

1. Parish : Withersfield

Meaning: Valley or field where wethers were kept

2. **Hundred:** Risbridge

Deanery: Clare

Union: Risbridge

RDC/UDC: (W. Suffolk) Clare RD (-1974), St. Edmundsbury DC (1974-)

Other administrative details:

Civil boundary changes 1885, 1971
Risbridge Petty Sessional Division
Haverhill County Court District

3. **Area:** 2,498 acres (1912)

4. **Soils:**

Mixed:

- a. Slowly permeable calcareous/non calcareous clay soils, slight risk water erosion
- b. Deep well drained fine loam, coarse loam and sandy soils, locally flinty and in places over gravel. Slight risk water erosion

5. **Types of farming:**

1086		5 acres meadow, wood for 40 pigs, 6 cobs, 32 cattle, 75 pigs, 223 sheep, 57 goats, 16 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. Also has similarities with sheep-corn region where sheep are main fertilising agent, bred for fattening, barley main cash crop.
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
1937	Main crops:	Wheat, barley, oats, beans, peas, roots
1969	Trist:	More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet.

6. Enclosure:

1854 606 acres (Barton Common) enclosed under General Acts 1845

7. Settlement:

1960 Line of Roman Road runs to south of developed area on W-E axis. Well spaced development around Green and Church and extending along the Great Thurlow (Clare) road where another Green area is situated. Scattered farms.

Weston Colville airfield intrudes into northern sector of parish possibly influencing development in that area.

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 33, 1801 – 82, 1851 – 142, 1871 – 149, 1901 – 138, 1951 – 126, 1981 – 129

8. Communications:

Roads: Roads to Horseheath, Bartlow, Haverhill, West Wrating, Great Wrating and Great Thurlow.
Roman Road runs W-E
Keeper of Turnpike recorded 1768
1844: Carrier to Ipswich on Wednesday
1912: Carrier from Haverhill daily

Rail: 1891: 2 miles Haverhill station:
Haverhill South: Haverhill–Halstead line, opened 1863, closed 1962
Haverhill North: Haverhill–Sudbury line opened 1865, closed for goods and made unmanned halt 1966, closed for passengers 1967

Air: 1960: Weston Colville airfield

9. Population:

1086 – 43 recorded (including Domesday vill of Hanchet)

1327 – 16 taxpayers paid £3 0s. 1¼d.

1524 – membrane missing

1603 – 133 adults

1674 – 63 households

1676 – 205 adults

1801 – 424 inhabitants

1831 – 545 inhabitants

1851 – 642 inhabitants

1871 – 670 inhabitants

1901 – 604 inhabitants

1931 – 416 inhabitants
1951 – 365 inhabitants
1971 – 331 inhabitants
1981 – 359 inhabitants

10. Benefice: Rectory

1254 Valued £8 13s. 4d.
Portion of Prior of Castleacre £2 13s. 4d.
Portion of Prior of Stoke (by Clare) (separate tithe)
£2 10s. £13 16s. 8d.

1291 Valued £11 6s. 8d.
Portion of Prior of Castleacre £2.
Portion of Prior of Okebrunne £2 10s. £15 16s. 8d.

1535 Valued £9 17s. 2d.
Early 18th Rectory built
Century
1831 Glebe house. Gross income £509 p.a.
1835 Valued £465
1841 Modus of £590 p.a. awarded plus 41 acres glebe
1873 Valued £530
1912 Net value £410 p.a. plus 38 acres glebe and residence

Patrons: Sir Giles Alington (1603), G.T.W.H. Duffield (1831), T..
Duffield (1844), Rev. W. Mayd (1873), Col. F.J. Ryder (1912)

11. Church St. Mary

(Chancel, nave, N & S. aisle, S. porch, W. tower)

14th cent. Chancel (rebuilt 1868)
15th cent. Main structure including tower
c.1480 N. aisle built
1643 Puritanical vandals (William Dowsing) destroyed 60
superstitious pictures, 1 crucifix and ordered steps
levelled
1868. S. aisle added. General restoration

Seats: 39 appropriated, 369 free (1873)

12. Nonconformity etc:

1676 6 nonconformists
1824–1841 2 houses set aside for worship
1893 Primitive Methodist chapel built

13. Manorial:

1066 Manor of 2 carucates held by Wigmer
1086 Manor of 2 carucates belonging to William of Warenne

Withersfield Pellegrues al Pettigrues

13 th cent.	William de Stuteville
c.1280	Roger Luneday owns
c.1300	Alice le Blund owns
c.1338	Sir John de Pulteney owns
c.1408	Sir Philip de St. Clere owns
Circa 1522	Sir Giles Alington owns (linked to Little Wrating)
17/18 th cent.	Charles, Duke of Somerset owns (linked to Gazeley and Lidgate)
1847	Thomas Duffield owns
1855	Rev. William Mayd owns
1909	Charles Foster Ryder owns (linked to Little Thurlow)

14. Markets/Fairs:

15. Real property:

1844	£2,346 rental value
1891	£2,635 rateable value
1912	£2,669 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844–1891	Land subdivided
1912	C.F. Ryder, principal owner

17. Resident gentry:

1844	Rev. William Mayd MA
1912	Rev. T.E. Marshall JP

18. Occupations:

1500–1549	1 smith
1550–1599	3 yeomen, 7 husbandmen, 1 tailor, 1 clerk
1600–1649	9 yeomen, 1 husbandman, 1 tailor, 1 labourer, 1 collar maker, 1 edge tool smith, 1 labourer
1650–1699	8 yeomen, 4 husbandmen, 1 blacksmith, 1 miller, 1 carpenter
1831	92 in agriculture, 25 in retail trade, 1 professional, 7 in labouring, 12 in domestic service, 2 others
1844	Wheelwright, victualler, carpenter, blacksmith, shoemaker, shopkeeper, shopkeeper/beer seller, corn miller, butcher, bricklayer, 8 farmers
1912	Sub-postmaster, police officer, schoolmaster, machinist, wood turner, 2 publicans, hurdle maker, farm bailiff, boot repairer, 10 farmers, painter, blacksmith, brick, pipe and tile manufacturer, baker, 2 shopkeepers, 2 thatchers, gamekeeper, beer retailer, assistant overseer, grocer

19. Education:

1818	1 Sunday school (30 attend)
1833	1 daily school (established 1826) (15 attend)
1865	National school built, enlarged 1908, average attendance 1912 91

20. Poor relief:

1776	£99 1s. 2d.
1803	£371 14s. 3d.
1818	£963
1830	£824 4s.
1832	£615 9s.
1834	£326 10s.

21. Charities:

Poor's Cottage:

1840	Cottage divided into 4 tenements occupied rent free by poor Blacksmiths shop let at £2 p.a. Rents applied to repair of above cottage
1912	Bequest of Miss Heylin: £100 invested producing £10 p.a. – distributed in coal and clothing £1 applied to Sunday school (no date)

22. Other institutions:

	Guildhall believed to be 16 th cent. Building
1803	Friendly Society (5 members)
1912	Police officer listed

23. Recreation:

1844	The White Horse public house, 1 beer seller
1891/1912	The White Horse and The Duke Inn public houses, 1 beerhouse/retailer

24. Personal:

Rev. Thomas Barnard: d.1782. Former rector of parish. Also Master of Leeds Grammar School and a Kings chaplain. Buried in churchyard (northern sector) but forbade any epitaph to be placed on his tomb.

25. Other information:

Hall Farm: situated at Town Green. Timber framed 15th cent. moated Hall – converted to barn 1956.

White Hall: double winged 16th cent. building, converted into cottages 1956.

Bethnel Green Free school and hospital has estate in parish 1844.

Incident attributed to Swing Riots 1830.

1 case of incendiarism due to agrarian unrest 1844.