballet own (absorbed by main manor)

## 14. Markets/Fairs

1219/20	Grant of market to be held on a Friday
1412	Grant of market and fair
1540	Fair in existence
1579	Fair for wool held on 10 <sup>th</sup> October
1673	Friday market 'plentiful' and 'well frequented'
1792	Market held on Wednesday

1844	Market now of 'trifling consequence' Fair for wool and pleasure held on 10 <sup>th</sup> –12 <sup>th</sup> October. Abolished 1874
1921	Friday market revived

**15. Real property:**

1844	£14,320 rental value
1891	£15,882 rateable value
1912	£15,932 rateable value

**16. Land ownership:**

1844	Land sub-divided
1891	Sir C.J.F. Bunbury, principal owner
1912	Sir H.C.J. Bunbury, principal owner

**17. Resident gentry:**

1674	Sir Henry North, Henry Warner, 17 Misters and 2 Mistresses
1680	1 Baronet, 1 Knight and 1 gentleman recorded
1844	G. Gataker
1912	Sir H. Bunbury JP, F. Parker JP and J. Parker JP

**18. Occupations:**

1381	14 farmers, 7 brewers, 3 clothmakers, 2 bailiffs, 58 craftsmen, 36 servants, 153 labourers
1550–1549	2 weavers, 3 labourers, 4 husbandmen, 1 tailor, 1 warrener, 1 rough mason, 1 priest, 1 tanner, 1 fuller
1550–1599	3 weavers, 6 labourers, 2 shepherds, 67 husbandmen, 6 tailors, 15 yeomen, 1 woollen draper, 1 organ player./clerk, 1 rough mason, 3 carpenters, 1 thatcher, 1 butcher, 1 tanner, 1 shoemaker, 1 saddler, 2 maltsters, 1 clerk, 1 painter, 1 cooper, 1 dyer, 1 ploughwright, 2 glovers, 1 harpist, 1 shearman, 1 petty chapman
1600–1649	2 weavers, 9 labourers, 7 shepherds, 54 husbandmen, 3 tailors, 73 yeomen, 2 woollen drapers, 1 carpenter, 1 linen weaver, 4 thatchers, 2 lime burners, 1 baker, 1 joiner, 1 clothworker, 1 gingerbread baker, 2 tanners, 5 shoemakers, 1 barber, 3 blacksmiths, 2 maltsters, 1 clerk, 1 miller, 2 innholders, 1 ploughwright, 2 watermen, 1 scrivener, 1 timberman, 1 glover, 1 brewer, 1 bricklayer 'the poorer women employ their time in spinning'(1673)
1650–1699	2 weavers, 7 labourers, 2 shepherds, 27 husbandmen, 5 tailors, 86 yeomen, 1 woollen draper, 6 spinsters, 4 grocers, 2 warreners, 4 carpenters, 1 farrier, 3 thatchers, 1 lime burner, 1 baker, 2 victuallers, 1 felt maker, 1 translator, 1 joiner, 1 clothworker, 2 butchers, 1 woolcomber, 1 tanner, 3 shoemakers, 3 barbers, 4

- blacksmiths, 1 maltster, 2 millers, 1 knacker, 3 wheelwrights, 1 bailiff, 1 merchant tailor, 1 waterman, 4 clothiers, 1 glover, 1 stuff weaver
- 1831 330 in agriculture, 200 in trade and manufacturing, 150 others
- 1844 Silk and worsted manufacture formerly flourished. Wine/spirit merchant, master of workhouse, land agent, gardener, farrier, coal dealer, bankers clerk, horse breaker, land surveyor, gas works manager, solicitor, sluice man, gamekeeper, excise officer, letter carrier, coal dealer, game dealer, miller/maltster, mason, sexton, thatcher, vet, printer, attorneys clerk, relieving officer, dyer, architect, 3 banks, 5 fire and life officers, 14 publicans, 5 academies, 2 attorneys, 2 auctioneers, 4 bakers, 3 basket makers, 11 beerhouse keepers, 2 boat builders, 9 blacksmiths, 5 booksellers, 14 boot/shoe makers, 3 ironmongers, 5 bricklayers, 1 brick/tile maker, 4 butchers, 2 chemists, 1 coachmaker, 2 coopers, 63 farmers, 2 furniture brokers, 8 gardeners, 5 grocer/drapers, 3 hairdressers, 9 joiners, 2 lime burners, 3 milliners, 3 painter/plumbers, 3 saddlers, 10 shopkeepers, 4 straw hat makers, 4 surgeons, 9 tailors, 2 watchmakers, 4 wheelwrights
- 1912 Moderate sized town development with expanding employment. From this time Mildenhall has expanded into a retail and industrial centre.
- 1974 6,000 personnel on air base

## 19. Education:

- 1724 School in existence
- 1817 Free school built by T.C. Bunbury

### High Town:

- 1818 1 endowed school plus several private schools, 2 National schools for 69 girls and 40 boys
- 1833 1 National Sunday school (90 attend), 1 National girls school, 14 private day schools (270 attend), 2 Wesleyan Sunday schools (178 attend), 1 Baptist Sunday school (127 attend)
- 1902 Church of England school built, average attendance 153
- 1912
- 1938 Riverside Middle school built
- 1963 Breckland Secondary Modern school opened, celebrated 21 years 1984
- 1968 St James Primary school opened
- 1976 Upper school opened
- 1977 College Heath Middle School opened

**West Row:**

1851 National school built, converted to chapel of ease  
1874 School built, average attendance 166 1912,  
1892 North Terrace Infants school, average attendance 140  
1912

**Beck Row:**

1877 School built, enlarged 1904, average attendance 140  
1912

**Kenny Hill:**

1877 School built, average attendance 38 1912

**Mildenhall Fen:**

1906 School built, average attendance 27 1912

**20. Poor relief:**

1674 37% too poor to pay Hearth Tax  
1776 £599 0s. 0d.  
1803 £1,343 6s. 6d.  
1818 £4,127 0s.  
1830 £2,193 19s.  
1832 £2,127. 0s.  
1834 £2,640 6s.

**21. Charities:**

**Poors Lands, Doles:**

1840 Site of tenement let at 11s. p.a.  
Allotment (West Row Fen) of 13 acres 21P gained at enclosure and let at £5 8s. p.a.  
2 allotments (West Row Fen) of 27 acres 3R 8P let at £11 p.a.  
Allotment of 100 acres (Great Delf or Mildenhall Common) awarded at enclosure for fuel and use of the poor  
11 acres 2R 16P called Hurst (Holywell Fen) let subject to right of poor to cut turf, at £1 p.a.  
4 acres 2R 4P let at £5 p.a.  
2 allotments (6 acres 2R 18P) (Peterborough Field) let at £8 p.a.  
1 acre 23P let at 30s. p.a.  
Various other pieces of land. All rents applied to benefit of poor.



### **Doles:**

Gift of John Allin: 40s. from land in Glemsford for poor of Mildenhall.

Gift of Edmund Bright: 40s. to poor of Holywell Row  
6s. 8d. gift of person unknown and gift of Jeremiah Haske  
of £1 3s. 4d. (believed to relate to house called Finch's  
House and 2 acres of land in Beck Row)

Gift of Richard Suckerman: 20s. from allotment in  
Nayland for poor of Beck Row

### **Boyder's Gift:**

1677 Gift of Alice Boyder: Tenement in Holywell Row, 10s. p.a.  
for sermon on Maundy Thursday and 20s. p.a. to poor  
persons receiving sacrament on that day

### **Shore's Charity:**

1710 By will of Catherine Shore: 7 acres 2R 18P let at £18.  
15s. for purchase of stuff for gowns for poor women  
16 acres 1R 19P in West Row Fen at £3. 5s. p.a. applied  
with poors lands

### **Abbott's Charity:**

1724 By will of John Abbott: Marsh lands in Mildenhall Fen  
charged with payment of £5 p.a. £3 applied to purchase  
of 3 gowns and 3 coats for 3 working widows of High  
Town. 40s. to be paid for education at chief school in  
High Town of 2 poor boys

### **Hanmer's Almshouse:**

1723 By Indenture of Sir Thomas Hanmer: Building of  
almshouse or hospital, occupied by 4 poor widows 1840

### **Poors House:**

1840 6 cottages and gardens, south side of churchyard,  
occupied by 6 poor persons

### **Clift's Gift:**

1735 By will of Richard Clift: 3 houses and 2 acres 3R to poor  
of West Row. One house believed burned down (1740)  
others and land unidentified 1840 therefore charity  
appears lapsed

### **Baker's Gift:**

1840 Coomb of barley meal to churchwardens of West Row, ½ peck per person to be given to the poor of West Row – Commissioners were not able to ascertain if this had ever been complied with

### **22. Other institutions:**

1450 Guild of Corpus Christi  
1464 Great Guild of St Trinity, Corpus Christi and St John the Baptist  
1533 Guild of St Mary, St James, St Thomas the Martyr and Blessed Trinity  
1722 Almshouses founded by Sir Thomas Hanmer, 4 poor widows, renovated 1976, converted to 4 homes for elderly  
1840 Gas works erected, closed 1958, demolished 1960  
1844 Petty Sessions held at Bell Inn alternate Fridays  
3 banks, 5 insurance officers  
1851 Reading room and Institute founded, transferred to Town Hall 1886  
1868 Cottage Hospital established, renovated 1923  
1886 Town Hall built, seats 350, adjoining Reading room and Institute (established 1880) used as cinema 1920's, sold 1986  
1891 Police station and Court Room – Petty Sessions held alternate Fridays  
County Court held bi-monthly  
Fire Engine kept in police station  
Oldfellows Lodge and Ancient Shepherds  
Benefit Society, 2 clothing clubs, 2 coal clubs  
Home for Orphans at Beck Row and Girls Training Home at Wamil Hall  
Workhouse: 121 inmates 1912, portion is of ancient origins (possibly monastic), rebuilt 1895/96 adjoined Hanmers almshouses  
1912 Newspapers (Gamekeepers Gazette, Parish Magazine, Lark Angling Society, Horticultural Society)  
Gamekeepers Association  
1965 Adult Centre built  
1968 Museum opened in Market Place, damaged by fire 1973, restored and re-opened 1974. New museum built 1983  
1970 Community Centre opened  
1980 New Forest Heath Council Offices opened  
1981 Scout Hall opened

### **West Row:**

1886 Parish room with attached reading room built  
1912 Fire Brigade

**Beck Row:**

1912 Village Hall and Institute established

**23. Recreation:**

1600–1649 2 innkeepers recorded  
1650–1699 2 victuallers recorded  
1844 1 inn, 11 public houses, 11 beerhouses  
1876 Cricket club founded  
1891 1 inn, 19 public houses, 11 beerhouses  
1912 2 refreshment rooms  
The Bell hotel and the White Hart hotel  
3 beer retailers  
The Ship Inn, The Queens Arms, Tigers Head, Maids  
Head and Half Moon public houses  
Bowling Club

**Beck Row:**

1912 The Kings Head and Bird In Hand public houses  
1 beer retailer  
1920's Football team  
1974 The Rose and Crown public house

**Burnt Fen:**

1912 Pig and Whistle and Plough and Duck public houses

**Kenny Hill:**

1912 1 beer retailer  
The Rising Sun public house  
Refreshment room  
1920's Football team

**West Row:**

1912 The White Horse, The Ferry Inn, The Pear Tree and The  
Plough public houses

**24. Personal:**

Henry Barton: Lord Mayor of London 1428, native of parish.

William Gregory: Lord Mayor of London 1451, native of parish.

Sir Thomas Haner: d. 1746 Speaker of House of Commons. 'History of Mildenhall', by A.E. Simpson, p.70.

North family: 'History of Mildenhall', by A.E. Simpson, p.54.

Francis Bugg: 1640–1714 native of parish, author of 16 books mainly on Quakerism.

William Coe: 17<sup>th</sup> cent. resident. Diaries in existence.

## **25. Other information:**

11 cases of incendiarism recorded due to agrarian unrest 1843/44.

MacRobertson International Air Race to Australia started from Mildenhall aerodrome 1934. 'History of R.A.F. Mildenhall', by C.M. Dring.

Saxon pagan graveyard excavated 1929).

Sir Henry North built present manor house c.1590.

Market cross believed to be 16<sup>th</sup> cent. of a unique design. Timber hexagonal structure, restored 1891.

Electricity supplied by Parker Mills 1919, fire at mill 1921.

Series of booklets by Keith Burrows.

'History of Mildenhall', by A.E. Simpson 1893.

37 houses said to be destroyed by fire (1567)

River Lark silted up: barges unable to reach Bury St. Edmunds, resulting in flooding 1879.

Designated area for G.L.C. overspill development 1965/74.

Widespread flooding 1946/47.

List of settlement examination and removal orders 1763–1833 in parish folder.

Nixon-Wilson summit meeting held at USAF base 1979.

Excavation at High Lodge 1964.

Jubilee Playing Fields, sports pavilion opened 1983.

Sports centre opened 1983.

Village sign unveiled at Beck Row 1979.

Excavation of Bronze Age site 1982.

Manor house 17<sup>th</sup> cent., demolished 1934: seat of Bunbury family. Panelling from the house said to have gone to U.S.A.

'The Mildenhall Treasure', by K.S. Painter 1977, discovered 1942.

'Roof Carvings in Mildenhall Church' booklet in parish folder (RO).

Copy of Rules and Orders for Management of the Poor: Workhouse of Mildenhall 1830, Parish folder (RO).

'West Row Men: Bronze Age Settlement', *Antiquity* Vol. 62, p.354. Copy of extract in parish folder (RO).

Mildenhall Town Centre Description and Proposals 1960's.

Wamil Hall (Elizabethan): former seat of Warner family, Home for orphans c.1891, destroyed by fire 1898, restored 20<sup>th</sup> cent.

'Clovesho and Mildenhall', by P.H. Reaney. *PSIA* vol. XXVI, p.220.

'Market Crosses of Suffolk', by C.J.W. Messent. *PSIA* vol. XXIII, p.18, drawing on p.21.

'Wall painting discovered at the Manor House, Mildenhall', by Rev. G.M. Benton. *PSIA* Vol. XXII p.108, example of 16<sup>th</sup> cent. art c.1580.

'Mildenhall Church', *PSIA* Vol. I, p.269.

'Two late Bronze Age Penannular Ring Ornaments from Mildenhall and Eriswell', by C.F. Pendleton. *PSIA* Vol. 36, p.219.

'A series of Late Middle Bronze Age Sites, Wilde Street, Mildenhall', by Col. T.C. Kelly. *PSIA*, Vol. 31, p.47.

'Clovesho: The Council and the Locality', by C. Morley. *PSIA* Vol. IVIII, p.90.

'The Tumuli of Warren Hill, Mildenhall', *PSIA* Vol. VI, p.287.

'The Anglo Saxon Graves, Warren Hill, Mildenhall', *PSIA* Vol. VI, p.57.

'On the roof of the Church of St. Andrew, Mildenhall', by J.G. Waller. *Archaeologica*, Vol. 54 part 2, p.255.

2 handbooks on 'The Mildenhall Treasure'.

'When Trains ran to Mildenhall', *Suffolk Fair*, (July 1985), p.36.

'They were repairing Watches in 1860', *Suffolk Fair*, (March (1984), p.36.

'Mildenhall–Melbourne Air Race' by C.R. Elliott, *Suffolk Fair* (November 1984), p.7.

'When Mildenhall was worth £40', *Suffolk Fair*, (August 1979), p.21.

'Mildenhall; A base for all Reasons', *Suffolk Fair*, Vol. 5 (1), p.30.

'RAF Mildenhall: Home of our American Cousins', *Suffolk Fair* (January 1980), p.5.

Mildenhall: Gateway to the U.K.', Suffolk Fair (September 1980), p.9.

'Mildenhall Electricity', by D. Parker. East Anglian Magazine, Vol. 37, p.466.  
Town lighted by gas 1912.