

## Longstowe

Longstowe is a small parish of 643 hectares, lying on clay in gently rolling country between 70 and 85m above sea level, and is bounded on the east by Ermine Street. It is poorly populated recorded in the 16th century population declined, to 17 householders recorded in the 17th century and only 14 at one stage in the 17th century. Gradual enclosure of fields in Longstowe started in the late 15th century and was linked with depopulation, with about half the parish enclosed before the official Act was made in 1799. In Domesday Book it is simply known as 'Stou' or 'Place', probably meaning 'Holy Place', but had acquired 'Long' by 1268.

### Middle Ages

The manor house of Longstowe belonged to Ramsey Abbey through-out until the Dissolution, when it was taken over by the Cromwell family. John Layer, writing in the early 17th century, states that Sir John Cage, who acquired Longstowe in 1571, had a fair lordship house there, with park, coney warren and fair demesne; The Cages replaced the medieval manor house with Longstowe Hall. This Elizabethan manor house can still be recognised in the present Hall, despite drastic alterations in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It contains high quality imported woodwork re-used from the grounds is a rectangular site, of interest because, although it appears to be medieval, it was actually constructed in the early 19th century as a garden feature.

A square medieval moat stood near Ermine Street, just south of the cross-roads. This was the site of the Hospital of St. Mary of Stowe, founded before 1250 by Walter the Chaplain, Longstowe's vicar, and started by a Master and sisters. Its lands were taken by the rector towards the end of the 14th century and it passed to the Crown, although an 18th century map shows a parsonage within it. One arm of the moat survives as a wet ditch, the rest being covered by a bungalow.

towards Dry Drayton. It now primarily consists of just one street leading north to the church.

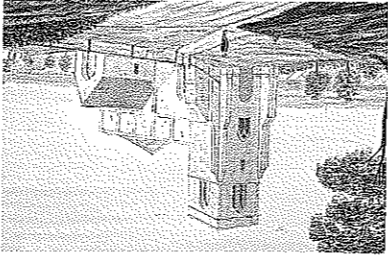
For its size, Lotworth had a reasonably high population in the Middle Ages, with 16 people in 1086, 50 tenants in 1279 and 154 tax-payers in 1377. After the 14th century the population declined, to 17 householders recorded in the 16th century and only 14 at one stage in the 17th century. Gradual enclosure of fields in Longstowe started in the late 15th century and was linked with depopulation, with about half the parish enclosed before the official Act was made in 1799. In Domesday Book it is simply known as 'Stou' or 'Place', probably meaning 'Holy Place', but had acquired 'Long' by 1268.

The Late Saxon village that had populated secondary settlements at Great and Little Childerley and was consolidated in one manor by 1086, still had several rent-paying freeholders in the Middle Ages. After about 1300 their land was being bought up by the lords of the manor, and peasants were able to acquire side the village, and in the 16th century it was acquired by John Cutts of Childerley, whose successors used it as a farmhouse at the time when houses were destroyed by fire in 1393, though this alone should not have had lasting impact. The process of consolidation in one ownership was largely completed by the Cutts of Childerley in the 16th century. There were a few substantial rent-paying farmers living in the village at that time but the labouring population was very low. After the Cutts sold the village in the late 17th century, Lotworth was held by outside land-owners until it passed to the Daintees, who built Lotworth Grange in the mid 19th century.

Longstowe Hall, drawn by R. Kelham in 1833. © Cambridge Antiquarian Society.



Longstowe Hall, drawn by R. Kelham in 1833. © Cambridge Antiquarian Society.



Lotworth church, drawn by R. Kelham in the early 19th century. © Cambridge Antiquarian Society.

### Middle Ages

A moated site at Lotworth Grange still had four sides in 1841, though now only one arm which has been enlarged to serve as a drain survives. 13th century pottery has been found within the moated area. This was the site of the manor house for Lotworth Manor, an estate which had been given to a follower of Picot after the Conquest. Medieval owners of the manor probably all lived outside the village, and in the 16th century it was acquired by John Cutts of Childerley, whose successors used it as a farmhouse at the time when houses were destroyed by fire in 1393, though this alone should not have had lasting impact. The process of consolidation in one ownership was largely completed by the Cutts of Childerley in the 16th century. There were a few substantial rent-paying farmers living in the village at that time but the labouring population was very low. After the Cutts sold the village in the late 17th century, Lotworth was held by outside land-owners until it passed to the Daintees, who built Lotworth Grange in the mid 19th century.

The village of Lotworth today retains little of its medieval origins apart from its church, but its shrink-age has meant that the sites of earlier buildings have remained as slight earthworks and as crop marks. These suggest that the church was once approximately in the centre of the village, with Lotworth settlement areas extending north and east of the present row of houses, giving a roughly rectangular lay-out. A triangular green in the south of the village, stretching along the road to Childerley, is mentioned in 1615 and survived into the 19th century. Only one of Lotworth's existing houses was built before the 19th century, a thatched 17th century house north of the green. Otherwise it is essentially a Victorian settlement based on the crossing of roads which at that time still ran to Childerley, Boxworth, the Cambridge-Godmanchester road and

along the road down to the river may have been moved as the land around the manor house was expanded to form the park. In 1729 there were extensive improvements to the road from Whitesford, part of a turnpike route, and this involved building a new road to the west of the village, effectively acting as a bypass to the original village but also attracting a new line of housing.

Little Shelford's population is not given separately in Domesday Book, but it was probably over half of the 38 inhabitants that it shared with Great Shelford. It later declined in relation with Great Shelford. There were 60 tenants in 1279, 36 tax-payers in 1327 and between 30 and 40 households were recorded from the 16th to the 18th century. In 1801 the population was 220, and this rose to 580 in 1851 despite the small size of the parish. Later there were slight falls, but since the 1960s there was a steady rise in population to 810 in 1996.

The Shelford's river crossing, so important to the origins of both villages, had a wooden bridge and a causeway in the 14th century, with a hermitage that acted as a toll-booth. A stone bridge stood here in the 17th century and was rebuilt in 1782.

## Lotworth

Lotworth is a very small parish of 450 hectares, lying on clay and rising only gently from about 30m above sea level along the Roman road from Cambridge to Godmanchester, its northern border, to 40m on its southern border with Childerley, which was once part of it. Open fields that had not been enclosed by the Cutts or other land-owners were officially enclosed by an Award made in 1848. In Domesday Book it is *Lotesworde*, Lot's Enclosure.

A long Mesolithic axe was found near the church.

### Prehistoric

In the Late Saxon period it seems that Little Shelford was a place of some importance. Its church, which have been moved as the land around

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## Little Shelford

Little Shelford is a small parish of 484 hectares, lying mostly on chalk apart from a strip of alluvium and gravel along the Cam, which forms its eastern border. Its boundaries with Whitesford, Hauxton, Harston and Newton were not fixed until Enclosure in 1815. The parish is generally very low-lying, but Cockle Hill rises to 30m in the extreme south-east. Like Great Shelford, from which it was not separated, its name in Domesday Book is just *Sceldesforde*.

### Prehistoric

A Bronze Age axe was found near the river, and the gravel soils were widely used for settlement in Iron Age times, crop marks showing settlements similar to those in the adjacent parishes.

An Anglo-Saxon cemetery, with an unknown but apparently small number of burials was found very close to the river. The only artefacts in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology from this site are two gilded brooches, six amber and two glass beads, a cowrie shell, buckle and a knife, which could all have been in one grave.

As in Great Shelford, the earliest part of the village was very close to the bridging point of the river, only about a quarter of a mile from its twin settlement. It grew up on a crossing place on a route from Foxton to Worsted Street, principally along the short stretch between the church and the river, where the manor house also stood. Later, the settlement spread further west along Church Street and south along High Street from where these two roads met near the church. The houses

Anglo-Saxon grave slab set in the porch of Little Shelford church

