

# 1. Parish: Orford

**Meaning:** Ford at the sea shore)

2. **Hundred:** Plomesgate

**Deanery:** Orford (–1914), Wilford (1914–1972), Woodbridge (1972–)

**Union:** Plomesgate

**RDC/UDC:** (E. Suffolk) Plomesgate RD (1894–1934), Deben RD (1934–1974), Suffolk Coastal DC (1974–)

Other administrative details:

Chapelry in Sudbourne, gained civil parish status at early date.

Has never acquired separate ecclesiastical Parish status. Orford Borough: Charter 1256, disfranchised 1832, Corporation continued until 1886.

Woodbridge Petty Sessional Division and County Court District.

3. **Area:** 2,693 acres land, 9 acres water, 317 acres tidal water and 231 acres foreshore (1912),

4. **Soils:**  
**Mixed**

a. Deep well drained sandy soils, some very acid especially under heath or in woodland, risk wind erosion.

b. Deep well drained sandy, often ferruginous, soils, risk wind and water erosion.

c. Deep stoneless calcareous/non calcareous clay soils, localized peat, flat land, risk of flooding.

d. Mainly deep well drained calcareous/non calcareous sandy soils, some sparsely vegetated unstable soils, localized waterlogging, shingle bars and spits, risk of wind erosion (Orford Ness).

5. **Types of farming:**

1500–1640	Thirsk:	Problem of acidity and trace element deficiencies. Sheep-corn region, sheep main fertilizing agent, bred for fattening, barley main cash crop.
1804	Young:	‘This corner of Suffolk practices better husbandry than elsewhere’...identified as carrot growing region.
1818	Marshall:	Management varies with condition of sandy soils. Rotation usually turnip, barely, clover,



1851 – 1045 inhabitants  
 1871 – 1022 inhabitants  
 1901 – 885 inhabitants  
 1931 – 706 inhabitants  
 1951 – 647 inhabitants  
 1971 – 673 inhabitants  
 1981 – 665 inhabitants

**10. Benefice: Perpetual Curacy (with Sudbourne)**

1254 Valued £26 13s. 4d. (included with Sudbourne)  
 1291 Valued £33 6s. 8d. (with Sudbourne)  
 Portion of Priory of Elyens insame 10s. £33 16s. 8d.  
 1535 Valued £33 6s. 3d. (with Sudbourne)  
 1546 Valued £7 5s. 7d. Clerks stipend £5 9s. 9½d.  
 1831 Curate, stipend £100. Glebe house in Sudbourne, joint gross income £594 p.a.  
 1891 Valued £577.  
 Tithes commuted for £317 p.a. 1838. Incumbent resides in Orford.  
 1912 Joint net value £500. 8 acres glebe and residence.

**Patrons:** The King (1603), The Crown (1831).

**11. Church**

St Bartholomew

(Ruined Chancel, clerestoried nave of 5 bays, aisles, S. porch, W. tower – also formerly contained transepts and transepts aisles)

Norman Chancel begun 1166. Note: 6 bays in length with 5 vaulted aisles + crossing a transept to the west.  
 12<sup>th</sup> cent. Ruins of original chapel adjoin the church.  
 14<sup>th</sup> cent. Nave/aisles and tower.  
 14/15<sup>th</sup> cent. S. porch  
 1643 Puritanical vandals (William Dowsing) destroyed 28 superstitious pictures, removed 11 popish inscriptions, ordered digging up of steps and removal of two cross from steeple and one in chancel.  
 18<sup>th</sup> cent. Tower cracked and in need of repair 1707 and 1824.  
 1830 Top of tower collapsed. Rebuilt 20<sup>th</sup> cent.  
 1897/1900 Restoration  
 1962 Tower restored

Seats 450 (1915)

Seats: 260 (1915)

**11a. Other religious institutions:**

Hospital and Chapel of St. Leonard (Leper-house)

First mentioned 1320, founded c.1267.  
Said to be in existence 1586, although Knowles and Hadcock record its dissolved date as c.1350.  
Chapel of St. Leonard described as Chapel of Ease to the parish church.

### **Hospital and Chapel of St. John (For the poor)**

Founded c.1390, appointment of warden recorded.  
Dissolved c.1500.  
Chapel house in existence 1546 let on lease to Baptists 1614.  
Stood on north side of river on land now called St. Johns Chapel field.

### **Priory for Austin Canons**

Land given on which to erect convent by Robert de Hewell 1294.  
Eventually built 1299, rebuilt 1363.  
Dissolved 1538.  
Granted Robert Lord 1544.  
Remains to south-west of church.

## **12. Nonconformity etc:**

1597	Incumbent does not wear surplice.
1844	Independent and primitive Methodist chapels.
1912	Primitive Methodist chapel built 1902 and mission room.

## **13. Manorial:**

c.1184	Robert de Valcines owns.
1316	William de Cleidon owns (linked to Farnham).
1321	John de Sturmy had custody of both manor and castle.
1331	Robert de Ufford owns. Grant of town and castle for life for his services in the wars in Gascony (linked to numerous manors throughout Suffolk).
c.1626	Sir Michael Stanhope owns (linked to numerous manors throughout Suffolk).
1740	Prince Deberaux owns (linked to Chillesford).
1753	Francis S. Conway owns (linked to Chillesford, Gedgrave and Iken).
1909	Arthur Herbert Edward Wood owns (linked to Chillesford).

## **14. Markets/Fairs**

Market:	Grant of market 1256 Market held on Monday 1618 described as small market for butter, cheese and meat 1679. Continued to be held on Monday 1759. Obsolete 1891.
---------	--

Fairs: Fair held on Midsummer Day and June 24<sup>th</sup> (for toys)  
1759. Abolished 1873.

**15. Real property:**

1844 £3,906 rental value  
1891 £3,448 rateable value  
1912 £3,102 rateable value

**16. Land ownership:**

1844 Marquis of Hertford, principal owner.  
1891 Arthur Heywood, principal owner.  
1912 K.M. Clark, principal owner.

**17. Resident gentry:**

1844 Rev. J. Dewing BA, Rev. J. Maynard MA and Capt. J.  
O'Grady  
1912 W. Toller JP

**18. Occupations:**

1500–1549 Clerk  
1550–1599 5 sailor/mariners, 6 yeoman, 3 husbandmen,  
1 shipwright, 1 linen weaver, 2 portmen, 1 guider of the  
poorhouse of St. Leonards, 1 draper, 1 shoemaker, 1  
pedder.  
1600–1649 5 sailor/mariners, 8 yeoman, 4 husbandmen, 2 tailors, 1  
blacksmith, 2 labourers, 1 fisherman, 2 merchants, 2  
carpenters, 1 linen weaver, 1 housewright, 1 clerk, 1 inn  
holder, 1 baker, 1 mercer.  
1650–1699 1 sailor/mariner, 6 yeoman, 1 spinster, 2 husbandmen, 2  
tailors, 1 blacksmith, 2 maltsters, 1 weaver, 2 carpenters,  
1 bricklayer. Known to have been involved in the export of  
wool and wool cloth 15<sup>th</sup> cent.  
1831 138 in agriculture, 80 in retail trade, 13 professional, 76 in  
labouring, 67 in domestic service, 6 others.  
1844 Sea port. Few vessels employed in coal and corn trade.  
Formerly had considerable oyster fishery.  
Saddler, 3 farmers, corn miller/merchant, sail maker, tide  
surveyor, coastguard, professor of music, glove/breeches  
maker, 2 shopkeepers, corn miller, accoucheur, ship  
owner, corn/coal merchant, straw hat maker, land agent,  
surgeon, joiner, boat builder, beerhouse keeper,  
insurance agent,  
grocer/draper/newsagent/plumber/glazier/pointer, milliner,  
hairdresser, 4 hotels, inns and tavern owners, 3  
academies, 2 bakers, 4 blacksmith, 3 boot/shoe makers,

2 butchers, 13 master mariners, 5 tailor/drapers, 2 wheelwrights.

1912 Public officers, sub-postmistress, police officer, tailor, 2 blacksmith, corn/flour dealer, publican, fisherman, 2 grocer/drapers, insurance agents, 3 farmers, keeper of the castle, dressmaker, 2 carriers, baker, 2 carpenters, warrener, asst. harbour master/water bailiff, bricklayer, 2 butchers, cowkeeper, insurance agent, plumber/glazier, oyster fishery, librarian, journalist, school master, corn/coal/spirit/porter agent, mail contractor, boot maker, boot repairer, fisherman/town crier, stationer, shopkeeper, pork butcher, saddler.

**19. Education:**

Clerk teaches children 1546. Person teaches within the parish 1597.

1818 2/3 schools (140 attend) includes Gedgrave.

1833 6 infants schools (108 attend), 4 daily schools (144 attend), 2 Sunday schools (316 attend) includes Gedgrave.

1844 3 academies. National school built 1872, enlarged 1891, 250 attend 1891, average attendance 1912 171.

**20. Poor relief:**

1776 £100 4s. 2d.

1803 £281 16s. 4½d.

1818 £393 10s.

1830 £486 1s.

1832 £448 16s.

1834 £518 14s.

**21. Charities:**

**Town Estate:**

1840 Workhouse.  
¼ acre let at £3 p.a.  
Parcel of land let at 40s. p.a.  
Marshland (6 acres 1R 20P) adjoining Orford quay let at £21 10s. p.a.  
Rent-charge of £30 p.a.  
Applied to relief of poor.

**Sir Michael Stanhope's Charity:**

1618 by deed of Sir M. Stanhope: £10 p.a. distributed among the poor.

**22. Other institutions:**

1776 Workhouse (20 inmates).  
1803 Friendly Society (51 members).  
By will of James Coe: almshouses to be made for 3 aged widows situated near Castle Green 1591.  
By will of Robert Bence: 6 or more almshouses to be made from 4 small tenements in Bridge Street for 6+ aged widowers/widows 1611.  
Court of Sessions held on average once a year 15<sup>th</sup> cent.  
Commission of sewers 16<sup>th</sup> cent.  
Town lock-up formerly situated in Broad Street.  
Town Hall: built by Marquis of Hertford 1779, Petty Sessions held in this building, discontinued c.1891, building becoming derelict 1891, rebuilt 1903.  
Assembly House: built c.1774 by Marquis of Hertford.

1844 Coastguard station at Orfordness.  
2 lighthouses called High built c.1744 and Low Lights built 1792.  
Old Workhouse occupied by paupers, built 1830.  
Revenue cruiser, commander, 4 men and 2 boys 1868.  
12 cottages occupied rent-free by old and infirm 1891.

1912 2 lending libraries (one held in Mission room founded by Miss Mary Crisp 1858).  
Police officer  
Shipwrecked fishermen and Mariners Royal Benevolent Society.  
Town Crier  
Harbour Master and Water Bailiffs  
Orford Electric Light and Power Co. Ltd.  
Sick and Rational Society  
Royal and Ancient Order of Foresters

### 23. Recreation:

16<sup>th</sup> cent. 4/5 inn holders  
1622 Inn holder recorded  
17<sup>th</sup> cent. 11 alehouses  
1844 Beerhouse  
The Crown and Castle public house.  
The Jolly Sailor public house, formerly a quayside inn c.16<sup>th</sup> cent., building flooded to 2 feet 1953.  
The Kings Head public house of ancient origin, used by smugglers, damaged by fire 1969, quickly restored.  
The White Hart public house, 14<sup>th</sup> cent. Foundations although did not become inn until 1780, closed c.1914, used as café for soldiers 1939–45, private dwelling 1978.

1891 Recreation and Pleasure ground (5 acres) opened 1883.  
Crown and Castle hotel rebuilt c.1897, building 17<sup>th</sup> cent. became hotel 1867.  
The Kings Head, The White Hart and The Jolly Sailor public houses.

- 1912 Annual Regatta held in August  
The Kings Head and The Jolly Sailor public houses.  
The Crown and Castle hotel.
- No dates: The Ship and The Bull public houses.  
The Orford hotel (situated in Church Street) called the  
Great House 1978.

#### **24. Personal:**

James Coe: First mayor of Orford d.159)  
Francis Mason of Orford: vicar of Orford c.1538, theological author whose works earned him title of Vindex Ecclesiae Anglicanae. PSIA Vol. XXVII, p.54.  
Henry Coggeshall 1623–1690: son of John Coggeshall of Orford. Became mathematician and inventor of the sliding rule.

#### **25. Other information:**

Town believed to formerly have been one of considerable importance. The castle being at its centre. Surrounding fields said to reveal house foundations when ploughed. Recorded as being in decay by 1722, the sea having silted up the port.

Castle: Keep built for Henry II 1156/67 by Alnoth (keeper of the King's houses). Has unusual irregular 18-sided shape (the first of its kind to be built). Chapel contained in the forebuilding. Defended by natural gully (NE side) and by double ditches and double banks to remainder. To SW – probable outer bailey.  
Threatened with demolition 1805 but deemed to be a necessary sea-mark.  
New floor to upper storeys and new roof (1831), provided by Marquis of Hertford. Presented to Orford Town Trust 1930 and to the Ministry of Works 1962, opened to the public 1930.  
'The Story of Orford Castle' 1933.  
2 Orford Castle guidebooks with sectional drawings 1964.

Town and River Alde separated from the sea by narrow peninsular know as Orfordness and Lantern Marshes.

Town sent three ships and 62 men to the siege of Calais 1359.

Town Charter granted by Richard III for government by mayor, 8 portmen, 12 capital burgesses and a recorder.  
Borough incorporated by early date 1579, disfranchised 1832, Corporation abolished 1886.

Town lighted by electricity 1911, power house situated within former brewery.

Provision made for draining and enclosing the Kings Marshes c.1168/69 to provide pasture for livestock with which to feed the men garrisoned in the Castle.

'Orford', by V.B. Redstone.

'Oreford-nigh-the-sea' 1970 and 1935.

Beacon lit at Orfordness 1603–1704 as warning to shipping.

'Sir Edward Turnour's Lighthouse at Orford', by C.E. Welch, PSIA Vol. XXVIII,



p.53. Lighthouses date from 1661. Contains elevation of one of the lights built 1709. 2 brick lighthouses replaced these 1739, Lower lights built 1709. 2 brick lighthouses replaced these 1739, Lower light washed away 1724 but replaced, low light discontinued 1888, in ruins 1925. High lighthouse built 1792, remaining lighthouse electrified 1959.

'Orford, Suffolk', by J.I. Carter and S.R. Bacon 1978.

Town Regalia: Silver Gilt Mace, 2 small Silver Maces, a pair of Silver Oars (Water Bailiffs insignia), silver Punch Bowls and Ladles, circular leather punch bowl case, 3 Oyster Legends.

Stocks: (now in church), stood near the White Hart public house, removed 1873.

Mills: building of mill recorded 1163/63. References to 2 mills being lost c.1318.  
Tide mill on marshes 12<sup>th</sup> cent. bog-oak gates 11<sup>th</sup> cent. have been found.  
Windmill on land called The Harp 1637.  
Post Mill near main road in existence 1903 subsequently pulled down.

Prisoner of War Camp: established on Orford Ness 1914, later used for Atomic Weapons Research projects and more recently Cobra Mist project.  
Area used for experiments with radar 1918–1939 later removed to Bawdsey.  
Early warning system removed 1974.

Damage to town caused by bombs during air raid 1942. 13 persons died.  
Town virtually surrounded by water during floods of 1897. Water reached Daphne Road in the floods of 1953.

'The Borough Business of a Suffolk town (Orford) 1559–1660' Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 1931, p.95.

Town troubled by absentee home owners which, it has been suggested, accounts for 25% of houses and cottages 1975.

'Orford Ness: A Selection of Maps' mainly by John Norden 1966, earliest map c.1530, most recent 1963.

'Orford: A View into a Village', by E. Sandon, p.22.

'Orford Church in 1706', PSIA Vol.XXVI, p.225.

'A Face carved on a capital in Orford Church', by S.E. Rigold. PSIA Vol.32, p.90.

'Medieval floor–tile from Orford and Sudbourne', PSIA Vol.32, p.198.

'An Old Orford Lantern', by G.E. Crisp. PSIA Vol.VII, p.77.

'Survey of Orford Castle 1600', PSIA Vol.XI, p.50.

'The Suffolk Coast: Orford Ness', PSIA Vol.XIX, p.117.

'Present state of Orford Castle 1840', Archaeologia Vol.29, p.60.

'Excavations in the ruined choir of the Church of St. Bartholomew, Orford', by F.H. Fairweather. The Antiquaries Journal Vol.XIV, p.170.

'Field Names: Orford', by H.W. Wheyman. East Anglian Notes and Queries New Series Vol.VI, p.133.

'Orford Marriage Licences 1613–1674', by H.W. Wheyman. East Anglian Notes and Queries New Series Vol.X, p.312.

'The Seal of the Dissolved Corporation of Orford', by H.W.B. Wayman. East Anglian Notes and Queries New Series Vol.XIII, p.225.

'Records of the Dissolved Corporation of Orford', by Rev. W.D. Macray.  
Historical Manuscripts Commission, Vol.IV, p.255.  
Lanes called Draweryslane and Blyndelane in existence 1464.  
Tenement called the Tollehowse in existence 1538.  
Act passed by Corporation forbidding foreigners to drag for oysters 1581,  
Renewed 1712.  
Incorporation of the Towns tailors into a society 1588.  
New jail built 1804.  
Legend: 1679 Fisherman (Ralph Coggeshall) caught fish resembling a  
Man, which was kept in the castle for 6 months before escaping  
back into the seas.  
Event recorded 1555 that on a portion of beach vast quantities of peas  
appeared which the people gathered preserving hundreds from  
starvation.  
Politics: £3,000 spent on houses for free accommodation of voters  
1730's.