

1. Parish : Wattisfield

Meaning: Wacol's/wattle field

2. Hundred: Blackbourn

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

Union: Stow

RDC/UDC: (W. Suffolk) Thedwastre RD (-1974), Mid Suffolk DC (1974-)

Other administrative details:

Blackbourn Petty Sessional Division
Bury St Edmunds County Court District

3. Area: 1,530 acres (1912)

4. Soils:

Mixed:

- a. Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loam over clay
- 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

5. Types of farming:

1086		1 acre meadow, wood for 12 pigs
1283		267 quarters to crops (2,136 bushels), 55 head horse, 162 cattle 75 pigs, 239 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.
1818	Marshall:	Course of crops varies usually including summer fallow as preparation for corn products
1937	Main crops:	Based on four course system
1969	Trist:	More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet.

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

6. Enclosure:

1853 51 acres enclosed under General Acts 1850

7. Settlement:

1958 Small compact development to east of main A143 Bury St. Edmunds to Norwich road, church centrally situated. Secondary settlement at Bobby Hill. Scattered farms

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 51, 1801 – 70, 1851 – 132, 1871 – 130, 1901 – 68, 1951 – 123, 1981 – 144

8. Communications:

Roads: Main A143 Bury St. Edmunds–Norwich road formerly Scole Bridge–Bury St. Edmunds turnpike road (17/18th cent.)
Roads to Walsham, Rickinghall Inferior, Hinderclay, Hepworth, Thelnetham and Stanton. Stretch of road known as Wattisfield Causeway incorporated into the main road.
1891 Carrier to Bury St Edmunds on Wednesday

9. Population:

1086 – 34 recorded
1327 – 16 taxpayers paid £2 2s. 4d.
1524 – 20 taxpayers paid £2 8s. 2d.
1603 – approx. 100 adults
1662 – 36 householders paid £6 2s. *
1674 – 61 households
1676 – 252 adults
1801 – 520 inhabitants
1831 – 592 inhabitants
1851 – 603 inhabitants
1871 – 562 inhabitants
1901 – 408 inhabitants
1931 – 321 inhabitants
1951 – 426 inhabitants
1971 – 428 inhabitants
1981 – 427 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.
Portion of Master R. of Fakenham £4 13s. 4d. £9 13s. 4d.

1291	Valued £8
1341	Valued £9 8s. 8d.
1535	Valued £8 11s. 6d.
1831	1 curate, stipend £52 p.a. Glebe house unfit for residence. Gross income £344 p.a. Incumbent also holds Vicarage of Rendham, Norfolk
1835	Valued £336
1856	Good rectory house built
1886	Cemetery opened
1887	27 acres 2R 12P glebe. Rent charge of £379 15s. 10d. in lieu of tithes.
1912	Nett value £230 p.a. 30 acres glebe and residence

Patrons: Mr. Osborne (1603), M.A. Morgan (1831), Mrs. Morgan (1844), Rev. J.T. Hassall (1873), Incumbent (1891), T. Owen (1912)

11. Church **St. Margaret**
(Chancel, nave, N & S. porches, W. tower)

1086	Church plus 12 acre free land in alms
14 th cent.	Timber N. porch, tower arch c.1300
15 th cent.	Main structure
	Traces of mural paintings
1872/1891	Restorations

Seats: 40 appropriated, 110 free (1873)

12. Nonconformity etc:

1593	1 person refuses to receive communion from the minister's hand
1654	Wattisfield Congregational church dates from covenant drawn up in 1654
1676	49 nonconformists
1678	Independent/Congregational chapel built, rebuilt 1876, seats 480
	Picture of Old Meeting House (said to be built 1706) (pulled down to make way for new building erected 1876
	'The History of Congregationalism in Suffolk' by T.J. Hoskens (1920) also gives account of congregationalism in Wattisfield
1704–1818	4 houses set aside for worship
1734–1788	Rev. Thomas Harmer 1714–1788 nonconformist minister
	Short biography in 'Suffolk Nonconformist Ministers' by J. Duncan, 1959
	Author of 'Remarks on the Ancient and Present State of the Congregational Churches of Norfolk and Suffolk' 1777 (T. Harmer)
1949	'The story of Wattisfield Congregational Church 1654–1949' by C.A. Jolly

13. Manorial:

1066 Manor of 1 carucate of land held by Aelfrik, a thane
1086 Manor of 1 carucate belonging to Earl Hugh

Wattisfield Manor:

-1538 Abbot of St. Edmund owns
1544 Sir Ambrose Jermyn owns (linked to Hepworth)
c.1577 John Osborne owns
1655 Clement Heigham owns (linked to Moulton and
Wickhambrook)
1664 Samuel Baker owns
1766 David Powell owns
1855 Henry Youngman owns in which family it remained

Sub-Manors:

Gyffords and Hallymote:

1287 Sir William Gifford owns
1377 Sir Simon Burley owns (linked to Stratford St. Mary)
14th cent. William de la Pole owns (linked to Aspall, Cotton, Debenham,
Dagworth and Walsham le Willows)
1511 Sir Robert Brandon owns
1538 Anne of Cleves owns (linked to numerous manors throughout
Suffolk)
1558 Sir Ambrose Jermyn owns (absorbed by main manor)

14. Markets/Fairs

15. Real property:

1844 £2,187 rental value
1891 £1,964 rateable value
1912 £1,482 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844 G. Mallows plus small owners
1891 Land sub-divided
1912 Messrs. Youngman and William Brothers, principal
owners

17. Resident gentry:

1674 Samuel Baker and Clement Heigham
1679 Samuel Baker
1844 G. Mallows
1891 Rev. J. Robinson MA

18. Occupations:

1500–1549	1 yeoman, 1 husbandman
1550–1599	3 yeomen, 1 husbandman, 1 labourer, 1 thatcher, 1 carpenter
1600–1649	11 yeomen, 5 linen weavers, 4 labourers, 1 weaver, 1 thatcher, 2 tailors
1650–1699	14 yeomen, 4 husbandmen, 2 linen weavers, 1 labourer, 1 cordwainer, 1 cooper, 1 wheelwright
1831	79 in agriculture, 51 in retail trade, 2 professionals, 2 in labouring, 18 in domestic service, 19 others
1844	2 victuallers, 3 shoemakers, grocer/drapers/tailor, corn miller, cattle dealer, shopkeeper, 2 brown earthenware manufacturers, brick/tile maker, wheelwright, baker, grocer/drapers, blacksmith, gardener/beer seller, bricklayer/carpenter, 14 farmers, maltster
1891	H. & J. Watson, earthenware manufacturers, factors of china, glass and stone, established (1800)
1912	Sub-postmaster, schoolmaster, 13 farmers, builder/undertaker, wheelwright, publican, carter, shopkeeper, beer retailer, poor rate collector, grocer, blacksmith, china/glass merchant/Wattisfield pottery, saddler 'The Potters of Wattisfield: the Story of Henry Watson Potteries Ltd.' Present potteries date from 1734. Earliest record of potters at Wattisfield 1646 although evidence suggests that pottery making dates from much earlier in this parish

19. Education:

1818	2 day schools (37 attend), 1 Dissenting Sunday school (90 attend)
1833	2 daily schools (30 attend), 1 Protestant Dissenters Sunday school (80 attend)
1862	Parochial school built by Rev. G. Coulcher. 80 attend
1891	enlarged 1908, average attendance 1912 96
1980	Talks regarding integration with Walsham leading to closure of school. However school continued in operation until (1986) when it was finally closed, the attendance having fallen to just 15 1985

20. Poor relief:

1776	£141 13s. 5d.
1803	£321 12s. 1d.
1818	£611 15s.
1830	£581.
1832	£557 8s.
1834	£405.

21. Charities:

Town Estate:

1840 54 acres 1R 2P let at £71 17s. p.a. applied to defray expenses of churchwardens, parish clerk, and constable, surplus applied to support of poor. Town house occupied rent free by poor.
2 acres 1R 36P poors land also applied with above

Bacons Gift:

1628/29 by will of Sir Nicholas Bacon: £33 6s. 8d. for purchase of land, rents of which to be applied to repair of Wattisfield Causeway.

22. Other institutions:

15/16th cent. Guild of St. Margaret
1876 Working Mans Club and Reading Room established in cottage near to church

23. Recreation:

1844 The Black Swan (dates from 16th cent.) and The White Swan public houses, 1 beer seller
1891 The Black Swan and The White Swan public houses, 1 beerhouse
1897 Recreation ground purchased
1912 The Black Swan public house, 1 beer retailer
1969 The Black Swan public house closed (reputedly a former haunt of highwaymen)
1986 Turpins free house and carvery opened at Black Swan House, former site of public house of same name, adjacent to the Suffolk Barn restaurant opened 1983

24. Personal:

Personal narrative of Samuel Baker (1644–1700) (bought Wattisfield Hall estate 1665). It contains his religious beliefs and how they grew throughout his life and the life of his family. He attended university at Cambridge at 16 years and then went to the Inns of Court, at which time he sought out persons of Congregational and Presbyterian persuasion. It could be of value to studies of early nonconformity, giving insights into thoughts and deeds of these persons and the beginnings of the Congregational Church in Wattisfield.
For brief biography of Mr Baker, see 'History of Congregationalism in Suffolk', by T.J. Hosken 1920, p.208/209.

25. Other information:

Wattisfield Hall: 16th cent., long range, timber framed building.

Roman kilns: 25 on clay belt at Foxledge Common.

Village lighted by oil lamps, expenses defrayed by subscription 1912.

'Excavations at Calke Wood, Wattisfield', 1956 by J.S. Wachter PSIA Vol.XXVIII.

'Reports on a Roman Pottery-making site at Foxledge Common, Wattisfield' PSIA Vol.22, p.178.

'Two small Medieval Houses: Walnut Tree Cottage Wattisfield and Friars Hall, Rattlesden', by S. Colman PSIA Vol.31, p.64.

Believed Wattisfield Hall was home of Charles Brandon 16th cent. before he moved to Westhorpe Hall.

Village sign unveiled 1980.

Pear Tree Farm occupies site of 'Giffords' manor.

Giffords House/hall built c.1600.

Halymotes (the holy moats or ponds) occupies sites of monastic fishponds.

Suggested site is close to border with Walsham le Willows.

Squirrels Hall built c.1840 on site of older house of same name

1 case of incendiarism due to agrarian unrest 1843.