

1. Parish: Westthorpe

Meaning: West farm/hamlet

2. Hundred: Hartismere

Deanery: Hartismere (–1897), Hartismere (South)(1897–1931), S. Hartismere (1931–1972), Stowmarket (1972–)

Union: Hartismere

RDC/UDC: (E. Suffolk) Hartismere (–1974), Mid Suffolk DC (1974–)

Other administrative details:

Hartismere Petty Sessional Division
Stowmarket County Court District

3. Area: 1337 acres (1912)

4. Soils: Fine loam over clay soil with slowly permeable subsoil. Subject to seasonal waterlogging. Some brickearth.

5. Types of farming:

1086 Wood for 38 pigs, 31 pigs, 3 cobs, 2 cattle, 50 sheep, 15 goats, 5 beehives.

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.

1804 Young:

1818 Marshall: Course of crops varies usually including summer fallow as preparation for corn products.

1937 Main crops: Wheat, barley, beans, oats, clover.

1969 Trist: More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet.

6. Enclosure:

7. Settlement:

1958 Small diverse settlement mainly along Walsham le Willows road and around the Green. Few scattered farms.

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 18, 1801 – 26, 1851 – 52, 1871 – 53, 1901 – 40, 1951 48, 1981 – 66

8. Communications:

Road: Roads to Badwell Ash, Finningham, Wyverstone and Walsham-le-Willows.

1844 Carrier to Bury St. Edmunds Wednesday.

Rail: 1891 1½ miles to Finningham Station: Ipswich to Norwich line, opened 1849, station closed 1966.

9. Population:

1086 – 48½ recorded
1327 – 23 taxpayers paid £2 7s. 10d.
1524 – 22 taxpayers paid £2 0s. 2d.
1603 – 65 adults
1674 – 24 households
1676 – 103 adults
1801 – 199 inhabitants
1831 – 263 inhabitants
1851 – 240 inhabitants
1871 – 212 inhabitants
1901 – 191 inhabitants
1931 – 146 inhabitants
1951 – 163 inhabitants
1971 – 162 inhabitants
1981 – 170 inhabitants

10. Benefice:

1254 Valued £5
Pension to the Cleric of Denham £1 6s. 8d.
Tithe of the Prior of Castleacre 6s. 8d. £6 13s. 4d.

1291 Valued £5 6s. 8d.
Portion to Henry, Cleric of Denham £1 6s. 8d.
Portion to Prior of Castleacre 6s. 8d. £7 0s. 0d.

1535 Valued £4 18s. 1½.

1831 Curate, stipend £82 p.a. Glebe house unfit for occupation. Gross income £300 p.a. Incumbent also holds Perpetual Curacy of Lever, Lancs.
Rent charge of £350 in lieu of tithes. Thatched rectory house and 16 acres glebe 1839

1912 Nett value £245. 16 acres glebe and residence

Patrons: Incumbent (1831), Mrs. E. Brook (1855), Rev. A.K. Harlock (1912)

11. Church: St Margaret
(Chancel, nave, S. porch, embattled tower, Barrow chapel)

14th cent. Chancel, tower – main structure
17th cent. Chapel. Cromwell's horses said to have been stabled in the church.
1896 Chancel restored

Seats: 200

Chapel of St. Mary: recorded 1402, nothing more known.

12. Nonconformity etc:

1603 3 nonconformists
1676 7 nonconformists
Primitive Methodist chapel built 1891

13. Manorial:

Westhorpe Hall

1066 Manor of 1 carucate held by Wulfric Hagni
1086 Manor of 1 carucate belonging to Eudo, son of Spirwic and held by Geoffrey
1240 Walter de Westhorpe owns
1338 Robert Hovel owns (linked to Cotton, Finningham, Gislingham and Rickinghall Inferior.
1371 Sir William de Elmham owns
c.15th cent. Sir William de la Pole owns (linked to Aspoll, Cotton, Braiseworth and Debenham)
1514 Charles Brandon owns (linked to numerous manors throughout Suffolk)
1554 Sir Thomas Cornwallis owns (linked to Brome, Palgrave, Stuston and Thrandeston)
1566 Sir Nicholas Bacon owns (linked to numerous manors throughout Suffolk)
No dates. Barrow family owns (linked to Newton)
1855 Sir Miles Nightingale owns.

14. Markets/Fairs:

Grant for market and fair obtained by William de Ellingham (Elmham) 1372/73
obsolete 1844

15. Real property:

1844 £1706 rental value
1891 £1522 rateable value
1912 £1135 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844–1912 Land sub-divided

17. Resident gentry:

1680 1 gentleman
1844 Rev. R. Hewitt DD
1912 Rev. A.K. Harlock MA

18. Occupations:

1361 1 chaplain
1550–1599 1 joiner, 4 yeomen, 1 rector
1600–1649 8 yeomen, 1 husbandman
1650–1699 6 yeomen, 1 husbandman, 4 carpenters, 2 clerks, 2 spinsters
1831 62 in agriculture, 2 in retail trade, 10 in domestic service, 4 others
1844 Carrier, 1 land agent, architect, victualler, 10 farmers
1912 Sub-postmaster, baker, 9 farmers, poor rate collector, farm bailiff, publican, blacksmith

19. Education:

1733/35 1 schoolmaster/tutor recorded
1818 1 day school (30 attend)
School board formed and school built 1877, average attendance
1912 35

20. Poor relief:

1776 £82 13s. 4d.
1803 £113 9s. 6¼.
1818 £394 5s.
1830 £269 14s.
1832 £302 3s.
1834 £266 12s.

21. Charities:

Town Estate: 1840 1 messuage used as poorhouse.
12 acres 2R let at £21. 9s. p.a. applied to church and poor rates.

Brown's Dole: 1641 by will of Richard Brown: 10s. for distribution among poor

22. Other institutions:

Poorhouse in existence 1840

23. Recreation:

1844–1912 The Crown public house.

24. Personal:

Mary Tudor (1496–1533), lived at Westhorpe Hall. Daughter of Henry VII, widow of Louis XII of France, wife of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. Buried in St. Mary's Church, Bury St. Edmunds.

25. Other information:

Westhorpe Hall: 14/15th cent. original building demolished mid 18th cent.. Present building (Georgian). Home of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk and Mary Tudor. Remains of original hall consist of 3 arched Tudor bridge over moat.

Village Hall established from converted army hut 1914/18, destroyed by fire 1976, new hall built 1977, opened 1978.

Parish won the Suffolk Best Kept Village Competition 1977.

Agricultural Museum at Westhorpe Lodge 1980.