

Population changes:

Whilst the population within the village was consistent for several hundred years.

Towards the end of the 1800's there was a considerable reduction in the number of residents in the village and into the early 1900's.

Following a conversation with Peter West of Brome, a truly knowledgeable historian and author of publications on the history of the area, it became clear that the reduction in residents within the parish was very much in line with world events such as the opening up Britain to cheap imports of grain from the Americas, the advent of steamships making crossing the Atlantic quicker and safer, together and more mechanical and efficient farm machinery reducing the need for labour.

The “perfect storm” appears to have been compounded by the mills and industrial complexes of Lancashire & Yorkshire effectively destroying the cottage industries such as weaving, etc. by offering more and cheaper goods.

All this ties in with what has been called the “Great Agricultural Depression” (1846–1896) - which resulted in agricultural workers migrating voluntarily to (new) industrial centers such as Ipswich, Norwich, etc.

This is when well-known companies such as Fison’s and Ransome’s (now part of Bosch Group) were founded at or around this time.

Given that there was very little support for displaced workers – the workhouses being the last resort, its perhaps no surprise that by 1891 over 23,000 Suffolk based workers had migrated to the mills in the North and another

50,000 to London, in all probability including at least some former residents of Stuston.

It is also entirely possible that significant numbers of the population migrated to America, Canada and Australia to seek their fortunes abroad, particularly with gold rushes in California and Australia in 1849 and 1851 respectively.

As mentioned previously, the population of the village has remained relatively stable for perhaps the last 50+ years, and I hope it will remain so.