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
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GEOLOGY AND PLACE-NAMES IN KESTEVEN (S.W. LINCOLNSHIRE).

The Kesteven division of Lincolnshire—officially the Parts of Kesteven—provides a good illustration of geological control, by outcrops of varying lithology, over human settlement. The topography suggests at once an explanation of the marked north and south lines of village distribution. The chief physical feature of the division is the high Heath which runs north and south and is unsheltered and unsuitable for settlement. This goes a long way towards explaining the village distribution: practically all the sites are off the high Heath, but, as they are on the lower land flanking it, they conform roughly to north and south lines of distribution. The Geological Drift map is just as useful in helping us to understand the village distribution and stratification of names in Kesteven.

For examination, the Drift map of the division¹ may be conveniently divided into two parts: the regions north and south of the Ancaster Gap.² The topography of the district north of the Gap may be rapidly described in its chief features. Stretching eastwards from the western boundary of the division is the low and level plain across which the River Witham and its tributary the Brant flow northwards, fed by the numerous 'becks' which cross the plain. On the east, this plain is bounded by the rapidly rising scarp of the Heath, which is known as the Lincoln Edge. The Lincoln Edge rises about 250 feet or 300 feet above the plain and then the Heath slopes away gradually eastwards until the flat level Fen beds are reached, and finally the River Witham which, having turned east through the Lincoln Gap, now flows south-east to the Wash.

¹ One Inch Geological: Old Series Sheets 70 and 83 (Drift).

² The site of the Romano-British *Causennae* is probably to be sought in Ancaster (Danelaw  Charters *Ancastre* 1190).

The Drift map shows the prevailing types of the Witham and Brant plain, west of the Lincoln Edge, to be Lower Lias clays, sands and limestone with considerable patches of overlying gravels and of alluvium of recent age. As the ground starts to rise sharply to the Lincoln Edge there is an outcrop of Middle Lias sands and clays above which, running from Ancaster northwards to Lincoln, is an outcrop of Upper Lias clay. The main ridge of the Heath is an escarpment of Lincolnshire Limestone which stretches northwards from Ancaster to Lincoln. This escarpment ridge is about six miles wide and it is the main feature of the region. Along the east of the Lincolnshire Limestone there is an outcrop of Upper Estuarine clay, succeeded in turn by Great Oolite Limestone and Clays, Cornbrash and Oxford Clay occasionally covered by outliers of Boulder Clay. As the land gradually slopes to the level of the Fens, there are considerable spreads of gravel, some of which are surrounded by Fen beds, composed here of peat.

The village distribution and names of the northern half of Kesteven can now be examined with these features of the Drift map in mind. Starting again in the west we find that the villages of the Witham-Brant plain are in almost every instance situated on the edge of a gravel spread. These spreads vary in size from the small isolated outliers upon each of which is situated one village such as Thurlby (Graffoe), Haddington or South Hykeham, to the large spreads on whose edges are situated several villages such as Skellingthorpe, Doddington, Eagle, Whisby, all on one gravel spread. The gravel provides good dry sites, while the underlying Lower Lias clays hold up the water, which is therefore easily obtained from wells in the gravel. The clays appear to have been avoided, doubtless on account of their dampness, in contrast to which the gravel spreads where the villages are situated offered obvious advantages. The claylands too, would be heavily wooded in ancient times, and remain well-wooded even to the present. It is significant that we find such names in this district as Eagle (Domesday Book *Aclei* 'oak-wood'),

The Lound,³ Lound Farm, Ash Lound and Brakes Farm. This oak-bearing clayland would not be successfully cleared and tilled until Anglo-Saxon times, when the powerful ox-teams were employed. C. W. Phillips in his recent survey, "The Present State of Archaeology in Lincolnshire,"⁴ records no early finds in this district. If the Drift map helps us to understand more completely the village distribution and village names of this area, it also helps with the often less-noticed farm names. In a clay region it is only natural that names such as Broughton Clays and Skelmire Farm should be found. It is noticeable too, that one of the very few villages not sited on a gravel spread in this district should be called Claypole. Its site on the Lower Lias clay is sufficiently distinctive to earn it the name (DB. *Claiþol* 'clay-pool').

The next group of villages forms a remarkable line of north and south distribution. They appear about half way up the steep slope of the Lincoln Edge, or are perched near its summit. The line goes with remarkable continuity: Bracebridge, Waddington, Harmston, Coleby, Boothby, Navenby, Wellingore, Welbourn, Leadenham, Fulbeck, Caythorpe, Normanton, Carlton Scroop, and Sudbrook. The true significance of their sites comes with a glance at the geological map. For the most part they are not on the unsheltered Heath, but, more important still, where the impervious Upper Lias clay outcrops below the Lincolnshire Limestone (which quickly loses water by fracture); therefore where these villages are situated there is a spring line and an adequate supply of water. Whereas the Heath soon becomes parched and dry in summer, the villages have a natural and adequate supply of water. Many little streams rise at the junction of the Lias clay and the Lincolnshire Limestone and flow westward to the Brant. Fulbeck, significantly enough, is the name of one village situated by such a stream (DB. *Fulebec* 'dirty stream'). Names containing the elements "well" (Old East Mercian *welle* 'spring') and

³ See *LSE*. ii, 72-5.

⁴ *Archaeological Journal* xc, 106-149, xci, 97-187.

“ bourn ” (Old English *burna* ‘ small stream ’) are frequent. Each of these villages has its strip of “ heath ” on the Lincolnshire Limestone ridge and also its “ Low Fields ” on the lower slopes towards the Brant and Witham, which with their Lower Lias clays, sands and limestone are good crop producers. C. W. Phillips has noted plentiful finds along this Lincoln Edge—evidence of settlement in the Late Bronze Age. The geological features here favour early settlement.

Still carrying the survey eastward, we find that the broad ridge of Lincolnshire Limestone is singularly devoid of village settlement. The difficulty of water supply explains this.⁵ The only settlement is Temple Bruer, founded by the Knights Templars ‘ on the Heath ’ (*super Brueriam*).⁶

The outcrop of Upper Estuarine clay east of the Lincolnshire Limestone ridge coincides with another north and south line of villages. Again there is a spring line, the streams this time flowing eastward to the Fens. Again there are names like Brauncewell, Cranwell, containing the element ‘ well.’ Slightly further to the east is a line of villages including Potter Hanworth, Nocton, Kirkby Green, Rowston, Digby, Bloxholm (DB. *Blochesham*); Dorrington and Ruskington. These villages are situated over Cornbrash or on river gravel spreads rather than on Oxford Clay, Kellaway Sands or the Boulder Clay to which in every instance they are very close. Again the Cornbrash, like the gravels, affords reasonably well-drained sites, yet the water supply on the underlying impervious clay beds is readily accessible. Further east, a line of gravel deposits running north and south almost the whole length of the Kesteven division, provides sites for a north and south line of villages. In the northern part of Kesteven these gravels are on Peat Fen beds—for example the spread upon which N. and S. Kyme are situated—or they may be on Boulder Clay or Oxford Clay—for example, the small patch upon which Ewerby is situated. The gravels upon which Timberland,

⁵ See also Mr. T. M. Blagg’s letter in *The Times* of 13 August 1935.

⁶ E. Ekwall, *Studies in English Place- and Personal Names*, p. 66, takes *Bruer* to mean ‘ brewhouse,’ but the above interpretation better fits the forms.

Martin and Thorpe Tilney are situated rise above the surrounding fen. Billingham (DB. *Belingeri*), N. and S. Kyme, Ewerby Thorpe and Howell do not rise appreciably above the Fen, but each is on its spread of gravel, which explains the position of the village. Archdeacon Edward Trollope (*Sleaford and the Wapentakes of Flaxwell and Aswardhurn*, p. 489) describes Billingham as at one time "not unfrequently surrounded in winter by a dismal waste of waters." The second element of Billingham, as of Tilney, is OE. Mercian *ēg* 'island' or 'land in the midst of marshes.'

South of the River Slea which flows eastward through the Ancaster Gap, thereby dividing Kesteven into roughly two equal parts, the topography is more varied than that of the northern half. Running south from Ancaster and curving slightly westward is the high ridge which acts as a watershed. The ridge reaches a height of over 400 feet and is broken only by the narrow valley of the Upper Witham which flows due north through it to descend to the plain, where it is joined by the Brant. North-west of the ridge, the slope is usually steep down to the plain which is well watered by the numerous "becks" (Old Norse *bekkr* 'stream') and is well-wooded. The "Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain" shows these slopes and the plain as densely wooded.⁷ South-east of this ridge, the slope is gradual towards the east and south-east. The River Glen and its tributary flow south-east across the district, but the slope is more directly west to east near the edge of the Fens which form the eastern boundary of the division, and many small streams flow due east into the Fens.

Starting at the western boundary of Kesteven, to the north of the high ridge, we may describe the chief features of the Drift with the topography in mind. Again the geological control over the distribution and naming of villages is noticeable. The lower slopes towards the Brant-Witham plain are Lower Lias clays, sands and limestone, but there are no gravels

⁷ In the "Ordnance Survey Map of Britain in the Dark Ages", which has appeared since this paper was in type, the forest background is the same as that adopted for Roman Britain.

or alluvium here as in the more northerly part of the plain. Higher up the slope of the ridge which rises steeply to the south-west of this plain is the Marlstone and higher still is an extensive outcrop of Upper Lias clay overlain as in the northern half of Kesteven by the Lincolnshire Limestone which forms the continuous escarpment. Upper Lias clay again outcrops as inliers below the Lincolnshire Limestone in the narrow valley where the Witham flows due north through the Limestone ridge. The predominant covering of the gradual slope south-eastwards to the Fens is Boulder Clay. In the valleys of the Glen and its tributary there are almost regular outcrops, in ascending order, of Great Oolite Limestone, Cornbrash and Oxford Clay. Towards the south, where the Glen and its tributary meet, the deposits of Cornbrash and Oxford Clay are larger. The valleys of the small streams flowing due east to the Fens all show outcrops of Cornbrash and Oxford Clay and sometimes of Great Oolite Limestone. Just south of the River Slea, between the Lincolnshire Limestone ridge on the west and the Fens on the east, are outcrops of Great Oolite Limestone, Cornbrash and Oxford Clay with a capping towards the Fens of Boulder Clay on which are several isolated spreads of glacial gravel. To the east of the Boulder Clay there are the Peat Fen beds. Where the streams flowing eastward from the Boulder Clay region reach almost the level Fen there is a long narrow spread of gravel running north and south.

The village distribution and some of the names may now be examined with these features of the Drift in mind. Starting as before at the western boundary, to the north of the high ridge we find that the villages of the district, Hougham, Marston, Foston, Allington, Great Gonerby, Barrowby and Woolsthorpe, are situated on the steep slopes or on the brow of a hill. The Drift map here shows Lower Lias clays, with no gravel spreads, such as one finds in the north Witham-Brant plain, to help drainage. Villages are therefore situated where a good fall of land helps the numerous becks rising at the junction of the Upper Lias clay outcrop higher up the slope to drain the land

and carry away the surface water. Sedgebrook (DB. *Sechebroc*) situated between two of these becks on the more level ground suggests that the streams are here slower and the ground more liable to water-logging.

Where the Upper Lias clay outcrops below the Lincolnshire Limestone, as in the North of Kesteven, villages are found along the spring line: Honington, Londonthorpe, Harrowby, Harlaxton and Denton. There is water supply and a good slope for drainage. The high Lincolnshire Limestone ridge has no villages as it sweeps south-west from Ancaster, apart from the significantly named Welby (DB. *Wellebi*) which is high up on the Heath. On this ridge the water supply is always a problem. Where the Upper Lias clay outcrops, however, in the valley of the Upper Witham and in the valleys of its two tributaries from the west, there are several villages conforming in distribution to the outcrop of clay and to the water supply there obtainable. On the main south-north line are South Witham, North Witham, Colsterworth, Easton, Great Ponton, Little Ponton. On the Upper Lias clay outcrops of the feeders are Stainby, Skillington, South Stoke, Wyville (Book of Fees *Wiwell* 1212) and Stroxton.

The covering of the gradual slope south-eastwards from the Lincolnshire Limestone ridge was noted to be Boulder Clay with various outcrops in the valleys of the chief streams of the region. It is strikingly noticeable that no villages are situated on the Boulder Clay. There are numerous small streams, and even to-day the district is very well wooded. The "Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain" shows the area as one of dense woodland. These two facts probably explain the village distribution. The heavy woodland would only be cleared as need for more agricultural land arose and the villages would preferably be established on the outskirts. The outcrops of Great Oolite Limestone, Cornbrash and Oxford Clay in the valleys of the Glen and its main tributary coincide with the two main lines of village distribution here. These villages are Boothby Pagnell, Bitchfield, Burton Coggles, Corby, Swayfield, Swin-

stead, Creeton, Little Bytham, Careby and Aunby. Along the Glen's tributary are Humby, Hanby, Lenton, Keisby, Hawthorpe, Irnham, Bulby, Elsthorpe, Grimsthorpe, Edenham, Scottlethorpe, Lound, Toft and Manthorpe. These villages are usually away from the streams and are situated over Cornbrash, Great Oolite Limestone, or are on the edge of the Lincolnshire Limestone which appears in the southern half of Kesteven through which the Glen flows. The Great Oolite Limestone, presenting a drier site, seems to be preferred, but only when near a clay outcrop or Cornbrash. Cornbrash, with its marl characteristics so valuable to an agricultural community, also appears to be a favourite. There is one village again on the Lincolnshire Limestone in the south—Holywell—again a "well" name.

On the eastern slope of the Boulder Clay down to the gravel spread and to the Fens, the siting of the villages is similar to that of the villages in the valley of the Glen. Threckingham and Horbling are over Cornbrash. Pickworth, Walcote, Folkingham, Birthorpe are on Great Oolite Limestone or Cornbrash along another of these streams, but never on the Boulder Clay. Laughton, Sempringham, Aslackby, Kirkby Underwood, Ripplingale, Stainfield (DB. *Stentuith*, *Steintone*, where ON. *þveit* occurs beside OE. *tūn*), Hanthorpe and Morton are all similarly situated. To the east of these villages whose distribution on the eastern slope to the Fens has been explained is a line of villages situated a very little above the level of the Fens, but all on a spread of gravel which runs north and south in this part. These villages with a well-drained gravel site are: Horbling, Billingborough, Pointon, Millthorpe and Dowsby.

South of the River Sleas, isolated spreads of glacial gravel over the Boulder Clay were noted. On each of these a village is situated—even a small patch providing a drained site for Thorpe Latimer. These villages, Heckington, Great Hale, Little Hale, Helpringham with Thorpe Latimer, and Swaton, are all but a very little above the level of the Fens and their

sites upon these glacial gravels appear all the more significant. Water supply from wells in this glacial gravel is now regarded as unsuitable for human consumption, but there is no doubt that it was formerly utilised.

The peculiar nature of geological control over human settlement, village distribution and names may be yet further illustrated from the division. It is the claylands of the division, so densely wooded in early times, that account for the name Kesteven (DB. *Chetsteven*, in which *Chet-* is probably cognate with Welsh *coed* 'wood'). During the Anglo-Saxon period, those districts which were suitable for settlement on account of their water supply, drainage and fertility were occupied as the demand arose. The sturdy plough-teams of oxen made clearing of the woodlands possible, but sites on the outskirts were naturally chosen. It is not surprising that the region round Horbling, which conforms to these requirements and is easily accessible from the coast, should appear to be one of the oldest districts of settlement during this period. Names like Horbling, Folkingham, Threckingham, Sempringham, Screddington and Rippingale are of an early type, especially the first four. North of the River Slea there are Holdingham, Leasingham,⁸ Ruskington, Dorrington and Heighington, all of an early type and all on sites suitable for early settlement. The villages with an early type of name on the Witham plain to the west of the Lincolnshire Limestone ridge are few in number, but their siting is of interest. Haddington, Bassingham, Beckingham, Dry Doddington, Long Bennington and Allington are all on the wood-bearing clayland of the Brant-Witham plain. Haddington and Bassingham are situated on the lowland by the Witham and are therefore accessible to settlers following the river. Their sites upon spreads of gravel, which presented a drained area in contrast to what must have often been water-logged woodland, are important illustrations of geological control over human settlement. Long Bennington is on the

⁸ It should be noted that Metheringham (DB. *Medricesham*) is not an original *-ingham* name.

low land by the Witham but is significantly situated where Sewstern Lane merges with the modern Great North Road. C. W. Phillips describes this lane, which leaves Ermine Street six miles to the north of Stamford and runs north-westward to Long Bennington, as "an ancient route joining the Welland and Trent valleys across the oolite ridge." In view of its site therefore, Long Bennington's early type of name is to be expected. Dry Doddington and Allington, though both are over Lower Lias clay, are situated well above the Witham valley on a separate hill (Dry Doddington) or on a slope (Allington), and these better-drained sites, probably in clearings, would be more attractive. Honington, another village with an early type of name, has a site with all the advantages the region has to afford. Being in the Ancaster Gap it is accessible from the coast by way of Witham and Slea. It is well up the slope to the Lincolnshire Limestone ridge. It has its own 'beck' which rises at the junction of the Upper Lias clay and the Lincolnshire Limestone. In the south-east corner of the division are four more villages with names of an early type: Market Deeping, West Deeping, Tallington and Uffington. The first three are situated on the alluvium of the Fens by the River Welland which flows into the Wash. Uffington stands on higher ground over Cornbrash. The early settlement at Uffington, near the Welland, on a drained site, and over the fertile Cornbrash, is to be expected. Tallington, West Deeping and Market Deeping are all by the River Welland and it is significant that they are west of the Car Dyke which crosses the Welland at Market Deeping on its course to the River Nene. Since, as is noted later, the Dyke skirts the firmer land on its course northwards to Washingborough and forms a western boundary for the original Fen, it would appear that in this south-east corner of the division the alluvium to the west of the Car Dyke presented more attractive and likely sites than the alluvium elsewhere in the division. Even though the sites of the Deepings west of the Car Dyke suggest a comparatively firm site, we are reminded by the names themselves

(DB. *Est deping*, *West Depinge*, probably from OE. *dēop* 'deep' and meaning 'the deep fen')⁹ that, after all, they are situated on alluvium. West Deeping too, is on the old Roman road King Street which runs from Castor (Northants) to Bourne and is continued to Sleaford as Mareham Lane. This route is considered to be an ancient trackway improved and used by the Romans as a purely local line of communication linking the settlements of east Kesteven and running conveniently near to the Car Dyke. Possibly Mareham Lane had a continuation from Sleaford to Lincoln along the eastern edge of the Lincolnshire Limestone ridge. Evidences of Romano-British settlement have been found along this route, which passes either through or near to many of the villages which have been noted as possessing an early type of name.

It would seem that as a demand arose for more arable land to support later settlers and invaders woodland was cleared. The later types of English names and the numerous settlements with names containing Scandinavian personal names or significant words (as ON. *býr*, *þorp*,¹⁰ *toft*, *lundr*)¹¹ are to be found deeper in the districts we have described as originally woodland. West of Screddington, Threckingham and Folkingham are numerous villages with Scandinavian elements in their names. In the valley of the Glen and its tributary¹² the later types predominate. This would suggest that there was no general displacement of the native population during the Scandinavian invasion.¹³ Again Temple Bruer, the one

⁹ E. Ekwall, *English Place-Names in -ing*, p. 16.

¹⁰ Later perhaps than *-by*: cf. ODanish *thorp* 'smaller village due to colonisation from a larger one.'

¹¹ In Londonthorpe, Aveland Wapentake, Timberland, as well as the various Lounds.

¹² The original name of this stream may be preserved in Irnham (DB. *Gerneham*, *Greneham*, with which may be compared the early forms for Yarmouth cited in Ekwall, *English River-Names*, pp. 477-8).

¹³ More than half of the wapentake-names—like *wapentake* itself—are, however, of Scandinavian origin (cf. O. S. Anderson, *The English Hundred-Names*, pp. 56-61). ON. *haugr* 'mound' or 'hill' is the second element of Langoe and Threo and possibly of Graffoe; for none of these is the place of meeting known. Boothby offers no difficulty. Aveland (probably called after the same Dane as the lost *Avethorpe*, forms for which are often assigned to Hawthorpe) contains ON. *lundr*. Aswardhurn

village definitely of post-Conquest origin, lies on the Lincolnshire Limestone ridge—which would not attract early settlement.

The eastern boundary of Kesteven is interesting. There is little doubt that before reclamation of the Fens was undertaken in comparatively recent times the Car Dyke (*EPNS. Northants* p. 5) was in effect the eastern boundary of the division. Since Trollope's masterly description (*Sleaford*, pp. 64-81) in 1872, this Dyke has been generally admitted as a Roman work designed to act both as a catch-water drain and as a communication canal. For our purposes, the important thing to note is that the Dyke north of the Glen is cut along the extreme eastern edge of the Oxford Clay outcrop as far as Bourne and Morton. It then continues north on the edge of the gravel east of Hacconby, Dunsby, Dowsby, Billingborough and Horbling. It now bulges slightly eastward to skirt the spread of Boulder Clay east of Helpringham, the Hales and Heckington. The gravel spread upon which Billinghay is situated forms an irregular salient, after which the Dyke makes its way north-eastwards fringing the Boulder Clay spread east of Walcot, Timberland, Martin, Metheringham, Dunston and Nocton to end somewhere east of Washingborough. To the east of the Car Dyke all the way are the Peat Fen beds or Alluvium. The only villages of Kesteven east of the Dyke are N. and S. Kyme, both situated upon the one gravel spread east of the Dyke. The modern eastern boundary of Kesteven in the northern part is the River Witham, about three miles to the east of the old Car Dyke. The reclaimed Fen has been apportioned in neat strips to the villages bordering it. The eastern boundary south of the River Sleas is the Holland Dyke, and further south, the South Forty Foot Drain, both about

(which may be called after the same *Ásvarðr* as Aswarby) contains the ON. *þyrnir* 'thorn.' Ness (site unknown) is ON. *nes*, here in the sense of a projection into the fenland. Of the wapentake-names of OE. origin Beltisloe (site unknown) may be pretty early; it is difficult to assign a date to Flaxwell (site unknown), Loveden and Winnibriggs. On the accompanying map the known wapentake-sites are marked by an asterisk and their names printed in capitals, except in the case of Boothby Graffoe which is also a village-name.

two miles to the east of the Car Dyke. Here too, the reclaimed Fen has been apportioned in neat strips to the villages adjoining it.

The other major Roman work of Kesteven, the main Roman route from Stamford to Lincoln, follows very noticeably the high Lincolnshire Limestone ridge which offered a good foundation and materials for the well-built road—Ermine Street.

The Car Dyke and Ermine Street are marked on the accompanying map, on which the significant geological features are indicated and names of early type (as well as the wapentake-names noted at p. 12) printed in capitals. It will be seen how neatly the Old English, the Scandinavian and the Old French place-names fall into their places on this map.¹⁴

L. W. H. PAYLING.

¹⁴ The general lines along which this paper has been written were suggested by Sir Cyril Fox's *The Archaeology of the Cambridge Region* (Cambridge, 1923), to which my attention was directed by Professor Dickins. Professor Dickins has since helped me at every stage of my work. I am also deeply indebted to Mr. A. V. Williamson, Reader in Geography, and to Dr. R. G. S. Hudson and Dr. J. E. Hemingway of the Department of Geology, for their corrections and suggestions. My colleague Mr. D. Leslie Griffiths has drawn the map from my rough sketch, and the aesthetic qualities it now possesses are to be ascribed to him alone. It is based upon the Ordnance Survey Map (Geological: Drift Edition), with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. It should be noted that Tallington and Uffington (in the extreme south of the area) are perhaps not *-ing* names.

Since this paper was in proof the north-western part of the area has been dealt with in greater detail, but from rather a different point of view, by H. M. Keating (*Geography* xx, 283-94).

It should be noted too that the Roman road mentioned at p. 11 of this paper is marked on W. Page's sketch-map at *Antiquity* i, 460.