

1. Parish: Walberswick

Meaning: Waldberht's/Walhberht's dwelling place/village/hamlet/farm

2. **Hundred:** Blything

Deanery: Dunwich (–1868), Dunwich (South)(1868–1914), N. Dunwich (1914–1972), Halesworth (1972–)

Union: Blything

RDC/UDC: (E Suffolk) Blything RD (1894–1934), Blyth RD (1934–1974), Suffolk Coastal DC (1974–)

Other administrative details:

Chapelry of Blythburgh, no separate ecclesiastical status, separate civil parish status gained early.

Civil boundary change 1934

Blything Petty Sessional Division

Halesworth County Court District

3. **Area:** 1,978 acres land, 5 acres water, 2 acres tidal water, 41 acres foreshore (1912)

4. **Soils:**

Mixed: a. Deep well drained sandy soils, some very acid, risk of wind erosion.

b. Mainly deep well drained calcareous/non–calcareous sandy soils. Shingle bars and spits, risk of wind erosion.

c. Some deep peat soils associated with clay over sandy soils, high groundwater levels, risk of flooding by river.

5. **Types of farming:**

1500–1640 Thirsk: Sheep-corn region, sheep main fertilising agent, bred for fattening. Barley main cash crop.

1818 Marshall: Management varies with condition of sandy soils. Rotation usually turnip, barley, clover, wheat or turnips as preparation for corn and grass.

1937 Main crops: Wheat, barley, roots

1969 Trist Barley and sugar beat are the main crops with some rye grown on poorer lands and a little wheat, herbage seeds and carrots.

6. **Enclosure:**

7. **Settlement:**

1958/75 River Blyth forms natural boundary to north with the sea to the east. Extensive marshland restricts development to the south. Small coastal ribbon type development. Church situated at western extremity of settlement. Few scattered farms.

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 35, 1752 – 20, 1801 – 32, 1851 – 76, 1871 – 80, 1901 – 79, 1951 – 185, 1981 – 193.

8. Communications:

Road: To Blythburgh, Dunwich and Southwold
Rail: 1891 Rail station: Southwold–Halesworth line, opened 1879, closed 1929
Water: River Blyth: navigable to Halesworth 1761, silted up 1891 Ferry crosses from Southwold to Walberswick, said to transport over 60,000 passengers per year 1891

9. Population:

1086 – not recorded
1327 – 71 taxpayers paid £4 10s. 1d. (includes Blythburgh)
1524 – 77 taxpayers paid £9 6s. 10d.
1603 – 306 adults
1674 – 59 households
1676 – Not recorded
1801 – 229 inhabitants
1831 – 279 inhabitants
1851 – 357 inhabitants
1871 – 303 inhabitants
1901 – 304 inhabitants
1931 – 396 inhabitants
1951 – 500 inhabitants
1971 – 423 inhabitants
1981 – 435 inhabitants

10. Benefice: Perpetual Curacy 1831, Vicarage 1891

1254 Not recorded
1291 Blythburgh cum Capella de Walberswick valued £28 13s. 4d.
1535 Valued £12
1650 Valued £20
1831 No glebe house. Gross income £41 pa. Incumbent also holds Perpetual Curacy of Blythburgh and Vicarage of Arncliffe, York.
1840 Tithes commuted for £192 pa
1891 Valued £51. Incumbent also holds Blythburgh. Parsonage house given to parish by Sir C. Blois.
1912 Nett value £36. 16 acres glebe and residence. Incumbent also holds Blythburgh.

Patrons: Sir C. Blois (1831), Sir R.M. Blois (1891), John Brooke (1650)

11. Church St Andrew

(130 ft x 60 ft with tower of 4 stages 85 ft high)
(N aisle, W tower, S porch, 4 bays of S aisle)

- 1426–1493 Main construction period, replacing earlier building on same site.
- 1426 Tower built (considered to be one of the 4 best towers in Suffolk).
- 1493 Church dedicated
Note: aisles were originally 6 bays long but only 4 of the S aisle are in use.
- 1507 N aisle added
- 1643/44 Puritanical Vandals (William Dowsing) destroyed 40 superstitious pictures, removed 5 crosses on steeple and porch 'and we had 8 superstitious inscriptions on the grave stones'.
- 1695/96 Building partly taken down, preserving only tower and SW end. The inhabitants, being unable to support a large church, obtained grant for its partial demolition. Sale of lead, beams, brasses and bells raised £293 which was used for remodelling the S aisle for the use of 40 persons.
- 1974 Ruined remains testify to the size and scale of the original church.
- Seats: 260 (1915)

Church: dedication unknown

- 1086 Presumed one of the 2 churches mentioned as of Blythburgh. Believed to have stood on border of marshes (tatched). Replaced by present church. Said to have been taken down c.1473.

12. Nonconformity etc:

- 1597 5 persons open shops on the Sabbath and sell cheese and butter to the poor.
5 further persons excommunicated
Curate suspended for failing to catechise.
- 1831 Independant/Congregational chapel built
- 1846 Primitive Methodist chapel built.

13. Manorial: Always attached to Blythburgh and shared the same lords
of the Manor.

14. Markets/Fairs

15. Real property:

1844	£1,496 rental value
1891	£1,621 rateable value
1912	£2,599 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844	W. Borrett and C. Peckover, principal owners
1891	Majority of parish is freehold
1912	Sir R.B.M. Blois, principal owner

17. Resident gentry:

1912	Rev. R.P. Wing BA
------	-------------------

18. Occupations:

1451	13 barks traded from this port to Iceland, Ferro and the North Sea + 22 fishing boats
1500–1549	9 seamen/sailor/mariners, 1 freemason, 1 clerk
1550–1599	10 seamen/sailor/mariners, 1 husbandman, 2 yeomen, 3 shipwrights, 1 tailor, 1 merchant
1679	Trade in small vessel building. Sea trade: 3–4 ships.
1600–1649	1 chapman, 8 seamen/sailor/mariners, 4 husbandmen, 5 yeomen, 2 carpenters, 1 lime burner, 1 shipwright, 2 mercers, 1 tailor, 1 blacksmith, 3 merchants, 1 fisherman, 1 stone mason, 1 oil finer, 1 grocer, 1 inn holder.
1650–1699	1 mason, 8 seamen/sailor/mariners, 3 husbandmen, 1 shepherd, 5 yeomen, 2 ships carpenters, 1 butcher, 1 carpenter, 3 shipwrights, 1 weaver, 1 blacksmith, 1 spinster, 1 clerk.
1831	42 in agriculture, 19 in retail trade, 9 in labouring, 6 in domestic service, 3 others.
1839	Lime kiln built by Mr Samuel Gayfer
1844	Quay for vessels of 100 tons. Shoemaker, schoolmistress, 2 shopkeepers, bricklayer, 2 victuallers, corn miller/merchant/lime and coke burner, wheelwright, blacksmith, master mariner, 7 farmers.
1912	Sub-postmistress, schoolmistress, station master, artist, 3 builders, cowkeeper, baker/apartment house owner, carter, 13 apartment house owners, ferryman, 2 grocers, 2 farmers, architect, publican, gamekeeper, hotel owner, blacksmith, tea rooms owner, laundress, china/earthenware dealer, shoemaker.
1982	Main industry: tourism and fishing.

19. Education:

1818	1 Sunday school (40 attend)
1830	1 Independent Sunday school established (42 attend)

- 1833 1 daily school (20 attend), 1 established church Sunday school (20 attend)
 1844 Schoolmistress recorded.
 National school, 60 attend in 1891, 48 average attendance in 1912, closed in 1976.

20. Poor relief:

- 1776 £27 6s. 10d. spent on poor relief
 1803 £51 5s. 3¹/₄d. spent on poor relief
 1818 £126 9s. spent on poor relief
 1830 £113 spent on poor relief
 1832 £193 11s. spent on poor relief
 1834 £231 8s. spent on poor relief

21. Charities:

Town Lands

- 1912 283¹/₂ acres let at £150–£200 pa distributed among the poor.

22. Other institutions:

- 1459 Guild of St Barbara mentioned in Churchwardens Accounts
 1490 Guild of St Andrew
 1522 Almshouse founded by T.W. Odiorn
 1572 and by T.A. Richardson
 1889 Gannon Reading Room established
 1918 Women's Institute founded; believed to be the first in East Suffolk
 1968 Village hall built

23. Recreation:

- 1642 Inn holder recorded
 1844 The Blue Anchor and The Bell public houses
 1891 The Anchor Inn and the Bell public houses
 1912 The Anchor Inn and The Bell hotel
 Tea rooms

24. Personal:

25. Other information:

1470: Market Cross was situated at crossroad near the church. 'Paid for making the Cross – 5 nobilys and 40d'.

1583: The Old Quay was situated at the head of Horse Reach.

Formerly Walberswick was a large and prosperous town: its decline began in mid 16th cent. aided by the effects of repeated flooding and several fires.

Severe damage by fire occurred before 1583 and in 1633, 1683 and 1749. In the latter fire one-third of the town was destroyed.

The town was said to have fallen into poverty and decay after 1539.

1590: Outlet to the river was artificially constructed.

A series of Charters exempting tradesmen from tolls and taxes in order to encourage commercial trading exist for 1262, 1483, 1485, 1553, 1558, and 1625.

1612: Common land (1,400 acres) and fens were seized by Sir Robert Brook.

1632: Sir Robert Brook also seized the quay.

1642: Court ruling allowing the town to regain this land. Sir Robert countered this with men and dogs to drive away 'trespassers'.

1674: 61% of the local inhabitants listed as too poor to pay tax.

1742: South pier built.

1749: North pier built.

1752: Wharf erected at Blackshore.

1809: Waterloo Bridge built across Buss Creek, removed in 1815.

1844: Parish contains 130 acres of open salt marsh and heath. The local inhabitants have the right to graze cattle and geese on them.

1911: 'Ferry Knoll: Walberswick Notes', by C. Christie.

1974: Walberswick Churchwardens Accounts AD 1450–1499 transcribed by Rev. R.W.M. Lewis.

1953: 'Walberswick Story', by A. Jobson.

1960: Windmill: brick built tower (drainage) mill, gutted by fire.

'Walberswick', PSIA Vol VIII, p 416.

'Kessingland and Walberswick Church Towers', by Rev. C. Chitty. PSIA Vol XXV, p.164.