

# In the Beginning ...

What's that place over there?

It's the old pumping station? It drained the thousands of acres of fens from Cambridge to Ely for nearly 100 years.



Why did they have to drain it?



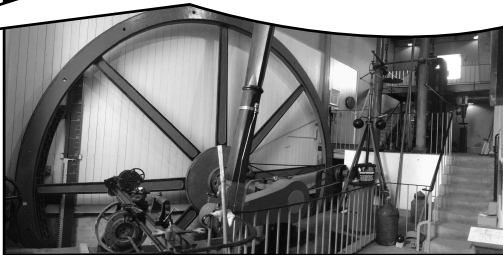
Well, in the past the area was under water for most of the year and they wanted more farmland.

How did they do that?

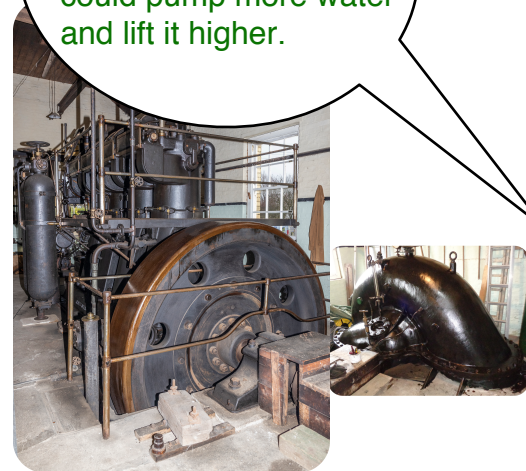
Originally the land was higher than the rivers but as they drained it the land dropped and they had to pump the water up into the rivers so then they used windmills.



By 1800 they needed more power to lift the water higher and so built the steam engine in 1831.



Then in 1920 a diesel engine and cenrifugal pump were put in, which could pump more water and lift it higher.



Today electric pumps are used that can pump even more water but the old diesels are still kept in working order as a back up!



But how did the the steam engine work?

Now, that's a story for another time!