

The Battle For Harmondsworth

By **Alexander Baron** - Jul 2, 2015



Harmondsworth barn

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If you haven't heard of Harmondsworth, it is an **historic village** in the London Borough of Hillingdon. It is mentioned in the *Domesday Book*, and in 2011 had a population of less than 1,500. But, if **the recommendations** of a (so-called) independent report are carried out, Harmondsworth will be wiped off the map, and a thousand years of history with it.

If it is deemed that the construction of a third runway at nearby Heathrow Airport would be for the public good, a compulsory purchase order will be issued, and bye bye Harmondsworth. This sort of thing is far from uncommon; in recent years there have been a number of large construction projects in the capital that have used these powers. Likewise, great projects in other countries have often necessitated sacrificing the lands and even the livelihoods of local populations for the greater good, though what our masters consider to be a greater good may not be anything of the kind, but let's not talk about Soviet Russia.

The controversy over Harmondsworth is by no means a recent development. First there was talk of building a third airport for London to supplement Heathrow and Gatwick – the latter of which is actually a fair distance from the capital. This resulted in the conversion of Stanstead, which had been opened as a military airport in 1943. Its first terminal was opened in 1969, and it has been a major player since the 1980s.

So do we really need another runway at Heathrow, especially with the opening of the Channel Tunnel in the 1990s? Many big names think not, including London Mayor Boris Johnson and the man who may well replace him, Zac Goldsmith. The Green Party has made particularly **cogent objections** to a third runway at Heathrow citing air pollution and noise as unwelcome fringe benefits in addition to the destruction of local communities.

Such is the strength of opposition to this plan that there are a number of dedicated websites and a petition against it. If you care about the environment and the destruction of an historic village, be sure to **add your voice**.

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