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# Teacher Briefing

Land of the Fanns

*From, Land of the Fanns Online Resource*

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## Land of the Fanns

Straddles the London-Essex boundary.

Encompassing Havering, Thurrock and Brentwood.

<https://www.landofthefanns.org/>

- The Land of the Fanns area straddles the London-Essex boundary. It encompasses lots of Havering, Thurrock and Brentwood with small parts of Epping Forest and Basildon.
- It is 180km<sup>2</sup> (70 square miles).
- The name 'Land of the Fanns' comes from a book called The Land that Fanns by local librarian and historian Leslie Thompson. This was published in 1957.
- 'Fann' is the Saxon word for fen, a 'low marshy land or low-lying district' .
- The landscape was shaped by the last Ice Age and was historically an area of fens, forests and farming.
- Today, it has an unusual variety of natural landscapes including highland, lowland, marshes and river valleys.
- **South:** has the River Thames;
- **North:** has historic parklands and views around Bedfords Park and Weald Country Park;
- **East:** has a gravel ridge dividing the historic fens and Thames marshes from Langdon Hills Country Park.
- In 1768 an Essex clergyman and author called Philip Morant declared the view from Langdon Hills to be the "grandest prospect in England".
- The River Thames runs along the south of the Land of the Fanns. The Thames has had an important influence on the historical development of the area because of linking London to the sea, through the Land of the Fanns. There are also tributary rivers running north-south: the Mardyke, Ingrebourne and Beam.

- This landscape represents one of the few remaining undeveloped areas of landscape which historically formed the setting to London and played an important role in supporting London's growth.
- It is an ever-changing landscape which has a long history but has experienced decades of damage due to major road building, housing development, quarrying and land fill. The Land of the Fanns area combines new landscapes continually being created as well as historic landscapes reflecting past land use and enclosure patterns.
- **It includes:**
  - Rainham Marshes, home to 10% of the UK population of water vole
  - 'Lost' royal residences within the Havering Hills.
  - The largest reed bed in London in the Ingrebourne Valley
  - Historic connections with the celebrated River Thames.