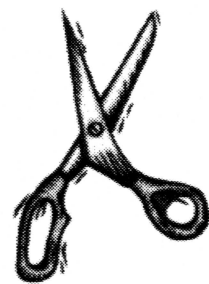
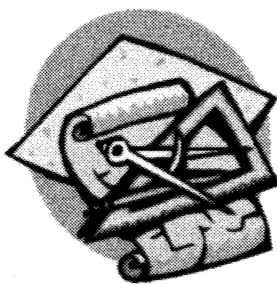
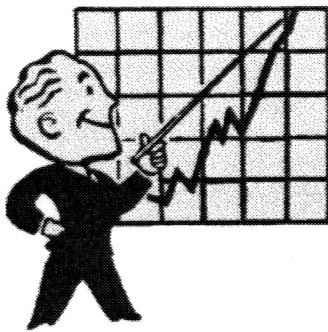


**A SURVEY OF THE VILLAGE
AT THE MILLENNIUM**



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LOCATION

Harkstead is a parish within Babergh District and lies on the Shotley Peninsula in the southeastern corner of the County of Suffolk. The village has an estimated population of 275 in December 1999, and an area of 1750 acres.

It is approximately seven miles from the County town of Ipswich and overlooks the broad estuary of the River Stour at the mouth of which lies the thriving port and ferry terminal of Harwich.

That part of the parish situated between the Erwardon-Holbrook road (The Street) and the River Stour lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The compact built-up area at the centre of the village lies on both sides of The Street and around the framework formed by The Street, including Walnut Tree Lane, Ipswich Road, River View Road and Church Lane. A further group is situated between the village and Holbrook and is centred around Alton Green and extends along the Holbrook road to a point just beyond Marsh Gate at the head of Holbrook Creek. Although all these properties lie within that part of Holbrook parish known as Lower Holbrook, the hamlet has strong social links with Harkstead.

Another detached group of development is centred around St. Mary's Church and includes the former school building (now School House), the Rectory, Harkstead Hall Farm and several cottages; other isolated groups of cottages are situated at Rence Park, Needle Corner and Brick Kiln Lane. Land outside the built-up area is mainly in agricultural use and is divided into a series of farm units.

Holbrook, Chelmondiston and Shotley, three of the larger villages on the peninsula provide a wide range of shopping, social and other facilities; Holbrook, on account of its easy accessibility, has particularly strong links with Harkstead.

POPULATION

The population of Harkstead is recorded in the ten-yearly Government National Census Returns as follows:

1901	-	388	1961	-	304
1911	-	389	1971	-	295
1921	-	359	1981	-	284
1931	-	336	1991	-	277
1951	-	331	1999	-	275(estimate)

The population, and its structure, has changed considerably throughout the 20th century, at the beginning of which it consisted almost entirely of an agricultural community made up of large families, most of whom were born and bred in Harkstead.

Since 1901 the population has decreased from 388 to the present figure of approximately 275 persons consisting of (a) adults (not retired) - 60%, (b) retired - 20% and (c) children under 18 years of age - 20%.

Very few villagers are now employed in agriculture as a result of the considerable changes in farming practices. A number of people at present living in the village have moved into the area from elsewhere, either when retiring from full-time employment or just prior to retirement, whilst others of working age have moved into the village and raised their families in a pleasant rural environment.

The average family size has decreased dramatically to 2.3 persons per household since the beginning of the century and, as elsewhere, has necessitated an increase in housing stock in the village to approximately 120 dwellings.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Before the beginning of the Second World War, the village consisted of a group of houses at the junction of The Street and Ipswich Road including The Baker's Arms public house and properties in Walnut Tree Lane. Many of these properties remain today, often having been substantially improved, extended or converted to a lesser number of dwellings. Further smaller groups were established in the vicinity of St. Mary's Church, opposite Shore Lane at its junction with The Street, near Marsh Gate and also at Needle Corner on the Erwardon road.

About 1920 a pair of Council houses were built by the former Samford Rural District Council adjacent to the old Rose public house (now The Old Rose). During the 1960s, the allotment land opposite The Baker's Arms was developed privately by the construction of six bungalows with frontages to The Street and Church Lane and a further ten were built on both sides of Ipswich Road.

In addition, three more bungalows were built between existing development and the former Rose public house on the north side of The Street and a further three dwellings on the opposite side of the Street, west of Shore Lane.

To provide for housing needs following the lack of wartime building, Samford Rural District Council built twenty-four houses and bungalows in River View Road and these have for the most part provided accommodation for the elderly. Several of these properties have subsequently been sold privately to existing tenants or to new owners.

Only a few dwellings in the village are used primarily as 'holiday homes'. In accordance with planning policies established in 1965, Harkstead was defined as a village where generally only 'infilling' would be permitted and consequently only a small number of dwellings have been built since that date.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Suffolk County Council, with its headquarters at County Hall, Ipswich, provides the following services - education, social services, strategic planning and transport, libraries and fire services, whilst Babergh District Council, with its offices at Cork Lane, Hadleigh,

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is responsible for day-to-day planning control, environmental health and housing.

The Parish Council consists of seven members who meet monthly in the Village Hall to discuss matters of local interest. The public and press are invited to attend these meetings.

CHURCH

The Church of St. Mary's stands prominently on high ground outside the main built-up area of the village.

Services are held every Sunday throughout the year, together with wedding, funeral and baptism services. There is an average congregation of 15 - 20 at services but the Church is often full to capacity on special occasions such as Christmas and Easter services and weddings and funerals.

Reverend David Newton and Reverend Rodney Freeman conduct the Church services, whilst the former also serves Chelmondiston and Erwarton. Dr. Derek Walker is the Lay Minister and Edwin Ardern and Peter Ward act as Churchwardens.

Much repair work has been undertaken to the south aisle roof of the church and further work is needed to repair the church tower.

SHOPS

Although there are no shops in the village, the shop attached to the Post Office in Ipswich Road having closed in 1976, two mobile vans call each week - on Thursday, Mike Storer, greengrocer and on Wednesday, Staggy's Mobile general groceries.

Coal, oil and Calor gas are delivered by local coal merchants and fuel suppliers; newspapers and milk are provided by a daily delivery service. There is also an excellent shopping run each Friday when a number of car owning residents provide transport to Holbrook on a voluntary rota system

Following the closure of the Post Office in The Street (Post Office Cottages) and later at the Anchorage at the junction of the Street and Ipswich Road, a new service was provided in part of a bungalow in Ipswich Road, opposite its junction with River View Road. It has been run by Shirley Rufford since it opened in 1969 and opens on Mondays and Fridays between 9 am and 1 pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9am and 1 pm and 2-4pm and on Saturdays from 9-10.30 am.

Mail deliveries in the village are made daily (except for Sundays and Bank Holidays) and post boxes are situated outside the post office, at Lower Holbrook at the entrance to Marsh Gate and outside St. Mary's Church.

Most properties have their own private telephone but a public telephone kiosk is located in River View Road.

PUBLIC HOUSE

The Baker's Arms is situated in The Street on the south side of the road and is the only licensed premises in the village following the closure of The Rose public house

in 1958. It provides meals and snacks in the lounge and bar, whilst the lawn and garden on the west side of the building form an attractive setting for visitors and walkers to enjoy a quiet refreshment and occasional barbecue. The pub is owned by Pubmaster and landlords have changed frequently in recent years.

VILLAGE HALL.

In 1947, just after the Second World War, a village hall was erected by voluntary labour on a site in Church Lane. The building (60ft x 25ft) was a former deep litter chicken hut and was well used for local activities for many years.

By the 1980s however, its condition had deteriorated and with the need to provide more adequately for current activities, in particular the newly formed Carpet Bowls Club, thoughts turned to either building a completely new village hall or extending and refurbishing the existing building on the same site. Babergh District Council were clearly not prepared to provide a grant to extend or refurbish the existing building owing to its poor condition and the decision was therefore taken to provide a completely new building.

The existing site is well related to the playing field/Millennium Green on the opposite side of Church Lane.

After negotiations with Babergh District Council, planning permission was granted and with the aid of a substantial and generous grant of £39,450 from the District Council and £19,300 already raised over several years from within the parish, a loan of £27,000 was received from the Public Works Loan Board towards the total cost of the building - £87,000.

Repayment of the building loan (approximately £7,000 is outstanding at present) and the maintenance of the hall and its surroundings are achieved mainly from money raised from Auctions, Morning Markets, the Annual Village Fete, and the Bowls Club Tournament, the 100 Club and by hiring out the hall for various functions. In addition money has been donated by the Parish Council, the Art Group and various other organisations and individuals.

Work on the building was commenced on 26 May 1992 by Featherstone Builders Ltd. (Ipswich). The building was designed by Dennis Coward of Johns Slater & Haward, Architects, of Ipswich.

It was formally opened by Jack Godley, the local District Councillor, on 31st January 199, at a ceremony attended by a large number of villagers.

Recently the car park has been resurfaced with the help of a loan of £5,000 from the Lottery Commission.

The hall has proved a tremendous asset to village life and has been well used for a variety of meetings, functions and other events.

In addition to the monthly Parish Council and Village Hall Committee Meetings, it is used on a regular basis by the Carpet Bowls Club, the Garden Club, the Art Group, the History Group and Church Heritage.

Harkstead Survey - continued

Numerous other activities include the monthly Morning Markets, the Christmas Bazaar, the six-monthly Auction Sales in April and October, the Annual Craft Fairs, Art Exhibition and Sales, Harvest Suppers, occasional dances, wedding and birthday parties, quiz evenings, jumble sales, lectures and the visits of the Eastern Angles, a theatre group from Ipswich.

The building and site are owned by a Charitable Trust and the hall is managed by the Village Hall Management Committee under the Chairmanship of Margaret Harward, who succeeded Peter Young on his death in 1994. The present caretaker is Jack Peck, who followed Stan Rayson who died in June 1999.

PLAYING FIELD/MILLENNIUM GREEN

Until recently the playing field (approximately 2.5 acres) on the east side of Church Lane has been rented from Sir Peter Green on a fifty-year lease at a peppercorn rent.

The field has been used for general recreation and for a number of years provided for the village cricket team, which subsequently disbanded. During the last few years the childrens' play area has been improved and extended by means of a grant from Babergh District Council and local funds.

The Village Fete is held annually on Bank Holiday Monday and has provided a well-supported function with attendances reaching the 1000 mark. Attractions have included the Ipswich Hospital Band, a variety of stalls, games, model aircraft flights, dancing displays and car boot sales. Teas are served in the village hall opposite the field.

The opportunity arose to purchase the playing field as part of the Millennium celebrations partly through the provision of grants of £15,000 from the Countryside Commission, £4,000 from Babergh District Council and £6-7,000 from the Parish Council.

The primary function of the field as a playing field has now changed in favour of it becoming a Millennium Green. The field has recently been landscaped and the fence along the boundaries replaced.

EDUCATION

The former village Primary School, situated near St. Mary's Church on the outskirts of the parish, was closed in 1973. The building has since been converted for use as a private dwelling house.

Children of primary school age (5 - 11 years) from Harkstead are transported daily by school bus to Chelmondiston Primary School apart from a small number who choose to attend the primary school at Holbrook. Pupils of 11-16 years (up to GCSE level) attend Holbrook High School. Post 16 years education is provided at a variety of schools and colleges in Ipswich and Colchester.

HEALTH SERVICES

Two local surgeries provide medical treatment at Kingsland, Shotley and The Street, Holbrook. Both are purpose-built surgeries erected in 1989 and 1985 respectively.

Each surgery is admirably serviced by doctors (general practitioners) and nurses, who are in attendance on Mondays and Thursdays (8.30 am and 6.30 pm), Tuesdays and Wednesdays (8.30 am and 4 pm) and Fridays (8.30am - 12.30 pm). Specialist treatment is available at the Heath Road Wing of Ipswich Hospital (NHS Trust) or privately at the Suffolk Nuffield Hospital, Foxhall Road, Ipswich.

District nurses provide care for the elderly and for those patients requiring routine aftercare following hospital treatment.

OLD PEOPLE'S HOMES

An old people's home (Clench House) in Holbrook provides accommodation for elderly people who are unable to look after themselves and need long-term care. The replacement of Clench House by a sheltered housing scheme is under consideration.

MOBILE LIBRARY

A mobile library van provided by Suffolk County Council calls at the village every other Friday afternoon to enable villagers to obtain/exchange library books and stops outside Post Office Cottages at the centre of the village and at Alton Green (Lower Holbrook).

BUS SERVICES

The principal bus routes do not pass through Harkstead but follow the main routes from Ipswich to Holbrook, Stutton, Brantham and beyond (Service No. 96) with stopping places at Holbrook Compasses public house and from Ipswich to Shotley via Chelmondiston (Service No. 97). The only service to Harkstead is No. 98 twice daily Mondays - Fridays and once daily on Saturdays and timed to suit the needs of shoppers rather than journeys to work.

TRAFFIC

Being situated away from the principal traffic routes has meant that Harkstead is relatively quiet in terms of traffic noise and pollution as compared with many other villages. However, the lack of public transport has necessitated that most households require at least one car for business, shopping and entertainment purposes. In addition, increasingly heavy goods and farm vehicles and agricultural machinery which serve the area create problems when passing through the narrow village roads and lanes, often causing difficulties in passing other vehicles and resulting in damage to the roadside verges, trees and hedgerows. The problems are particularly acute at harvest time and during the sugar beet season.

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AIRCRAFT

In contrast to the period of the Second World War and just afterwards when large numbers of British and American aircraft passed over the area daily, today's peacetime conditions have seen a vast reduction in air traffic.

This was further reduced by the closure of Ipswich Airport; current air traffic includes low-flying helicopters, large civil aircraft passing to and from the Continent, a few British and American Service aircraft and a number of light private aircraft. Air traffic is however increasing resulting from the continued expansion of Stanstead Airport.

SERVICES

Piped water is provided to all properties in the village by Anglian Water and whilst many villagers took advantage of the provision of a main sewerage scheme in 1986, several decided to remain with only cesspits or septic tanks, which need to be emptied periodically.

There is no gas supply to the village and although an attempt was made by British Gas to provide a scheme to serve the peninsula in 1992/93 the project received insufficient support from local residents to make it viable and the idea was abandoned, temporarily at least. Several properties are however supplied with Calor Gas from private companies who deliver as and when required.

Electricity is available throughout the village and is generally supplied by Eastern Electricity but there is no street lighting.

Refuse is collected every Wednesday (other than holiday periods) by Babergh District Council, who have supplied 'wheelie' bins to each household for this purpose. Large articles of refuse are either collected on request by the Council or can be deposited at the Household Waste site on the main Ipswich-Shotley road at Chelmondiston.

The nearest fire station is located at Holbrook, whilst police services are headquartered at Martlesham, the local station at Holbrook having closed in recent years.

ENVIRONMENT

The undulating landscape around the village provides interesting views across the adjoining countryside particularly towards the church and Shotley and of the river. As in many other parts of the County, there has been a loss of trees and hedgerows in the past years, some through farming practices and others through the devastation caused by the October 1987 gales and Dutch elm disease. Tree planting has replaced some of

these losses and Julian Scales was appointed Tree Warden to assist in this purpose.

Public rights of way exist throughout the village, the most popular and well-used being that linking Walnut Tree Lane and the river, and which affords excellent access to the shoreline for ramblers, fishermen and villagers.

The following properties in the village are included in the Secretary of State's Listed Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest (1989)-

Grade II

Beaumont Hall
The Church of St. Mary
Nos. 1 and 2 Old Hall Cottages
Vale Farmhouse
Nether Hall
Knights Farmhouse
The Walnuts

The only allotments in the village (opposite The Baker's Arms) were lost when the land was developed some thirty-two years ago.

CLUBS AND ORGANISATIONS

Within the village a number of clubs and organisations exist and provide for many purposes. The principal of those are listed as follows but more detailed descriptions of these are to be found elsewhere in the Millennium Book - Art Group, Bell Ringers, Carpet Bowls Club, Church Heritage, Garden Club, History Group, Neighbourhood Watch and Whist Club.

WILDLIFE

The peninsula provides an excellent environment for wild life. Small numbers of deer, presumably from the large herd that can be observed regularly between Holbrook and Tattlingstone, are frequently seen particularly on the fields on either side of Ipswich Road near White House Farm - the occasional muntjac has also been seen. Foxes are fairly common and are frequently seen on the fields adjoining the Creek: whilst the brown hare population is well above average in the countryside around Harkstead.

The Stour Estuary attracts large numbers of geese and waders particularly during the winter; Brent and Canada geese are frequently seen on the fields, which also attract large numbers of black-headed gulls, lapwings and curlew.

A separate section dealing with birds is included elsewhere in the Millennium Book.