

Lakenheath Life

by Robert Rolph written in 1983

Lakenheath Life has changed through the ages,
it can now be read from the restyled pages,
of the Church magazine, our monthly news,
containing the rotas, the adverts, and other folks views.
Lakenheath's war years brought the womens land army,
all those young ladies sent the local lads barmy.
In time many of these girls, the local lads married,
and so blood from North, South, and West was now carried
into the veins of Lakenheath new,
some of us here? Perhaps me or you.
Now, the land army hostels' replaced at quayside,
by the place where the old folks reside.
The Americans came and did integrate,
and local young ladies made brides for the states.
Thus, Lakenheath life was spread over the Atlantic,
leaving brides parents feeling quite frantic.
The American aircraft have always been heard,
and are quite Lakenheath's noisiest birds.
It's useless to speak if F ONE ELEVEN'S
have swept back their wings to reach for the heavens.
We've had fighters, bombers and flying fuel tanks,
serviced and flown by our friends, some call Yanks.
When the 'B' Thirty Sixes ten engines turned on their power,
the noise and vibration shook our Church tower.
The cups in the cupboard and plates on the shelf,
I remember those giants quite well Myself.
Lakenheath fens are now drained so dry,
that there isn't enough rain from the sky,
and water is pumped from the ditches through pipes and reels.
To rain guns that travel the acres on wheels.
This makes the crops so very prolific,
does it make sense? The cost is terrific.
They tell us our country has a surplus of food.
So production at cost, cannot be good,
unless our surplus to the third world is flown,
for there not enough food is grown.
We've all seen their plight, shown on the telly,
None of them have enough food in their belly.
Freezing at night, and baked by the sun
living there cannot be fun.
Now we are a long way from Lakenheath fen,
And the old days of farming, and when,
the water was surplus and pumped out to sea,
through hand dug dykes all done properly.
The wage per chain was not very high,
for working in water up to your thigh.

Horses not tractors pull the farm implement
one acre a day and they were content.
Now, harvests soon over with all our power
a day's work for ten done in an hour.
No wonder there's surplus – and men unemployed.
If we ALL worked just three days it could be enjoyed.
What would all the old folk have thought in the past,
to see all the farm work being done so fast.
No armies of workers out in the sun,
just a man on his tractor – sat on his bum
making things look easy, until it breaks down.
Then out with the spanners and on with a frown,
skin off his knuckles – perhaps a bad word.
Have a look round – nobody's heard.
No one's there so no one hears,
you work alone on the farm these latter years.
Lakenheath life in some ways has diminished,
for much local craft is now all finished.

Cobbler and Blacksmith, and Bakers abundant.
So many pubs drinkers never need be redundant.
On Sundays families walked down the road,
and along the bank of Lakenheath Lode.
Round to High Bridge, and sit on the rail
where they could enjoy a glass of good Bullards ale.
The Green Dragon is gone. No more Swan near the Station.
Star, Chequers, Wagon and Horses and Anchor no more
Give temptation.
To drinkers, to sup of their brew,
For on some of the sites, stands something quite new.
No more Carron Shop. The Cinema's demolished.
Local killed meat at the Butchers,
Is that all abolished?
I know I've not finished - there is so much more.
If I continue it might be a bore.
And this just won't do I fear,
so, it's Lakenheath Life continued next year.

Epitaph added 2017

These has been much change over the years,
even in the last 34 years when I was inspired to write this verse.
Sadly, there is still starvation in the World,
and surplus, and so much conflict.
We thank God for his blessing on us that
have plenty, and pray for all who suffer

Churchwarden Robert Rolph