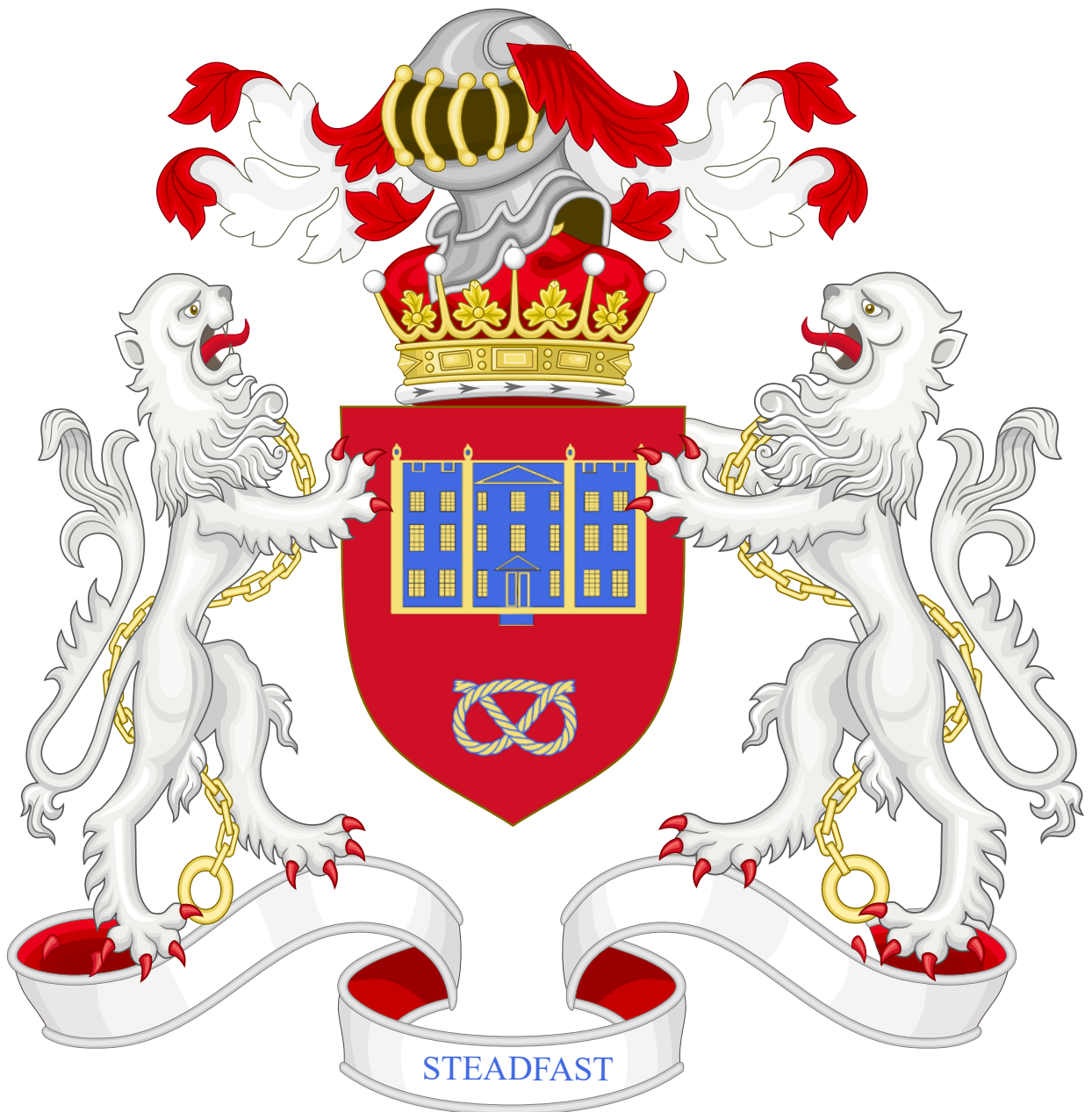


LONGNOR HALL

A Historical Perspective



By David Hill



**Warm Beautiful Homes
Operations Ltd.**



**Impressions of 19th Century Longnor
(Artists Impression)**

Introduction



The bridal party arrives back at Longnor 1726
(Artists Impression)

Nestled in the picturesque landscape of Staffordshire, Longnor Hall emerges as a quintessential emblem of England's rich architectural and agricultural heritage. Constructed in 1726, this estate hall represents not just the zenith of architectural elegance of its time but also a living chronicle of the evolving English countryside. As a Grade II* Listed building, Longnor Hall is distinguished not only by its architectural merit but also by its historical significance, standing as a testament to the lives and legacies of its various inhabitants through the centuries.

The hall was built by Ralph Edge, marking a pivotal moment in the architectural landscape of the region. With the initials "R.E.I." gracefully inscribed on a cast iron rainwater head, the hall's construction heralds the meticulous craftsmanship and attention to detail that define the era. The hall's design, characterised by its red brick construction in Flemish bond, symmetrical and decorative main facade, and the elegant proportion of its interiors, reflects a harmonious blend of formality with the functionality of a high-status hall of an estate.

Today, Longnor Hall stands as a beacon of historical and architectural significance. Its Grade II* listing underscores the importance of preserving such edifices, not only for their aesthetic and historical value but also for their role in telling the story of England's rural past.

Historical Timeline of Longnor Hall

The narrative of Longnor Hall is a tapestry of English heritage, stitched through centuries of history, architecture, and the lives of its inhabitants. Its story is not merely about the construction of a building but the evolution of a community and the land it occupies. This timeline encapsulates the pivotal moments.

Early Medieval Period: The name Longnor originates from Old English, meaning 'the long alder copse'. This period marked the establishment of Longnor as a settlement, situated near the main Roman road from London to Wroxeter, hinting at its longstanding significance in the region.

1086: Documented in the Domesday Book, it was part of the manor of Bradley, showcasing its early agricultural roots and its role within the local feudal system.

15th - 16th Century: Longnor remained under the auspices of the manor of Bradley, governed by the Lords of Stafford. The Aston family, through strategic marriages, came to own the hall, integrating it into their broader estate holdings.

1687: The manor saw a change of hands from John Fennihouse to William Saunders, setting the stage for the construction of Longnor Hall.

1719: Ralph Edge acquired the manor through marriage to Saunders' daughter, Jane. This union led to the construction in 1726, with its architecture possibly influenced by Francis Smith of Warwick, a prominent architect of the time.

Early 19th Century: Ownership transitioned to the Edge family descendants, underlining the hall's status as a significant familial and agricultural seat.

1839: Henry Leaver purchased the estate, initiating a series of substantial modifications that enhanced its stature and prestige. This era marked the demolition of earlier structures and the construction of new farm buildings, shaping the estate's current form.

1890: H. Mitchell acquired the estate, contributing further to its legacy through significant upgrades, including the addition of the Grade II Listed Coach House and Weighbridge House.

Early 20th Century: W.J. Shuker, a notable local agriculturist, tenanted the hall, expanding its agricultural operations significantly.

1921: The Holt family, under James Holt, purchased the estate, continuing to influence its development and ensuring its preservation into the modern era.

1962: The Ministry of Housing listed the Hall, recognising its historical and architectural significance.

2019: The passing of Robert Stuart Holt marked the end of an era but also a continued commitment to preserving the legacy of Longnor Hall.

VALUABLE
**FREEHOLD ESTATE,
LONGNOR HALL,
South Staffordshire.**

To be Sold by Auction,

BY

Mr. JAMES DAVISON,

AT THE

LITTLETON ARMS INN, PENKRIDGE,

On Thursday, February 14, 1839,

At Five o'Clock in the Afternoon, subject to such Conditions as will then be produced, (unless disposed of in the mean time by Private Contract, of which due notice will be given,)

All that the Manor, or reputed

**MANOR OF LONGNOR,
IN THE PARISH OF BRADLEY,**

IN THE COUNTY OF STAFFORD,

With the Rights, Royalties, and Appurtenances thereunto belonging.

And also, all that capital

MANSION OR MANOR HOUSE,

With the Yards, Gardens, Orchards,

Stabling for Twelve Horses, convenient Barns, Cow-sheds, Piggeries, Dovecote, Smithy, and Appurtenances thereunto belonging, containing

315 ACRES, 2 ROODS, AND 14 PERCHES, of

Rich Arable, Meadow, and Pasture Land,

In a high state of Cultivation, (100 Acres of which is Turnip and Barley soil,) and most respectably tenanted.

The Estate lies well to a southern aspect; is bounded for a mile and three quarters southerly by the celebrated Trout Stream, called, "LONGNOR BROOK;" possesses a fair quantity of fine Timber and thriving Plantations; Poor and other Rates are very moderate; and there is an excellent Pew in the south aisle of Bradley Church belonging to the Premises. A portion of the Estate is Tithe free.

The Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal passes within a mile of the Estate, thus affording a supply of Lime, Coals, and Manure, at a cheap rate.

LONGNOR HALL is situate about four miles from Penkridge, and nine from Stafford, both of which Towns have Stations on the Liverpool and Birmingham Railway.

The House, which is a handsome structure, consists of Entrance Hall, Dining and Drawing Rooms, six good Bed Rooms on the first Floor, and Attics above, with suitable Cellarage, Kitchens, Brewhouse, and other out offices.

Sir Thomas Boughy's Hounds hunt in the immediate neighbourhood, and the Estate always affords a plentiful supply of Game.

For further Information apply, (if by Letter, post paid,) at the Offices of Messrs. Freeth and Rawson, Solicitors, Nottingham; Messrs. Parke and Freeth, 63, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London; or of Mr. Davison, Land Agent, Stafford, where Plans and Particulars may be obtained.

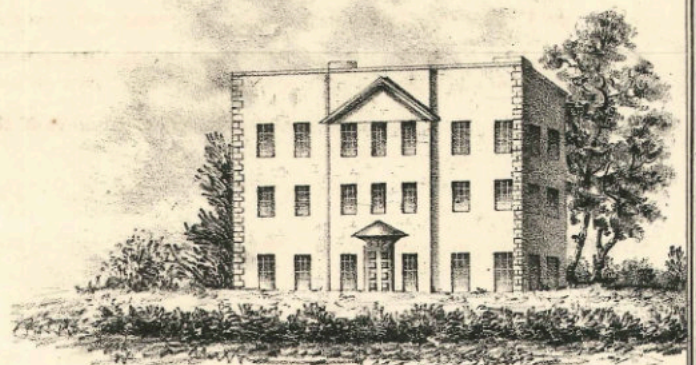
Plan of
the
LONGNOR HALL ESTATE
Situate in the
Parish of Bradley,
and
COUNTY OF STAFFORD.

1859



Reference,

No	Parcels	Culture	Quantities		
			a	r	p
1	Fine Meadow	Meadow	4	0	25
2	Lower Rye Leasow	Arable	11	0	36
3	Upper do	Pasture	9	1	20
4	Dove Bank	do	7	0	14
5	Dove Meadow	Meadow	4	1	33
6	Stony Ford and Meadow	Arable	17	1	16
7	Far Clays	do	11	3	25
8	Middle do, including Pile	do	11	1	39
9	Upper Barn Leasow and Plantation	do	7	2	37
10	Little Clays	do	4	1	16
11	Lower Barn Leasow, Plantation and Barn	do	9	0	10
12	Cow Leasow	do	11	0	14
13	Far Rye Field	do	15	0	32
14	Highway Leasow	Pasture	19	0	8
15	Calms Leasow	Arable	11	0	25
16	Far Ox Leasow	do	10	1	4
17	Wilby Leasow	do	3	3	3
18	Near Ox Leasow	do	7	0	36
19	Near Rye Field	Pasture	12	0	50
20	Hall Meadow, Barn and Yard	Meadow	7	1	52
21	Longnor Hall, Yards, Gardens & Outbuildings	—	2	1	11
22	Garden	—	0	3	24
23	Hall Croft	Meadow	4	3	22
24	Lower Pool Leasow	Pasture	4	2	4
25	Lower Pool Leasow	Arable	15	1	29
26	Upper Pool Leasow	do	18	1	15
27	Upper Pool Leasow	Pasture	5	1	12
28	Saw Pit Leasow	do	5	0	23
29	Oak Tree Leasow & Plantation	Arable	13	2	56
30	Oak Tree Meadow	Meadow	1	3	8
31	Middle Leasow	Arable	10	3	4
32	Wineers Leasow	do	14	1	18
33	Crick's Leasow	do	11	1	18
34	Bickford Leasow	do	9	0	37
35	Bickford Meadow	Meadow	1	2	14
TOTAL			315	2	14



The Estate and Its Owners

Longnor Hall, a beacon of historical and architectural significance in Staffordshire, has been shaped by the lineage of its owners, each leaving an indelible mark on its structure, land, and legacy. From its origins in the 18th century to its role as a prestigious country estate, it has evolved through the hands of several key families, each contributing to the estate's rich tapestry of history.

The Edge Family: Foundational Influence

Early 18th Century: Ralph Edge constructs Longnor Hall, embedding his initials "R.E.I." and the construction year, 1726, into the fabric of the building. This marks the beginning of the Edge family's influence, setting the architectural and historical tone of the estate.

The Leaver Legacy: Expansion and Transformation

1839: Henry Leaver acquires the estate instigating significant changes that would redefine it. Under his stewardship, earlier structures are replaced with a 'U' plan courtyard of farm buildings, heralding a new era of agricultural productivity and architectural evolution.

The Mitchell Era: Enhancements and Additions

Late 19th Century: H. Mitchell, known for his contributions to the brewing industry, becomes the proprietor. His tenure is marked by the addition of the Grade II Listed Coach House and Weighbridge House in 1890, along with extensive modifications to the hall itself, enriching the estate's architectural diversity and heritage.

The Holt Family: Custodianship into the Modern Era

Early 20th Century to Present: The Holt family takes up the mantle, ensuring the preservation and continued relevance of the property. Their period of ownership sees the estate through challenges and changes, including the transition of agricultural practices and the maintenance of its historical and architectural integrity.

Heritage

Longnor Hall, with its origins deeply rooted in the agricultural landscape of Staffordshire, has played a pivotal role in shaping the agricultural heritage and land use of the area.

The estate's agricultural legacy is marked by a dedication to both crop production and livestock farming. Throughout its history, Longnor Hall has seen the cultivation of a variety of crops, adhering to the demands of the time and advancements in agricultural techniques. The farming practices implemented on the estate were often ahead of their time, integrating innovations that would set standards for the region.

Obituary Mr. Shuker

Staffordshire Advertiser, Saturday, May 20, 1944: Death of Mr. W.J. Shuker,

(shortened and modernised)



By the death, which occurred at his home at Lapley Park Farm on Sunday, of Mr. Walter J. Shuker, the Staffordshire agricultural community has lost one of its most popular personalities. A typical farmer of the old school, Mr. Shuker, who was 85, had been for many years a prominent figure at agricultural events in the county, and his bluff and jovial personality won him the affection of a large circle of friends. He never missed a farmer's dinner if he could possibly manage to attend, contributing in no small measure to the

Before moving to Lapley, Mr. Shuker farmed 475 acres at the Hall Bradley. He had large herds of cattle and sheep and was a well-known breeder of Hackneys and Shires. He was one of the oldest members of the Brewood and District Agricultural Society, of which he was for a time chairman. Other farmer organisations to which he belonged included the Royal Agricultural Society and the Wolverhampton branch of the old Staffordshire Chamber of Agriculture. Born in 1859, he was the eldest son of the late Mr. John Shuker, C.C., a well-known agricultural authority and the first secretary and one of the founders of the Montgomeryshire Horse Society. He was educated at Ardingly College, Sussex, and when he left there, he farmed with his father, first at Hurst Farm and then on the Shropshire-Montgomery border.

Marrying in 1886, he took Raddington House Farm at Raddington, near Shrewsbury, where he captained the local cricket club with great success for several years. In 1890, he took Burlington Farm near Shifnal, under the Duke of Sutherland, which he farmed for 10 years, during the last two of which he also had Gosford Grange Farm near Shifnal, under the Earl of Shrewsbury. In 1900, he took Longnor Hall Farm near Penkridge, under the late Mr. Herbert Mitchell of Messrs. Mitchells and Butlers, Birmingham, and left there in 1921 when the farm, being sold, he bought Lapley Park from the late Major E.N. Am Vaughan. Referring to his farming tenancies, he was heard to remark, "I've lived under a Duke and I've lived under a Lord, but give me the Brewer."

Mr. Shuker took a keen interest in the public and social life of the district. He served on the old Cannock Board of Guardians and subsequently on Cannock Rural Council, and was chairman of Bradley Parish Council for nearly 40 years. He was an enthusiastic worker in the Unionist cause. Mr. Shuker was a widower and leaves a family. The funeral took place at Lapley Church on Tuesday, with the service being conducted by the Reverend O. Saint John Smith.

Obituary Mr. H. Mitchell

Smethwick Telephone, Saturday, November, 1914: Death of Mr. H. Mitchell

(shortened and modernised)



Mr. Henry Mitchell, a pivotal figure in the midlands commercial landscape for over five decades, passed away at the age of 77 at his Edgbaston residence, leaving a profound imprint on both the local community and the brewing industry. Born in Worcester in 1837, Mitchell initially followed in his father's footsteps in the building trade before charting a new course in brewing. He established his first brewery on Oldbury Road, Smethwick, in 1869, and subsequently expanded with the Cape Hill brewery in 1878. This establishment flourished under his leadership, eventually becoming one of the United Kingdom's most formidable and successful breweries. The formation of Mitchells & Butlers Limited in 1898, following the merger with Butlers Crown Brewery Limited, marked a significant milestone in his career.

Mitchell's business acumen led to the strategic acquisition and integration of several smaller breweries, propelling Mitchells & Butlers into the fifth largest brewery in the UK, boasting assets of £3,326,258 and an annual output exceeding half a million barrels. Despite his focus on business, Mitchell was celebrated for his generosity and dedication to his employees' welfare, actively promoting their happiness and investing in recreational facilities for them.

Aside from his brewing empire, Mitchell's contribution included the purchase and extensive modernisation of Longnor Hall in 1890. He transformed it into a productive farm, significantly benefiting the local community through both agricultural advancements and employment opportunities. This initiative demonstrated his commitment to community welfare and his vision for a thriving, sustainable local economy.

Mitchell's influence extended beyond his business ventures. He generously donated land and facilities for public recreation and sports, including a drill hall, cricket ground, and parks, in memory of his late son Harry Mitchell Jr. These contributions, coupled with his advocacy for physical health education, underscored his public-spirited nature and commitment to enhancing the quality of life.

In summary, Henry Mitchell's legacy is not only as a successful brewer but also as a benefactor who significantly improved the local community through his business ventures, philanthropy, and visionary projects like the modernisation of Longnor Hall.

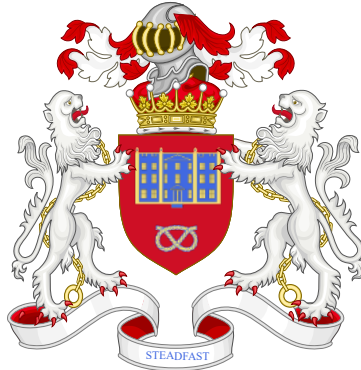


Victorian ploughing at Longnor
(Artist's Impression)

The story of Longnor Hall stands as a testament to the resilience, innovation, and heritage of rural England. From its origins in the early 18th century to its role in the 20th century and beyond, Longnor Hall has not only been a witness to history but has actively participated in the shaping of the local landscape and community. Each owner, from Ralph Edge to the Holt family, has left an indelible mark, contributing to the hall's rich tapestry of history, architecture, and agriculture.

The hall embodies the essence of continuity amidst change. Its walls have seen the transition from hand farming to mechanised agriculture, from local governance to national politics, and from private residence to heritage asset. Yet, throughout these transitions, Longnor Hall has remained steadfast, a beacon of tradition and progress intertwined.

In the end, Longnor Hall is more than just a building or an estate; it is a living history book, each page filled with stories of people, architecture, and the land.



Longnor Hall

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www.LongnorHall.co.uk



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