



Longstanton & District Heritage Society

Protecting and Promoting
the Heritage of
Longstanton & District

NEWSLETTER

No. 2 May, 2009

Work Continues ...

The Longstanton & District Heritage Society has enjoyed a very busy but successful year. We have worked hard and have met all the primary objects of the society. These are to act as an advisory body; to protect and promote the heritage of Longstanton & District; to develop archival records and use them for public education and enjoyment. In accordance with our secondary objects we were pleased to be able to make donations of £185 to each of the three churches within 'our patch'. i.e. All Saints' church and St. Michael's church, Longstanton and St. Andrew's church, Oakington (These donations are in addition to the funds raised earlier on behalf of these churches from the sale of the LDHS 2008 Christmas card).

Glimpses of Our Recent Past



Lilian Clark Goodchild's painting of the Black Bull with Bramble Cottage in the distance - young boy fishing in Longstanton Brook

Rev. John Goodchild was Rector and Vicar of Longstanton from 1936 until his death in 1944. Lilian Clark Goodchild, his wife, was an artist and daughter of artist James Clark R.I. She was also the sister of artist Cosmo Clark R.A. Dr Michael Goodchild MRCVS, their youngest child, recently made a number of images of his mother's paintings of Longstanton and a collection of family photographs available to Longstanton & District Heritage Society. These formed the basis of our 2009 calendar.



Rev. John Goodchild (centre) and Lilian (left) with members of the Goodchild and McKillip families. Photograph taken by Cosmo Goodchild, outside All Saint's church vicarage, Christmas Day 1938.

Another Contact Made

Peter Dunn, whose father Fred served at RAF Oakington as ground crew during WWII, has been in touch.



Photos LDHS via Peter Dunn



Posed in front of a Lancaster at RAF Oakington. c1944/ 45

Peter's father, Fred Dunn

He writes: "I'm afraid that I don't know which squadron my dad was in ... When I was around eight or nine, we went to stay for a holiday with some friends of my dad from his time at Oakington. They were a local family who lived in Willingham and were Frank and Gladys Papworth - I'm not sure how he first knew Frank, but I don't think he was based at Oakington - maybe doing work locally in the area. They had two daughters - Rosemary and 'Popsy' (a nickname but I don't recall her real first name).

I had a marvellous time, it was so different being in the country from West London, near White City, where we lived ... I remember going on walks and, in particular, gathering fallen fruit just lying on the ground and fields of flowers which, to me at the time, felt like paper. We lost touch sometime after my dad died, but I'll always remember our holiday there."

Peter says one of his father's RAF pals was Norman Holroyd who came from Yorkshire. Can anyone help provide more information?

"By Day & By Night"

Over twenty years ago, local aviation historian John Hamlin wrote and published a small series of booklets on the histories of several Cambridgeshire airfields. The subject of one of these was RAF Oakington, and in view of the currently-planned demolition of almost all the old airfield buildings, it was felt that an updated and expanded record would be appropriate.

Opened in 1940, RAF Oakington spent the war years under the control of Bomber Command. Many operations were carried out and many young lives lost, particularly by 7 Squadron, the motto of which forms the title of this book.



The new book has been written not only for aviation enthusiasts but for the many people interested in local history, particularly in the unusually long period of service of this RAF station. In wire-bound lay-flat format, the A4 book contains 74 pages and is priced at £9.95. Post and packing (UK) £2.50 per book. Copies may be obtained from **Longstanton & District Heritage Society**. Contact details overleaf.

(LDHS are proud to have contributed material for this book and would like to thank all those involved for permission to use it)

Talks

Friday 6th March, LDHS were fortunate to have as their guest speaker Michael JF Bowyer, possibly this country's foremost aviation historian. Michael stands with the Red Arrows and films like the Dam Busters and the Way to the Stars, since in common with them he has been awarded the coveted Robinson award for promoting the RAF's image in the eyes of the public. The Village Institute was packed to hear him relate the development, history and service association with **RAF Oakington** of the **Short Stirling**. These were first of the four engine "heavies" that were able to carry the war back to Germany in early 1941. His talk was illustrated throughout with some unique photographs, together with humorous personal anecdotes relating to this very large aircraft.



A packed audience, listening intently to Michael Bowyer delivering a fascinating talk on one of the RAF's forgotten aircraft

Friday 3rd April, 'Witches of the Region', postponed from the 6 February because of the snow, was given by Mike Petty. His talk this time turned out to be an entertaining trip from a starting point of an enquiry about the history of a house in Bateman Street to various reports of unexplained happenings in newspapers of the time. Mike's dramatic delivery was enhanced by the only lighting coming from his slide projector!



low lighting added drama ...

Friday 1st May, LDHS welcomed Dr. Peter Searby who gave a fascinating account not only of **'Jack Overhill's Wartime Diary'** but of Jack's background in Cambridge. He was born one of 13 children and as a back street boy triumphed over poverty, ignorance and class to win a degree; he wrote some thirty books, gave 50 or so broadcast talks on the BBC and founded the Granta Swimming Club. In addition, he found time to keep a detailed diary; the WWII entries provided the focus of Peter's talk. Question time, the test of an audience's interest, ran to 20 minutes.



Jack Overhill at 80



Dr. Peter Searby

Further talks/ socials planned for this year include:

4 September, 'The Social Life of the Potato' - John Macleod.

2 October, 'Fenland Museum' - Sarah Kerrison.

6 November, Cambridgeshire Collection - Chris Jakes

What next - 2009/10

Presentation Equipment

We are very pleased to announce that LDHS has recently acquired an audio visual suite consisting of a laptop, projector and mobile screen. This technology will enable talks and displays to be more readily carried out throughout Longstanton and District.

LDHS Website

Work has been going on for some time on our own website. Only a few details remain to be finalised before the site can officially go live! Already, the Home Page displays the map, shown below, defining the area within our remit. Northstowe's future impact can clearly be imagined!

Also on the site is a short history of LDHS together with main headings consisting of:

- Longstanton
- Oakington & Westwick
- Northstowe
- Airfield History

When the site becomes live, LDHS will be accessible to people across the world who have, or have had, associations with the area. In particular, it is hoped those who served on the airfield with the RAF or Army will make contact. Watch this space - www.ldhs.org



Northstowe - Latest

In addition, to making our archives more accessible LDHS will continue to lobby the developers and local government in order that we obtain a suitable heritage facility which will record the social and rural and military history of Longstanton and Oakington & Westwick. In particular, we asked for and have been given this statement, from Caroline Clapson, Senior Regeneration Manager, the Home Communities Agency (formerly English Partnerships):

"The HCA and Gallagher are currently in discussions about how best to proceed with the Northstowe project in the light of the current economic situation.

It is anticipated that amendments to the current outline planning application will be submitted to South Cambridgeshire District Council later this year. Both promoters envisage that the approach already set out in the planning application documentation with regards to archaeology and retention of buildings will remain unchanged. The site's historic heritage is regarded as an important element which will make Northstowe a unique place in which to live and work." 31/3/2009

LDHS remains committed to establishing a facility which will be a fitting memorial to all those who flew from RAF Oakington during WW2.

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Many thanks to all our members - your membership is our mandate - and every single member is invaluable. And remember please do not hesitate to contact us at any time if you have any queries; would like any information; or would like to contribute memories, photographs etc. Contact details are above. Particular thanks must go to CLE Print of St.Ives for their continued support by printing our calendars/cards and this newsletter.