

Normanton Park Road

Normanton Park Road was the first of the three new roads which were built during the construction of Rutland Water. Running from Normanton cross-roads to Bunkers Hill, Empingham, its initial role was to provide access for lorries carrying heavy equipment and materials to the nearby dam construction site. For most of its length it was built along the line of a farm track, which before 1925 was a coach road passing through an avenue of trees and open parkland. Margaret Plumb (*née* Hart) remembers: ‘We used to walk through the park from Empingham where the road is now, it was just a cart track and sometimes it was very muddy.’

The coach road was originally the east entrance to Normanton Hall, and the route taken by the Prince and Princess of Wales when travelling to Stamford following their visit in 1881. The Rev Edward Bradley, in reporting the visit for *The Illustrated London News* on 15th January, recorded: ‘On leaving the lodges at this [the east] side of the park the coach-road passes through a long avenue of beech and sycamores.’

The lodges were either side of the east entrance gates to Normanton Park, where the coach road passed through The Belt, narrow woodland on three sides of the park. To the north-west of the lodges was Mow Mires farmhouse and Mow Mires Spinney, both of which were lost when the reservoir was built (*see* Chapter 11 – Normanton).



*The former coach road in 1970 looking towards Normanton (Jim Levisohn ARPS)
Below: From the OS 2nd ed 25" map 1904 showing The Avenue, The Belt and the lodges which were either side of the east entrance gates to Normanton Hall*



The east coach road highlighted on the OS 2nd ed 1" map 1906



The Avenue section of the old coach road was a long ride of beech and sycamore trees. Only a short section survives today (Hart)