

1. Parish: Witlesham

Meaning: Witta's/Wittin's meadow/enclosure

2. **Hundred:** Carlford

Deanery: Carlford (–1931), Claydon (1931–1972), Bosmere (1972–)

Union: Woodbridge

RDC/UDC: (E. Suffolk) Woodbridge R.D. (1894–1934), Deben R.D. (1934–1974), Suffolk Coastal (1974–)

Other administrative details:

Woodbridge Petty Sessional Division
Ipswich County Court District

3. **Area:** 2,046 acres (1912)

4. **Soils:**

Mixed:

- a. Slowly permeable calcareous/non calcareous clay soils, slight risk water erosion.
- b. Deep well-drained sandy often ferruginous soils. Risk wind and water erosion.

5. **Types of farming:**

1086		16 acres meadow, 3 cobs, 8 cattle, 68 pigs, 180 sheep, 30 goats, 7 beehives
1500–1640	Thirsk:	Sheep-corn region where sheep are main fertilizing agent, bred for fattening. Barley main cash crop. Also has similarities with wood-pasture region with pasture, meadow, dairying and acme pig keeping.
1818	Marshall:	Wide variations of crop and management techniques including summer fallow as preparation for corn and rotation of turnip, barley, clover, wheat on lighter lands Flax mill in Sandy Lane 1850–1870
1937	Main crops:	Wheat, barley, beans, peas
1969	Trist:	More intensive cereal growing and sugar beet

6. **Enclosure:**

7. **Settlement:**

1958 Small compact development around centrally situated Church. Secondary settlement around Winesham Bridge. Scattered farms. River Fynn meanders through parish roughly following N-S course.

Inhabited houses: 1674 – 37, 1801 – 55, 1851 – 135, 1871 – 126, 1901 – 117, 1951 – 160, 1981 – 291

8. Communications:

Road: To Otley, Swilland, Ashbocking, Westerfield and Tuddenham St. Martin
1891 Carriers pass through to Ipswich

Rail: 1891 2 ½ miles Westerfield station: Westerfield–Felixstowe line opened 1877. Ipswich–Lowestoft line opened 1859, both still operational

Water: River Fynn

9. Population:

1086 – 51 recorded
1327 – 29 taxpayers paid £2 13s. 9d.
1524 – 26 taxpayers paid £6 8s. 2d.
1603 – 147 adults
1674 – 54 households
1676 – not recorded
1801 – 387 inhabitants
1831 – 562 inhabitants
1851 – 575 inhabitants
1871 – 534 inhabitants
1901 – 461 inhabitants
1931 – 476 inhabitants
1951 – 507 inhabitants
1971 – 674 inhabitants
1981 – 825 inhabitants

10. Benefice: Rectory

1254 Valued £16 13s. 4d.
1291 Valued £18 13s. 4d.
Portion of Norwich in same 6s. £18 19s. 4d.
1535 Valued £18 13s. 4d.
Incumbent accused of keeping swine next to the churchyard which is described as being 'unseemly annoyed with swyne' 1597
1st Rectory house believed built c.1621
Residence built + 47 acres glebe 1823

1831 1 curate, stipend £80 p.a. Glebe House. Gross income £498 p.a.
 1891 Valued £630
 1912 Nett value £360 p.a. 47 acres glebe and residence

Patrons: Philologus Fourd (1603), Peter House, Cambridge (1831–)

11. Church St. Mary
 (Chancel, clerestoried nave, S. aisle, W. porch tower)

Late 13/
 early 14th
 cent. Main structure, including tower
 14th /15th
 cent. S. aisle and clerestory
 1597 Chancel is described as 'decayed in whitinge and
 Glasse of the windowes'
 1845 Restoration

Seats: 300 (1915)

Free Chapel of Ease:

Built by Richard Weyland (no dates)
 1262 Right to celebrate Divine Service granted by Priory of
 Norwich
 1484–1505 Right suspended. Chapel demolished.
 Probably situated on boundary with Henley, possibly at
 Berghersh Meadow. (Witnesham took tithes and paid
 Henley 6s. p.a.)
 No traces survive

12. Nonconformity etc:

1606 1 person negligent in receiving communion
 Baptist chapel built 1838, rebuilt 1856
 'The Chapel', by I.E. Moore. Suffolk Review Vol.4, p.284

13. Manorial:

Burwash

13th cent. John de Weyland owns (linked to Clopton, Lt. Cornard,
 Onehouse, Great and Little Whelnetham)
 1553 Edward Nevill owns
 1558 Robert Gosnold owns (absorbed by Curdons) (linked to
 Grundisburgh)
 17th cent. Thomas Edgar owns
 1770 Mileson Edgar owns (linked to Wickhambrook)
 1855 Mrs. Woodham owns

1896 Brigadier-General Surgeon C.J. Meadows owns

Sub-manors:

Curdon's/Cardews Hall

16th cent. James Tyrell owns
c.1544 Robert Gosnold owns (absorbs Burwash)

Redhall al Brampton al Brompton

14th cent. Giles de Brewse owns
1530 John Audley owns (linked to Clopton and Sproughton)
17th cent. Sir Robert Hitcham owns (linked to Levington, Walton
and Hitcham)
1630 Daniel Meadows owns
1909 Capt. Charles A.G.P. Meadows owns (probably absorbed
By main manor)

14. Markets/Fairs

Grant of market (1227)

15. Real property:

1844 £2,993 rental value
1891 £2,980 rateable value
1912 £2,508 rateable value

16. Land ownership:

1844 Meadows family + few small owners
1891/1912 Land sub-divided

17. Resident gentry:

1844 Rev. William Potter MA

18. Occupations:

1500–1549 2 husbandmen
1550–1599 2 yeomen, 4 husbandmen, 1 labourer, 1 blacksmith
1600–1649 7 yeomen, 1 shoemaker, 4 husbandmen, 1 thatcher,
1 glover, 1 sawyer
1650–1699 4 yeomen, 1 husbandman, 1 clerk, 3 farmers, 1
blacksmith, 1 wheelwright, 1 carpenter, 1 hoopwinder, 1
tailor, 1 spinster
1831 110 in agriculture, 17 in retail trade, 2 professionals, 10 in
labouring, 24 in domestic service, 14 others
1844 Victualler, plumber/glazier, corn miller/maltster,
collar/harness maker, bricklayer, surgeon, 3

schoolmasters, 10 farmers, 3 blacksmiths, 4 joiner/wheelwrights, 2 shoemakers, 4 shopkeepers
Flax Mill 1850–70 in Sandy Lane (otherwise Factory Lane)

'Witnesham Flax Factory', by I.E. Moore. Suffolk Review Vol.4, p.24 (No.2)

1912 Sub-postmaster, schoolmistress, manageress of open air school, carpenter, publican/wheelwright, market gardener, 9 farmers, 2 blacksmiths, 2 shopkeepers, timber merchants, assistant overseer, tax collector, miller, poulterer, builder, farm bailiff, saddler

19. Education:

William Arnold recorded as teaching a school 1597
Schoolhouse built on road to church pre 1710
Charity school founded by Robert Beaumont Creiton 1753

1818 2 day schools (63 attend, 12 assisted places)

1833 3 daily schools (48 attend, 18 assisted places)

1 Sunday school (established church) (32 attend)

1 Baptist Sunday school (62 attend)

National school built 1840, enlarged 1872, 60 attend 1891, average attendance 1912 78

1844 Boarding school owned by S. & M. Steggall

1912 Open Air School for children from St. Saviour, Poplar, L London, managed by L.C.C. to accommodate 44

1930s New school built

20. Poor relief:

1776 £66 0s. 3d.

1803 £138 16s. 6d.

1818 £435 5s.

1830 £485 3s.

1832 £410 5s.

1834 £484 11s.

21. Charities:

Cooper Charity:

1865 bequest of John Cooper: Income from £66 13s. 4d. for distribution to poor widows

22. Other institutions:

1912 Young Men's Christian Association

23. Recreation:

1712 Carpenters Arms recorded
1844–1912 The Barley Mow public house (dates from c.1760)

24. Personal:

Carl Giles: resident of parish, internationally renowned cartoonist 1976
William Kirby 1759–1850: native of parish, celebrated entomologist
'Life of the Rev. W. Kirby', by John Freeman 1852 (also includes
Pedigree of the Meadows family – long associated with the parish)

25. Other information:

Bergherah House: occupies site approximately 200 yards from former ancient
Manor house, moat remains. Present home improved and enlarged
1819.

Witnesham Hall: Elizabethan, enlarged and improved 1842 with nook
Elizabethan additions, former seat of Meadows family, frontage added
19th cent.

Mills: 2 windmills 1340, 1 windmill 1647, water mill 1675, windmill
Demolished 1888, post mill demolished 1906, steam mill built
1870s burnt down 1930.

Village sign unveiled 1980.