

A brief History of Long Stanton

by Hilary Stroude

Early Occupation

Longstanton has been inhabited since very early times. Early habitation would have existed predominantly on the belt of sand and gravel that runs east of the brook. Excavations at Hatton Farm in 1991 revealed late Iron Age occupation, and that the site was used for farming during Roman times. Alison Taylor in her *Archaeology of Cambridgeshire (Vol II)* says that during the Roman period “there must have been a centre nearby.” The gravel belt provided solid, well drained land on which to build houses; and ran between two areas of fen, a valuable resource to people at this time. To the west, fenland reached as far as the current bridge on the Longstanton / Over boundary. To the east, the fen came from the Rampton direction towards the current parish boundary.

There are further indications that the site of what is now Longstanton was occupied during the Roman Period. It has been suggested that the use of the word “Stan”, the Anglo-Saxon word meaning stone, was associated with sites that had been inhabited during the Roman period. During recent building work on a house within the



Conservation Area pottery has been found, including a terracotta lid identified by the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology in Cambridge as possibly Roman. The well at St. Michael's church may also

indicate early occupation of the site. If there was a settlement in Longstanton during Roman times, it is likely that it was centred on the land near All Saints church, and that the Manor Farm paddocks are surviving examples of earlier pre-historic or Roman field systems.

Anglo-Saxon and the Domesday Period

A lecture by Dr G. Jones of the University of Leicester suggests that the word “tun” indicates an important meeting point in Anglo-Saxon England directly in the hands of the local lord; that is to say, a manor or estate. In East Anglia, much of the landscape was characterised by nucleated villages, with the church (not necessarily a building) as a focal point. Developments prior to 1066 had seen small estates becoming more common. The increased proximity of the lord to



village meant that the lord could rule over his manor and village as one unit. The manor house, the residence of the lord and his family was set away from the village proper. The fields radiating out from the village itself were divided between the sections in which peasants grew their own crops and the demesne, land dedicated to the lord's crops and worked by the serfs or villeins. Some areas of the village would be “Sokeland” – types of land whose ownership and usage distinguished it from the manor's other lands.

A typical tenth century village would have had a church standing amongst clusters of small wooden houses each with a modest garden plot. Stretching out from this would have been the arable lands. Many of the fields lacked fences – once harvested the land used by one resident of the village reverted to the community as a whole. Nearby were the commons, where peasants grazed their domestic animals. Beyond the commons lay the waste – the woods which the village depended on for everything from timber to clay to wild fruits and berries. There would be much variation depending on the location of the village. In the case of Longstanton, the community would have had access to fish, fowl and reeds from the neighbouring fen. Arable cultivation would have been at the forefront of their farming practices, and evidence of strip farming and ridge and furrow can still be seen in the Manor Farm and in Melrose House paddocks today.



Melrose House meadow leading to the brook. Evidence of our ancient past - contours of 'ridge and furrow' clearly visible after a light fall of snow in brilliant early morning sunshine.

Photo Longstanton Archive, January 2003

The Black Death in the 14th 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 Conservation Area today.

During the Domesday period (1086) Longstanton was one of the most populated villages in the area, with sheep the predominant livestock. The Domesday Book records that the largest land holding of 4½ hides* was held in 1066 by Sexi, King Edward's thane. The marsh on this holding yielded 3,200 eels. After the Conquest William I gave this land to Gilbert son of Thorold from whom the overlordship passed to the Tony family. Tony's Fee and the manors derived from it (including Walwyns) came from this one Anglo-Saxon manorial estate. It may be possible to identify exactly where this land holding was. The sharp bend on the Willingham – Longstanton road provides a good indication that people had to go around an important pre-Conquest site. Therefore the original manorial holding is most likely to have been situated on the land north and east of All Saints church, with the bend on the main road the northern boundary.

*hide - obsolete measure of land area varying from about 60 to 120 acres.

By 1086 the Normans had re-formed virtually all the pre-Conquest holdings into three manors. The 3 hides which later formed Long Stanton or Cheyneys manor were held in 1066 by 15 sokemen. Their lands were given after the Conquest to Picot, Sheriff of Cambridge. Picot also held other land in the village which later formed Colvilles Manor, which was situated under / near what is now St. Michaels' Mount. The Domesday Book includes a 4th and final reference to Longstanton - a small area of land held by William son of Ansculf. Sheriff Picot was also given this land by William I. Some time later this holding appears to have merged with one of the afore-mentioned manors.

The principal lords of the Manors

The first Cheyney in Longstanton was Sir William de Cheyney, a French knight from Guernsey. He held land in Longstanton from about 1235. A high status family of knights, who for generations were close to the Kings of England, the family increased their ownership of land in the village throughout the 15th Century to the point where they held all the main manors. However, by the early 16th Century they had lost some of this land to the local Burgoyne family as a result of various disputes. On the south side of All Saints church stands the Cheyney Chapel, later taken over by the Hatton family. One can speculate that the Cheyney's were involved during the re-building of the church after the original was destroyed by fire in 1349.

The last Cheyney to live in the village was the Reverend John Cheyney, rector of Longstanton St. Michael from 1432. After his death, the remaining land passed to his Cheyney relations of Fen Ditton; who were also knights and close



All Saint's church - Hatton Chapel with the remains of the ancient Saxon Cross under the window

allies of the King. The Cheyney family finally died out when Sir Thomas Cheyney had an only daughter, Elizabeth, who married Lord Thomas Vaux of Northamptonshire in 1523. Her father settled all his extensive estates, including those of Longstanton and Fen Ditton, on Elizabeth, at the time of her marriage.

The Vaux family held the Longstanton land for over 100 years, apart from when the Crown confiscated it as a penalty for the family's adherence to the Catholic Faith. The Vaux family never lived in the village, and in 1617 Lord Edward Vaux sold his Longstanton estate to Sir Christopher Hatton of Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire, who was a cousin and heir of the famous Sir Christopher Hatton, the Lord Chancellor to Queen Elizabeth I. At about the same time the Burgoynes sold their land holdings to the Hattons. Hence the Hatton family became the largest single land owner in Longstanton for the next 250 years. The estate of about 1787 acres was sold in numerous lots by the Finch-Hatton's in 1874. It was this sale that gave rise to the farms and land holdings still in evidence today.

Conclusion

The village of Longstanton still contains much evidence of its historical past within the surrounding landscape. This was primarily due to the strong manorial system that controlled the village for hundreds of years. The influential lords of the manors ensured that there was no piecemeal destruction of the manorial holdings; a legacy that we can still appreciate today.

Written by: **Hilary A.E. Stroude, The Manor, Woodside, Longstanton.** © July 2005 (With thanks to G.H. Preedy and F.R.E. Preedy for assistance with the text)

Reference and Further Reading:

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- History from the Sources: Domesday Book – Cambridgeshire. Editor John Morris (Philimore & Co.)
- Medieval Roads and Tracks: Paul Hindle
- The Traditional Buildings of England: Anthony Quiney
- The Development of the Manor in Anglo-Saxon and Danish England – Prof. Paxton Anthony House History 230-01 (Internet: users.ox.ac.uk)
- Anglo-Saxon England. Settlement – rural and town life: Dr G.R. Jones Uni. Leicester (Internet le.ac.uk)
- Anglo-Saxon Cambridgeshire . (Internet: kcs.cambs.sch.uk)
- The South-West Cambridgeshire Project: Institute of Continuing Education (Internet: cont-ed.cam.ac.uk)
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- Bakers Map 1821: (Cambridgeshire Collection)
- Hatton Estate Sales Particulars (Cambridge Uni. Library / Cambridgeshire Collection?)
- Court case: Rev. Atkins v Sir T.D. Hatton and others. (CRO P111/27)
- An essay in the Agrarian History of Longstanton Cambridge in the 16th and 17th centuries. H.M. Clark (CRO ref: R63/32 and 325/P1)
- Notes on the history of Long Stanton All Saints – H.B. Woolley (original in All Saints church yr.2000)

For other information and documents relating to Longstanton try: Cambridge Central Library; Public Record Office (Shire Hall); Cambridge University Library; Northamptonshire Record Office (Hatton papers)

Longstanton's Recent PAST

(Within living memory and just beyond)

Long Stanton

The civil parish of Longstanton was created in 1953 by uniting Long Stanton All Saints and Long Stanton St. Michael. The form Longstanton, occasionally used earlier in the 20th century, was the official name from 1953 and was increasingly adopted for other purposes.



Brookfield House, design resembled that of St Michael's Mount c.1926. Demolished in 1972, to make way for Ladywalk - its entrance followed closely the line of the original drive

Situation

The single village stands 9 km. (5½ miles) NNW of Cambridge on a low gravel ridge c. 1 km. wide. The land just north-east of the village also lies on gravel but most of the Church Parish is covered with clay, except for small patches of alluvium in the north-west and greensand in the south. The land rises gently from 6 m. (20 ft.) in the north to 20 m. (66 ft.) on the Cambridge-Huntingdon road (the old A604 now A14), which forms the south-western boundary. The irregular western boundary with Swavesey was determined by the furlongs of the open fields, while the northern boundary lies along tracks called mere-ways which divide Long Stanton from Over, Willingham, and Rampton. The village stands principally along both sides of a long almost straight street, aligned NNW and SSE.

Demography

In 1801 there were still about 60 families in All Saints but only 24 in St. Michael's, making a total population of 400. Increases in the 1810s, 1820s, and 1840s brought it to over 600 by 1851, with roughly the same proportions in the two parishes. The population then fell gradually to about 400 by 1911, the decline being greater in St. Michael's, which lost more than half its inhabitants and never had more than 100 residents between 1871 and 1931. The total population remained steady in the early 20th century but the creation of RAF Oakington and an influx of servicemen and their families more than trebled it by 1951 to over 1,300. In that year there were nearly 500 airmen living in the barracks. The population continued to increase rapidly after 1951, reaching 2,355 in 1981. The 2001 census recorded 1700 parishioners.

Housing

There were 70 houses with hearths in 1674 and fewer than 80 dwellings in 1811. High Street and Church Lane or Street in St. Michael's parish were both lined by houses and cottages in 1816. Their number fell from 34 in 1851 to 24 in 1871, mainly affecting High Street, which was left with little more than the rectory and two farmhouses. The number of houses in All Saints rose from about 60 in 1831 to nearly 100 by 1851. After the coming of the railway a few houses were built near the station, mostly for railway workers. In the late 19th and early 20th century the total number of houses declined to 115 in 1931.

Apart from the RAF married quarters and local government housing, little private housing was built in the village until the late 60s, when the small estates of Nethergrove and Brookfield Drive were created. Prentice Close, Spiggot's Close, Ladywalk, Clive Hall Drive, Colesfield, The Dale and Fairfield flats were added in the 70s and 80s. Finally, Stokes Close and Brewers Close were completed in the 90s together with Drake's Court flats. During this last period, SCDC built a number of houses, primarily extending Haddow's Close. Single private infill housing also continued. Around 2000, the houses in Magdalene Close, Thornhill Place and Thatcher's Wood, formerly occupied by RAF and Army personal and their families were converted via Annington Homes/MOD for civilian use and sold off as affordable housing. The total number of households in 2005 stood at approx 900.

Education

In 1843 part of the south aisle of All Saints' was used for a school, which in 1844 moved to a new building perhaps paid for by Elizabeth Ann Hatton nearly opposite the church, built of brick and slate with a small turret at the entrance end. It had almost 60 pupils in 1873, rising to 70 by the end of the century. With the decline in



Headmistress holding her dog, first right, second row, with the children, taken in front of the Old School House, School Lane. c.1900

population, attendance fell to half that figure by the Second World War. After 1946 the older pupils went to schools elsewhere but the growth of the village

soon outpaced the accommodation available. Hatton Park School was opened in May 1954 on the site of the Hattons' manor house. The Old School and the School House were sold off into private hands; the Old School became a hairdresser's during the 60s and 70s and was then converted in the 80s to a two storey private house with the distinct bell tower and mansard fish-scale slate roof. In 1975 there were 161 Army and RAF children and 106 from the village.

Impact of RAF Oakington

Longstanton was transformed by the Air Ministry's acquisition in 1939 of 353 acres at the north-east end of St. Michael's parish for part of RAF Oakington, severing the then B1050 connecting us with Oakington and Cambridge. Although the airfield lay in Oakington, most of the hangars, all of the barracks, and other buildings were in Longstanton.



Stirlings

An extraordinary photograph taken by the German Luftwaffe, showing Longstanton and the birth of RAF Oakington - 'Site Under Construction', before the main runway and when Thatcher's Wood was still a wood. c.1941



Wellingtons

The station opened in 1940 and continuous operations began after concrete runways were laid in 1941.

Bomber squadrons, flying Stirlings, Wellingtons and Lancasters, operated throughout the Second World War and for part of it a photographic reconnaissance unit and a meteorological flight, flying Mosquitoes and Spitfires.



Lancasters



Mosquito



Spitfire

Our national debt to the men, who flew from RAF Oakington during the 2nd WW - their families and loved ones, may be judged by the total operational losses of bombers flying from this airfield. Including machines destroyed in crashes in the UK, these amounted to 258. This was made up of 113 Stirlings, 93 Lancasters, 36 Mosquitos and 16 Wellingtons.



Lancaster Crew

The airfield was used by transport squadrons from 1945 to 1950 and by training schools after 1950, becoming home to the first jet fighter trainers, the Meteor and Vampire.



Meteor



Vampire



Varsity

In 1963 multi-engine advanced training was undertaken using Varsities. The army took over the site in 1975 as Oakington Barracks; in 1984 it accommodated an infantry battalion, a helicopter squadron, and an education centre. In 1999 the Royal Anglian Regiment moved from Oakington to North Luffenham.

After 1945 three housing estates were built in Long Stanton as married quarters for airmen. Post-war building in St. Michael's was restricted to a few more expensive houses, though there were also three residential caravan sites, originally established to provide temporary accommodation for the RAF. In 1984 they included at least 40 permanent dwellings and had room for touring caravans. In 2000, the Ministry of Defence leased the redundant barracks site to the Home Office for an Immigration Centre, which has processed several thousand asylum seekers' claims. The Centre is due to close by the end of 2006.



New Farms post 1916

A few farms were built in the former open fields after enclosure in 1816. In 1861 only the Bar House on Hatton's Road and Noon Folly Farm at the south end of the parish were inhabited. New Close Farm near Noon Folly and New Farm near the station were both built shortly after the Finch-Hatton estate was broken up in 1874. Inholms, perhaps dating from the same period, was demolished to make way for the airfield. In 1984, the only other farmhouse outside the village was Brookfield, a modern bungalow on Rampton Drift.

Long Stanton Railway Station

The railway from Cambridge to St. Ives opened in 1847 with a station by the Willingham road about half way between the village and the parish boundary. Its goods yard provided a valuable railhead for farmers and growers in Longstanton and the neighbouring villages for well over one hundred years. The station closed in 1970 but the line remained in use for goods traffic until 1987.

Public Houses

The inn which in 1686 had 3 beds and stabling for 2 horses was presumably the Black Bull.

Between 1841 and 1875, 3 pubs were opened in Longstanton: 'The 'William IV' on the Huntingdon Road - located almost opposite to the present Lolworth petrol station; 'The Railway Tavern' next to the

station, and 'The Red Cow' at Green End which closed in 1908 - now Green End Farm. By 1984 there were only two pubs in the village and the Hoops in St. Michael's, which began c. 1900 as a beer shop. The Hoops closed in 1983.



The Hoops standing at the corner of St. Michaels and Wilson's Road. Note, left to right middle ground, telephone box and Quaker House. c.1950

Village Institute

A small Village Institute was built in 1926 in High Street, the cost being partly defrayed by the accumulated profits of the stone, gravel, and clay pits allotted for public use at enclosure. After 1968 it was known as the Longstanton Social Centre. In 1951 the parish council purchased 8 acres by Over Road for a sports ground, on which a new pavilion was opened in 1971 known today as the Sports and Social Club.

Village Farming Economy

Wheat was the most important cereal in the late 19th century, though in most years barley ran it a close second. The total cereal acreage fell from about 1,400 acres in 1866 to just over 1,000 acres in 1905 as more land was put down to grass and fodder crops, particularly clover and turnips. The arable retreated again after 1918, and in 1935 the grassland, at about 900 acres, was marginally more extensive than the land under cereals, wheat still predominating. In 1980 there were 295 hectares (730 acres) of wheat, 168 hectares (415 acres.) of barley, and 86 hectares (213 acres) of rape. Sheep were long the



Long Stanton Station, viewed trackside looking towards Swavesey. Middle distance, left to right, main platform, station booking office and house, crossing gates, second platform, signal, signal box and goods siding. Main goods yard was to the left, out of camera. c.1950



dominant livestock. In 1866 there were about 1,750 sheep, though the number fell by nearly half before 1900 and few were kept after 1945. By then cattle were more numerous than at any time previously. In the 1790s one tenant farmer kept only enough to meet his household's dairy needs. Brookfield Farm had a large pig unit in 1982.

Market gardens and commercial orchards covered about 40 acres in 1885. In the 1920s there were about 175 acres of orchards, nearly all in the northern part of the parish near the railway station. Almost all had been grubbed up by 1980, when market gardens covered about 300 acres. There were usually four or five market gardening businesses in the late 19th century and a few more in the early 20th. Cambridgeshire Growers Ltd., established in 1949, packed and marketed local produce from premises by the station until 1968 or later. In 1984 Noon Folly Farm was being rented by the National Institute of Agricultural Botany for its work in the certification of seeds. The Hattons owned the only windmill recorded in the 17th century, which was mentioned until 1789.

Trades



Thomas Cole, baker, with horse drawn cart and delivery cycles. c.1910

Carpenters, a shoemaker, a thatcher, and a ropemaker worked in the village in the late 16th and early 17th century. In the 19th century there were blacksmiths, carpenters, wheelwrights, thatchers, shoemakers, and cordwainers. The number of craftsmen declined from the 1870s with the fall in population, and in the early 20th century there were only a blacksmith, a boot repairer and, for about 20 years, a carpenter. Around 1850 there were five shops in the village, and after 1900 usually three or four. The increase of population after the Second World War allowed three shops to remain open in 1984. Today, while we only have one shop and Post Office in the High Street, there are over 80 versatile businesses in the village, ranging from hairdressing, veterinary surgery, electrical contracting, chimney sweeping, B&B, house lettings, high tech, computing, consultancies, industrial, decorating, building, motoring, agricultural and many more commercial concerns.

Local Government

Both parishes were in Chesterton poor-law union from 1836 and Chesterton rural district from 1894. The united civil parish was in South Cambridgeshire district from 1974.

The Medieval Churches

The two parishes in Long Stanton, All Saints and St. Michael, were both first recorded in 1217. The benefices were united in 1923 but the ecclesiastical parishes remained separate until 1959, when St. Michael's became a chapel of ease to All Saints.

All Saints'



Interior view of All Saint's church, complete with oil lamps. c.1900

The rector of the united benefice in 1969 and 1984 held services in both churches every Sunday; his successors also acted as chaplain at the military base. The greater part of the church dates from a reconstruction after the existing building

was damaged by fire in 1349 so completely that it was unusable for services. The new church was evidently substantially complete by 1361, when a falling tree broke through the roof and killed two people inside. The church was fully restored between 1886 and 1891, when the window tracery was renewed and the top of the spire rebuilt. The alabaster monument to Sir Thomas Hatton (d.1658) and his wife Mary, remains in the chapel. The couple are depicted in recumbent effigies on a tomb chest, the side panels of which carry the figures of six of their children. A stained-glass window is dedicated to the memory of airmen who died in action during the First and Second World wars. In the 19th century the rent from 10 acres owned by the parish was regularly used for repairs. The parish retained some of the land in 1984.

St Michael's

'This church is typically and appealingly English in its setting, an adorable small village church in a quiet and idyllic corner. Lovers of architecture will admire the superb 13th century double piscina in the south chancel wall, with its two drains set beneath intersecting arches, similar to one in Jesus College Chapel Cambridge', writes the Churches Conservation Trust. St Michael's comprises a chancel and an aisled nave with south porch and west bellcot, and is built of field stones with ashlar dressings.

The nave and aisles are contained under a single thatched roof, one of only two to survive in Cambridgeshire. The chancel was presumably tiled during the 1884 restoration. St Michael's was fully re-thatched in 2000 by the Churches Conservation Trust. In 1825 the rector was holding morning and afternoon services each Sunday. The last separate rector of St. Michael's in 1897 held similar services and had 18 communicants in a churchgoing population of c.55, about two thirds of the parish. By the 1960s the church was used for only two or three services a year. It was declared redundant in 1973 and was taken over by the Redundant Fund in 1975. Today the Churches Conservation Trust is seeking funds and consent to reopen it for modern community use. In 1846 the church of St. James the Less, Philadelphia, was built almost exactly to measured drawings of St. Michael's.



Exterior view of St Michael's church, complete with its two external bells in the bellcot. c.1920

Notes and references:

Information supplied here has been derived from extracts: *'Long Stanton'*, A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: Volume IX: Chesterton, Northstowe, and Papworth Hundreds (1989), pp. 220-236. © 2003-2005 University of London & History of Parliament Trust. www.visitchurches.org.uk ©The Churches Conservation trust 2004. Additional notes have been supplied by residents of Longstanton.

With thanks to also to the Central Library's Cambridgeshire Collection and Tom Eaton for permission to reproduce these photos of the past



Post Office, Mill Lane. c.1900



Railway Tavern, level crossing and signal box. c.1910



Longstanton's horse drawn snow plough - shown coming from the School Lane junction with the High Street. It was stored at the old smithy when not in use. c.1927 (See page 30)



High Street Longstanton, Brookfield House drive on the right. c.1930



Before Colesfield, The Dale and Stoke's Close. Dutch Elm disease later removed tree line, below Church Farm. c.1975

Aerial photograph taken from a Phantom jet on it's way home to Alconbury. Photo: Dick Brant



Home Farm buildings and wall - a familiar sight on the High Street for many years c 2002