



LONG SUTTON TODAY

as seen by DAVID KAYE

THERE must be thousands of motorists who will remember Long Sutton as synonymous with long traffic jams on summer weekends. But this will disappear when the long awaited town bypass is constructed.

For centuries travellers between Spalding and King's Lynn had to deviate from a direct route when they reached Long Sutton and go further inland via Wisbech. Then in 1831 the huge Cross Keys embankment was built across Wingland on the far side of the River Nene at Sutton Bridge and the present A17 direct route between Long Sutton and King's Lynn was born.

The legacy of that long travelling past can be seen in the magnificent coaching inn, the Bull Hotel, with its Georgian fanlight porch and Venetian windows standing four-square on the corner of the Market Place and London Road. The horses may no longer pull coaches through the archway into the yard, but the sign pointing to the free car park is a reminder that this small Fenland town still has plenty of visitors, both on Friday market days and as tourists.

If you have never visited the town's splendid medieval parish church of St. Mary you have missed a treat. Its octagonal spire reaches a height of 162 ft, making it the ninth highest in the county. However, being constructed of timber and lead it is not only the tallest such spire in England, but is also the oldest surviving, dating from the early 13th century. It has a 15th century double-decker porch, the upper storey of which



was once the local schoolroom. Dating from this century, however, is the bust of Alfred Pinner, who became a renowned international operatic tenor.

In the Market Place stands what is probably the best preserved communal pump in Lincolnshire, the wooden casing of which still bears the coat of arms of the defunct Long Sutton Urban District Council — St. Edward's crown and a wheat sheaf. From there you can view the full length of the wide rectangular Market Place. Many shop fronts may be of modern design, but at first floor level they have hardly changed in over a century. Not that Long Sutton is a backwater. With a population of over 3,000, it is a thriving town.

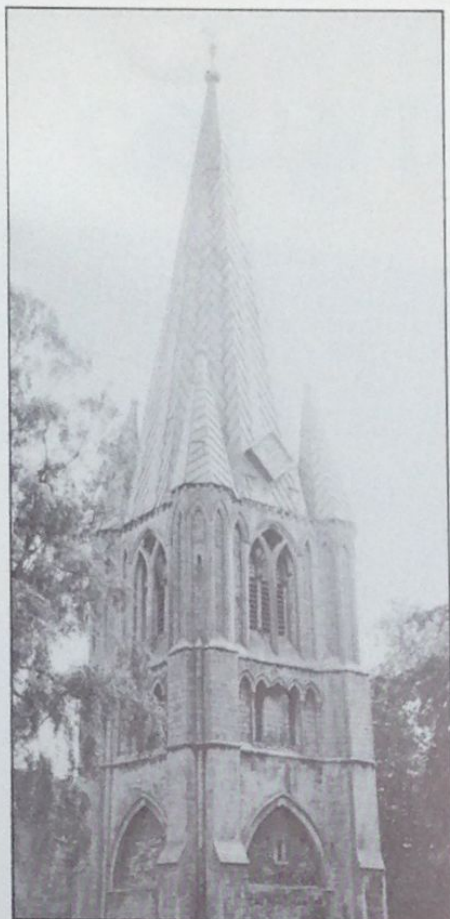
It may have lost its railway link over a quarter of a century ago, but in spite of bus deregulation it continues to have an hourly Lincolnshire Road Car route 505 double-decker to King's Lynn in one direction and to Spalding in the other. And since last October it has gained an additional facility on Sundays — a two hourly service to Peterborough, via Spalding operated by Elsey. It is also linked to Wisbech by the local coach firm Carnell on a regular frequency.

In 1973 a local gymkhana was staged to raise money for the restoration of the church spire, and from those humble beginnings was born the Long Sutton Horse and Pony Show, Every May in London Road horses and riders, owners and their prize dogs, and ordinary

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The well-kept town water pump in the Market Place



St. Mary's church spire of timber and lead.





Georgian terrace on London Road.

East Elloe Magistrates Court



families who are not exhibiting at all converge on the site, raising large sums for national and local charities. One of the latter was the Long Sutton Baptist Roof Fund. At the rear of this imposing church is an equally imposing burial ground, for the General Baptists were a powerful force on these southern Fens. For example in the unique Religious Census of 1851 the evening congregation averaged 250 worshippers, many more than either the Independents (i.e. Congregationalists) or the Wesleyans could muster, and not very far behind the numbers attending Evensong at St. Mary's.

However Long Sutton is not all about the nostalgia for old buildings, there are some fine new ones too, and none finer than the East Elloe Magistrates Court built in 1961 with its stylish porch and coats of arms. Then there is the fine Health Centre, and the town has a new primary school.

Between Long Sutton and Sutton Bridge is the extensive canning works of Lockwood Foods, which provides much employment for the area.

Long Sutton can boast two public parks, near the Magistrates Court with children's swings and enclosed by a screen of trees, and the other with a spectacular avenue of trees is along London Road near the small red brick modern United Reformed Church. The local football team called the Magpies play their home games in the London Road park.

It is to be hoped that once the A17 is diverted away from the town it will attract more visitors and shoppers, all its Georgian charm can be appreciated in greater peace.

**LONG SUTTON
ATHLETIC F.C.**

THE MAGPIES PLAY AGAIN

LONG SUTTON

KICK OFF

IN THE