

# Hatton Park School Heritage Board



## Early Occupation

Longstanton has been inhabited since very early times. Early inhabitants would have lived mainly on a strip of sand and gravel that runs east of the brook. Archaeology carried out over many years, most recently as part of the Home Farm and Northstowe developments, has shown that the parish lands were occupied during the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman eras. The gravel belt (which provided solid, well drained land on which to build houses) ran between two areas of fen, a valuable resource for people who did not have access to supermarkets or freezers.

## Anglo-Saxon and the Domesday Period

It is thought that the word "tun" indicates an important Anglo-Saxon manor or estate. In this part of England, much of the landscape during the later Anglo-Saxon period was characterised by villages, with the church (not necessarily a building) at its centre. Now the lord could rule over his manor and village together. In later years the Lords of The Manor would often own more than one manor house in Longstanton and this is why the Hatton estate was so large when it was finally sold in 1874.

The manor house, the residence of the lord and his family, was set away from the village itself. The Anglo-Saxon manorial site was probably located within what would later become the Hatton family parkland. Hatton Park School was built on the site of the former Hatton Mansion House and it is highly possible that the Anglo-Saxon manorial site lay close to, or possibly within, the school grounds.

Longstanton would have been a great place to live with the community able to obtain fish, fowl and reeds from the nearby fen. Arable cultivation would have been at the forefront of their farming practices, and evidence of this can still be seen in the paddocks that lie opposite All Saints' Church.



Aerial view of Longstanton and Hatton Park School - c. 1978.

## The Black Death

The Black Death in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century reduced the amount of labour available throughout England, and land that had been previously ploughed was put down to pasture. It was this conversion of land to grazing that has helped to preserve the historic landscape still found within the village today. The Black Death had arrived in Oakington village in the Autumn of 1348 and it would have not taken long for the disease to spread to Longstanton. Many people died and this reduced population changed the landscape of villages across England forever.

## The Hatton Family

The Hatton family had acquired a number of the Longstanton manors by the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The family's influence over the village was immense and lasted until Sir Thomas Dingley Hatton was killed in 1812 and the baronetcy became extinct. Although out-lived by a number of sisters, the house on the school site eventually fell into disrepair. Finally the whole estate was broken up and sold off in 1874.

Traces of the ancient Hatton Mansion House kitchen garden wall can be seen on the left as you arrive at the school entrance.



A pond in the Hatton Parkland 1936. It is possible that this is a photograph of the school pond but we cannot be sure of this. Photograph LDHS via Michael Goodchild.



Map of Long Stanton village - c. 1891

## Hatton Park School

By the early 1950's it was clear that the original school building on School Lane was no longer fit for purpose. Problems with poor sanitation and heating were made worse by the increasing numbers of children that had come into the village because their parents were based at RAF Oakington; an airfield that had been set up in the village because of the Second World War. Eventually some of the children moved to temporary classroom accommodation on the camp whilst a new school was built.

Thelma Jopling, who before her marriage taught at Longstanton school from 1951 – 55, recounts:

*"The school was officially opened on 8 May 1954 by the Bishop of Ely and Lord Tedder (Chancellor of the University of Cambridge).*

*One of the biggest problems faced during the building was what to do about the pond. It had been a clay pit and was now disused. At first it was going to be filled in, but we all thought it should be kept as it was an interesting addition to the field.*

*So eventually one side was levelled out by putting in a shingle beach, and the deeper part was fenced off and trees and reeds planted around it. It is lovely to see that the pond has been retained."*



Hatton Park School 2005. Photograph LDHS via Hilary Stroude.



Children at the new Hatton Park School c. 1958. Note the landscape behind them. Photograph LDHS via George Rainsford.

## Wildlife and a Changing Environment

Longstanton has been through many changes over the years. Turn around, and you will see Northstowe through the trees. The land did not always look like this, and the



wildlife has had to adapt to the changes which have happened. Since the Hatton estate was broken up and sold off the land near the school has been transformed from parkland to farmland, to golf course, to the new town of Northstowe.

During these periods of change, wildlife needs to adapt and find new habitats. For animals, insects and birds this is an easier thing to do than for plants. Rare plants need to be physically removed away from development sites and some protected species such as bats, kingfishers and water-voles need help to relocate. Luckily for the wildlife the developers of Northstowe have been asked to carry out a number of things to protect or replace habitat lost during the development of the new town.

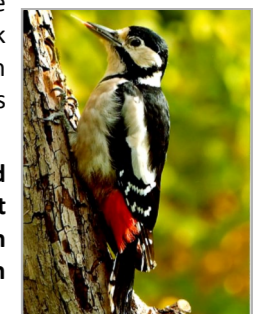


Where possible wildlife will move to new habitats and this has happened here on the Hatton Park School's site. This migration of species includes **badgers, kingfishers, owls and foxes**, and many species of butterflies. Hopefully,

as houses are completed within the new town wildlife will return once again to the Northstowe site. Given a chance wildlife can be amazingly resilient.

However, for the next few years there will be enormous disruption to the landscape and the environment surrounding Longstanton village and the grounds of Hatton Park School will play an important role in helping to protect animals and birds and the habitats they need.

**While you are here at the pond today – see how many different species of bird and animal you can find? Can you see the animals in the photographs?**



This heritage board has been produced by Hilary Stroude and the Longstanton & District Heritage Society, The Manor, Woodside, Longstanton, CB24 3BU. For more information please visit our website at [www.ldhs.org](http://www.ldhs.org) or visit our Facebook page.

Thanks go to all those who have contributed material to the LDHS Archives but particular thanks need to be expressed for the wildlife photographs. These images are courtesy of Jeff Harrison Photography - formerly of Longstanton and now living in Highland Perthshire - [www.jeffharrisonphotography.co.uk](http://www.jeffharrisonphotography.co.uk)