

SPALDING

AN INDUSTRIAL HISTORY

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LINCOLNSHIRE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP
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AND SPALDING GENTLEMEN'S SOCIETY.

P R E F A C E

This booklet is concerned with the history of Spalding over the last two hundred years, with particular emphasis on its transport, industries and public services.

Spalding does not have any heavy industry but has always been mainly a service and administrative centre for the surrounding agricultural area. It has been a market centre through which agricultural produce was exported from the area and where manufactured goods were imported and sold. The advantage of this site for that purpose was that it was the lowest bridging point on the Welland where the main road, linking the villages north and east of Spalding, crossed the river. The coastal villages, with Spalding in the middle of the line, lay between the marsh and the fen and the Welland gave them access both to the highland and to the sea.

From the eighteenth century to the present day Spalding has been described as a dutch-like town. The Welland runs through the centre like a road with houses on both banks and the description was even more apt when the Westlode was still an open channel. In the last hundred years or so the river has become less important to the life of the town and is now mainly appreciated for its environmental qualities. Spalding was also a railway centre but as that form of transport has also declined so the need for road improvements has become uppermost in the concerns of the town.

This is an initial survey of the industrial history of Spalding and not the detailed modern history which the town needs. It is produced at this time in connection with a tour of Spalding by the Lincolnshire Industrial Archaeology Group and the Norfolk I A Society, together with other interested people. It is my hope that this may prepare the ground for others who later work on the subject, and in the meantime fill a gap where no published material is available.

I am deeply indebted to Mr Norman Leverett, the Curator of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society, for his invaluable help in using the Society's extensive and valuable archives without which this booklet could not have been produced and for giving me the benefit of his extensive local knowledge. I also wish to thank Mr Norman Simson and the Urban District Council for the use of their minutes in relation their Water, Gas and Electricity services as well as Mrs Barbara Webster for permission to use her thesis on the activities of the Improvement Commissioners for some of the information in Chapter VIII.

The Industrial Archaeology Group is grateful to the Spalding Urban District Council and the Gentlemens Society for their generous contributions towards the cost of publishing this booklet, which have allowed it to appear in time for the tour of the Spalding area on Sunday 15 April 1973. The Urban District Council will pass out of existence on 30 March 1974 and be replaced by a new District Council covering southern Holland, and one section of this booklet records some of the achievements of the Council and their predecessors the Improvement Commissioners.

Figure 1 is based on a map drawn for the Spalding Gentlemens Society in 1732 and was copied by Mr Frank Tiero of the County Planning Department, with whose permission it is reproduced. We are also grateful to the Gentlemens Society for permission to reproduce the cover picture and Figs. 3, 4, 5a, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14b, 15 and 16, to Mr Derek Felton for photographing them and Fig. 5b for reproduction, and to Mrs Barbara Webster for Fig. 5a. Illustrations

3a, 4a, 7b, 8b, 9a, 12b, 15a, 15b, 16a and the cover are watercolour drawings by Hilkieah Burgess of Spalding (1775-1868) and were drawn in the first half of the nineteenth century. Figs. 2, 6, 13 and 14a have been drawn by the author, 14a being copied from a picture in the Illustrated London News.

This booklet is similar to Neville Birch's 'Industrial History of Stamford' published by the I A Group in 1972. It is not a comprehensive survey of modern Spalding but it considers some facets of the towns history and presents them in a form not previously available.

In this booklet the national grid references are given of many of the sites referred to. The 1" Ordnance Survey Sheet for Spalding and the surrounding area is Sheet No. 123.

Neil R. Wright

Witham Bank House,
BOSTON

March 1973.

SPALDING -- AN INDUSTRIAL HISTORY

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CHAPTER I

T H E T O W N O F S P A L D I N G

The settlement of Spalding grew at the point where the navigable river Welland crossed the higher land lying between the fens and the marshes. For a long period it was dominated by a Benedictine Priory established at one of the seats of the Earls of Mercia. This grew to be one of the richest religious houses in Lincolnshire and the Priors had many disputes with the equally powerful Abbots of Croyland (now called Crowland) only eight miles to the south.

Spalding was the principal town in the Wapentake of Elloe which extended eastwards from the town, being bounded on the north by the Wash, on the south and east by the county boundary and on the west by Deeping Fen. Most of the parishes in the Wapentake became very large and elongated by the process of reclaiming lands from the fen and the marsh and Spalding was no exception. The parish was reduced to its present size in 1932 but even now it includes land to the east, south and west of the town. On the east bank of the Welland it extended at its maximum six and a half miles downstream to Wragg Marsh at the head of Fosdyke Wash and five and a half miles upstream to St. Guthlac's Cross which marked the boundary with Croyland. The northern end of this strip was the chapelry of Wykeham which remained part of Spalding until it was transferred to the parish of Weston in 1932. The southern portion was the chapelry of Cowbit which has been an independant parish for many centuries now. The area to the west was the common of Spalding and Cowbit, and the South Fen of Pinchbeck; and was the eastern edge of Deeping Fen.

Spalding was elongated like the seven parishes to the east of it but like Pinchbeck to the north and Crowland to the south it also included land to the west. The seven parishes east of the town were, like Spalding, on the strip of land which formed the boundary between the marsh and the fens. The fens of those villages were south of them, extending to the Isle of Ely, whilst Spalding's was west of the town, extending towards the centre of Deeping Fen.

Although the fine chapel of the Prior's country house at Wykeham still survives as a ruin three miles outside the town (TF 276264) there are no certain remains of the Priory itself or of the one-time castle next to the Pinchbeck Road. The 'Prior's Oven' at the corner of the Sheep Market and arches and windows in Priory Road are possibly remains but they are only fragments.

The town grew up east of the Priory, on the triangle bounded by the Welland, the Westlode and the circle wall of the Priory, and also spread along both banks of the two waterways. The plan opposite the following page shows

Spalding in 1732 and comparison with other maps shows very little change until the 1840's, the increasing population being accommodated in the existing streets. Some of the street names have later changed.

The Welland is a natural river entering the county at Stamford and flowing past Market Deeping and through Spalding to the sea at Fosdyke. The Westlode was an artificial drainage channel of ancient date, dug to carry off the waters of the fens west of Spalding. It was also a main route for people and goods from the Bourne area to Spalding and there was a creek for them to land on the Gore. The Gore was the triangular area, now known as the Sheep Market, which lay to the north of the Priory, outside the main gate. The Market Place was in its present position, to the east of the Priory site, and in its centre there was a cross until 1772. The town itself only occupied a small area in the eastern half of the parish and several other crosses far out in the fens marked the boundaries claimed by the Priors. The only remains are part of St. Guthlac's Cross at Brotherhouse Bar (TF 260149) which marked the boundary with Croyland.

The manor of 'Spalding with its members' was at various times after the dissolution held by the Crown, the Duchy of Lancaster and the Buccleuch family but in the latter part of the eighteenth century it passed to Sir Sampson Gideon. In 1789 he was raised to an Irish peerage by the title of Lord Eardley, of Spalding and was afterwards created Baron Spalding, but his family sold the larger portion of their estates in the neighbourhood at various times after 1831. Most of the soil in Spalding belonged to numerous small freeholders and free and copy tenants. A Town Hall, or court-house, stood in the centre of the area now known as Hall Place, at the northern end of the Market Place, from 1623 to 1854.

The map opposite was drawn in 1732 by John Grundy, Mathematics Master of the Grammar School. Two of the series of maps drawn up in the process of the parliamentary enclosure of local commons show Spalding at the start of the nineteenth century. They were probably surveyed in the early stages of the enclosure, soon after 1801. The enclosure maps show very little difference from the 1732 plan, and the earlier map is more detailed as it covers a smaller area.

You will see that the houses are thickest firstly around the Hall Place, Market Place, Bridge Street axis, secondly along Double Street and High Street which run from the High Bridge northwards along the banks of the Welland, and thirdly along the north bank of the Westlode and the adjacent part of Pinchbeck Road. Houses also extended along the Welland bank north of the Westlode junction, called Double Street or late Albion Street. Isolated houses were strung out along the London Road and Cowbit Road on the east and west banks of the Welland. At a few points houses were closer together, particularly at the junction of Cowbit Road and Love Lane (TF 248222) and on the opposite bank in London Road, and these were linked by a footbridge. There was also a group of prosperous houses extending eastwards from the High Bridge to the parish church.

At Winsover (spelt Windsover until about 1850) (TF 236224), where the Westlode reached Hawthorn Bank and the Common beyond, there was a settlement with some cottages lying next to the south bank of the drain and others lying along the boundary of the common. Most of these cottages are still occupied. By 1801 there were houses on one bank or the other all the way between Spalding and Windsover.

Double Street was the centre of the port and it was the only street on the river banks with houses on both sides of it. Albion Street, High Street,

Map of — Spalding — in 1732.



Scale of Feet

Based on the Map by John Granby —
Mathematical Master of the Ordnance
Richard Spalding of that time.

Church Gate, London Road and Cowbit Road all faced the river and it may have been this difference which gave Double Street its name. This situation will not last much longer at the southern end of Double Street for the buildings between the road and the river are gradually being demolished to make way for a road improvement.

Between 18²⁶ and 1842 the growing population of Spalding was accommodated in crowded conditions in the existing streets and new houses were built in Winsover Road, Holbeach Road and Albion Street. Deep pits were dug in Clay Lake, south-east of the town, to find clay for brickmaking. These pits have since been filled in as rubbish tips.

There were no roads west of the Market Place until the Crescent was opened; on the 16 March 1843 John Smith, a livery stable keeper, drove the first four-wheel carriage through the newly-opened road.

After the opening of the railways new streets were laid out on both sides of Tomazin Lane (now called St. Thomas's Road) and development started in the Pennygate area west of the railway. In the twentieth century development of new streets has been mainly on the eastern, north-western and south-western edges of the town. There has also been considerable growth in Pinchbeck which is now only separated from Spalding by a few open fields.

The wealth of the town itself arose mainly from the river Welland, which made it the nearest port to the south-west corner of Lincolnshire. Spalding is not a town with manufacturing industry but is primarily a transport and administrative centre for the surrounding rich agricultural area. Its main industries in the past have been shipping, the railway and those using agricultural produce or providing services for farmers. Although buildings and other physical features still survive as remnants of those transport industries, shipping has long since ceased and is scarcely a memory and the railway retains only a fraction of its former importance. Even in the shopping sphere two principal department stores have closed, although one has reopened as a supermarket. Agriculture is still flourishing and every spring the town is packed for the Tulip Parade.

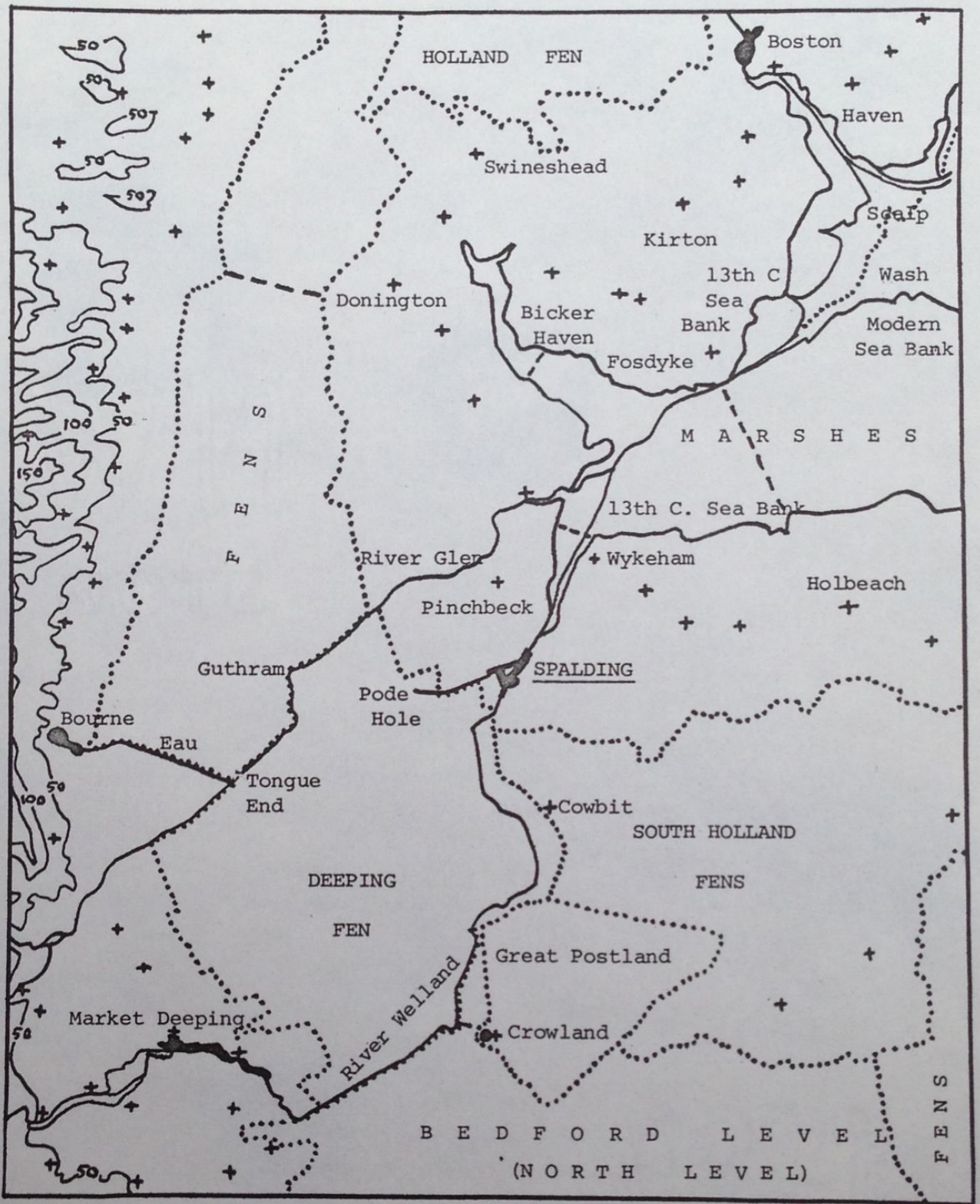
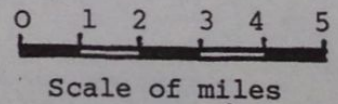


FIG. 2 SPALDING AND ITS ENVIRONS



CHAPTER II

ON THE TRADE AND NAVIGATION

Until the opening of Fosdyke Bridge in 1815, Spalding was the lowest bridging point on the Welland. High-masted sea-going vessels could not pass any further upstream than Spalding High Bridge even if they were able to get this far. Most of the warehouses were downstream of the bridge since the lighters and barges for Stamford could pass under even if ships could not. There was a footbridge at the northern end of the town, called the Chain Bridge (see Fig.12b), but this had a draw-bridge so that ships could get through into the harbour.

It is the river that gives Spalding its character and from early times brought it trade. The section below the High Bridge was navigable for sea-going vessels and the harbour was subject to the Port of Boston for customs purposes. In 1695 the merchants and traders of Spalding, with others of Stamford and Holbeach, had petitioned to have the town made a free port but they had not been successful.

The river upstream was at times navigable as far as Stamford, crossing the desolate expanses of Deeping Fen and Crowland Common, and an account of the upper reaches between Stamford and Deeping was given in 'Stamford: an industrial history' by Neville Birch. The river was the source of Spalding's wealth until the arrival of the railways in the middle of the nineteenth century. Practically all the finest houses are on the riverside often, in the ports heyday, facing coal yards and timber yards on the opposite bank. Many of the warehouses are still in use but other features right on the river's brink are disappearing. Soon there may be little indication that Spalding was ever a port and the river will serve mainly as a very pleasant amenity.

Trade

In 1792 Thomas Hawkes, who was treasurer to the Adventurers of Deeping Fen and had recently been appointed manager of the first bank in Spalding, a branch of Garfits of Boston, wrote some notes on the town for a directory.* These give us a picture of the river trade and the agriculture of the area as well as a list of some of the inhabitants and their occupations. He reported

* All of the following extracts in this section are from the Hawkes Papers, mainly 5 & 6, held by the Spalding Gentlemen's Society.

that 'all the corn grown in the interior parts of this country is brought up for the use of the inhabitants, and the surplus is sent to London in vessels belonging to Boston &c. The chief of the trade is in Oats, and some little Coalseed (sic), very little other grains being produced in this neighbourhood.' Elsewhere he wrote that this was chiefly the produce of 'a large tract of land called Deeping Fen which at present do not produce so much corn as formerly owing to the great improvement in of the land - being converted into pasturage for the supply of the London Market.'

'From Stamford and Deeping they send down Gangs of Lighters to be loaded with Coals for the supply of those parts of country and a large district in the neighbourhood of Stamford. With the Coals they . . also carry up all the Grocery Goods brought hither from London, also Fir Timber, deals, pitch, Tar and other commodities imported from Boston, Lynn, Hull and Lincoln which are brought hither from those parts either by their own Vessels or the Spalding Barges.

'The Stamford Boats bring down from the High Country vast quantities of Flour, which being of a superior quality has a sale all over the Low Country. Also Malt for which they are famous at Stamford, a great quantity of Limestone for the supplies of the Limekilns here, with paving stones and free Stone for Buildings, and Clapboards.

'There are several annual fairs at Deeping for the sale of Wood and Timber. There are people who buy falls of Oak Timber and bring them down to these fairs, and others who make good Gates, trays, &c and timber sawn into planks and scantlings, fitted for the carpenters and wheelwrights. These are purchased by persons who want and those who deal in these articles. Also large quantities of posts used for the fencing in the marshes. All these heavy commodities are sent down in the Welland and distributed all over the country.

'The boats coming for coals: when the tide serves they are halled by Horses down the river towards the Ships lying in Boston Scalp and receive the Coals immediately from out of the North Country Ships. At other times they are delivered by the Ships into the Spalding Barges and then loaded in the Merchants Coal Yards from whence they can at all times be put on board the boats and sent upwards.' Figure 3a shows a boat being hauled upstream into Spalding and Fig 7b shows one being hauled further up towards Stamford.

'The River Glen unites with the Welland about four below Spalding. The boats on the Glen carry Coals &c up to Bourne and bring Timber &c from thence to Spalding. From this sketch of the internal trade up and down the Welland it is seen that the Boatmen have generally a freight both upwards and downwards and thereby maintain their Gangs in a pretty constant course of trade when the river is of sufficient depth of water.' This last qualification is very important as the state of the river periodically fluctuated until the last boats used it in the 1930's, since when the navigation has ceased.

As well as passing goods up and down the river the merchants also dealt in locally produced goods, and the town had the usual activities carried on in any port, such as ropewalks, sail makers and boat builders.

Many of the merchants houses and warehouses still remain on both banks of the Welland and form the main part of the buildings of architectural or historic interest. All of the best houses are in High Street on the east bank while all the early warehouses are on the west bank, in Double Street. A seventeenth-century wooden warehouse on the river's brink north of Cley Hall was demolished in January 1973 for highway widening. Over the last few years



Fig.3a Pigeon End in 1832, with a boat being hauled into Spalding. Lowden's Mill (1788) was on the site of the first windmill in Spalding. (TF 257239) Hilkih Burgess.



Fig.3b Ocean going steamer aground in the Welland. One of the last boats to Spalding. SGS



Fig.4a Warehouses at the southern end of Double
Street, 1827. Hilkihah Burgess.



Fig.4b The same area during the floods in March 1947.
SGS

it had been neglected and became derelict but within living memory it was in use and had an old wooden crane at the north end.

Thomas Hawkes wrote in 1792 that goods to be shipped from London to Spalding and adjacent parts were sent on boats for Boston, generally being sent by Mr Perkins from the Gun and Shot Wharf in Southwark or from Stanton's Wharf whence vessel sailed every Tuesday with groceries. These goods were put on board the Spalding barges at the Scalp without being landed at Boston. The Scalp (TF 380380) was the great mud-flat in the corner of the Wash where the outfalls of the Witham and Welland flowed together. Hawkes also stated that there were no regular vessels sent by the Spalding merchants to Kings Lynn or Hull, though they did occasionally send their vessels thither when a freight offered. For the Tuesday market there were inland boats for goods and passengers from Crowland and Bourne but Hawkes said that 'these conveyances are not to be depended upon'.

In 1802 there were over seventy barges in the port, carrying from ten to fifty or sixty tons. In the 1820's barges of about forty tons burden could come up to the centre of the town, larger vessels not coming further in than the Scalp. These differences in tonnages reflect the varying state of the river at different times. Despite this limitation the carrying and coastal trade was extensive. With the enclosure of the commons around Deeping Fen and the growing of more cereals and other crops there was even more produce to be shipped through Spalding.

At various times in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Spalding merchants joined with the owners of lands draining by the Welland to apply for Acts to improve the river but the problem was never really solved. One effort was made in 1836, their action following a considerable increase in the trade of the port in the previous six years. In 1829 there had been 250 vessels bringing imports and 143 taking exports from Spalding and this had increased to 462 inwards and 282 outwards in 1833. But then in 1834 the number of vessels had fallen, and increasing the size of the vessels would allow the trade of Spalding to continue increasing. In 1833 Spalding had imported a total of 22,712 tons and exported 13,951 tons.

They obtained their Act in 1837 and works were carried out to create a controlled channel through the shifting sands downstream from Fosdyke Bridge.

As a result of continuing efforts it was possible for vessels of 50 or 60 tons to reach Spalding in 1856. Further works were carried out and by 1892 sloops and barges of up to 120 tons burthen could get up to the town. From there to Stamford the carrying was done by means of lighters, but after 1863 it was only possible to get upstream as far as Market Deeping, the canalised portion into Stamford having deteriorated since the opening of the railways.

After the first railways were opened in 1848 they gradually absorbed almost the whole of Spalding's carrying and coastal trade in corn, coal, etc. But flood prevention required the maintenance of the river and this ensured the survival of a waterway suitable for navigation by small or medium sized craft such as the one in Fig. 3b. The river trade gradually declined in the latter half of the nineteenth century despite occasional optimistic hopes of a revival. For example, it was said in 1892 that 'the shipping trade on the river has lately revived to a considerable extent.'*

* Whites Directory of Lincolnshire, 1892.

The main factors in the decline were the arrival of the railway, which could carry coal and corn at cheaper rates, and later developments in shipping. As ships increased in size there were fewer vessels capable of getting up to Spalding and after 1882, when the port of Boston was improved, there was no need to stop in the Wash and transfer cargoes to lighters on Boston Scalp.

Chamberlain and Co. of the South Holland Mills regularly had a cargo of locust brought up to their premises, when the tides were suitable, until just before the First World War. The Gasworks also continued to import coal by sea from Goole and Keadby in the early years of the present century. G.F. Birch was the last merchant to use Spalding as a port. In the first half of the twentieth century he used two steel hulled motor barges for carrying corn, hay, straw, etc. and they were in occasional use until the Second World War. They plied between Spalding and Fosdyke where they loaded and unloaded cargoes from larger vessels which sailed from there to Hull. It was possible for such lighters to carry much larger cargoes than wooden hulls on the same draught of water, an important consideration in shallow rivers such as the Welland. This did not help the local boat builders for such vessels could not be built or repaired in their boatyards. The development of motor traffic also competed with the shipping trade and the port has been dead since the Second World War. West Elloe Bridge was originally moveable but is now fixed firmly down.

Until 1930 there were quite a number of small craft - motor and rowing boats - which took passengers 'down below' on Sundays but they were killed by the motor car and after 1932 there was not even a rowing boat on the river at Spalding.

Buildings of the Port

There are no longer any riverside cranes in Spalding although at one time there were several, at different points on the banks. The first crane in Spalding was said to be the one erected about 1795 by Mr Presgrave in Double Street, at the end of Herring Lane (TF 249227). This was the main landing point, being nearest the town centre, but the quay does not appear to have had a distinctive name. The part of Double Street south of it is marked on the 1732 plan as Ea Side and is shown in Figs 4a, 4b and 5a. It was said that before the crane was erected the goods from the boats and barges were landed in a coal yard opposite the Steam Mill public house in Double Street.* This yard had been used for over 300 years, and in 1792 and the early nineteenth century was kept by John and William Lamb, who were also wharfingers. Another old coal yard in Double Street lay between the Ram Skin Inn and Herring Lane. This had been held by Mr Brightman but by 1856 houses had been built over the site. The Ram Skin was towards the southern end of Double Street, on the river side, and in 1973 it stands empty, awaiting the demolishers hammer. The gable end at the rear of the Ram Skin is in the centre of Fig. 4a, behind the boat.

In 1846 it was stated that the first person who bought wheat in Spalding for exporting from the area was Theophilus Buckworth Esq. This occurred at the end of the eighteenth century, the main cereal grown up to that time being oats. Buckworth's family were lords of the small manor of 'Spalding-cum-Croyland' and Everard Buckworth had built the Manor House (now the Constitutional Club) (TF 248228) in Crackpool Lane in 1727. Theophilus himself built Cley Hall in High Street (TF 252229) in 1764, naming it after his wife's family. He was a leading citizen, serving as High Sheriff of Lincolnshire in 1787, and he died in 1802. One of the old corn mills was due north of Cley Hall and is in the same ownership, suggesting that the mill was erected by Buckworth for his own use.

* 'Remarkable events &c. connected with the History of Spalding' by Old Robin Harmstone, 1846.



Fig.5a Shipping in the Welland in the nineteenth century. Copied from painting by Edward Gentle.



Fig.5b Weathervane from warehouse now demolished, included in the above picture. Now in the Gentlemen's Society Museum. Derek Felton.

Several old brick granaries and warehouses survive, including two large mills, but the one next to Cley Hall was demolished a few years ago. In 1882 the mill at 24 High Street north of Cley Hall and opposite the end of the Westlode, was occupied by Charles and Thomas Steel who also had an address at New Wharf, Kings Cross, London. This was taken over by George Francis Birch and Thomas Richards, who were grocers and provision merchants, as well as millers, before 1892. The property is still occupied by G.F. Birch & Co. who are now meal merchants. The old buildings were demolished in the 1960's and new ones erected further back from the road. Immediately in front of this mill was the wooden warehouse demolished in January 1973, also in the same ownership. The tall chimney shaft at Birch's mill was pulled down in the 1890's; it was octagonal and bound with numerous bands.

One of the surviving buildings is the Albion Mill, now converted to offices, with the attractive Albion House beside it. It is situated in Albion Street due north of the Chain Bridge (TF 251230). At some time, probably in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the house and granary were occupied by Mr Pate, corn merchant. They stood on the site of an old tan-yard, which was closed in 1756, called Bank-row. In 1830 the 'Albion Granary' in 'Double Street' was occupied by William Munton and shortly after 1842 Benjamin Mossop moved into the 'Albion Mills'. Up to that time Mossop had traded from Pinchbeck Street and in 1856 was still listed as a 'corn miller and merchant' in Pinchbeck Road. Immediately on acquiring the Albion Mills he erected a powerful crane on the river bank in front of it; this is marked on a plan of about 1845 as 'new crane'. It was capable of lifting five tons and was known as Mossop's Crane; it was demolished in the 1880's after the death of Benjamin Addenbrook Mossop.

The third of the steam mills, and the most impressive, was the building in High Street now known as the South Holland Mills, opposite the end of Herring Lane (TF 249227). The original granary on the site was erected by William Maples, merchant; in 1792 Emmitt & Maples were listed as corn and coal merchants and importers of wine and spirits. In 1826 William Maples traded as a timber merchant in High Street and a wine and spirit merchant in the Market Place but by 1842 he had given up the latter and by 1846 John Penford Harvey & Co. had erected a steam mill to grind corn on the High Street site, with ten pairs of stones.* Up to this time Harvey had been using an old brewery in Crackpool Lane. Pevsner and Harris date the new building as 1807, which was indeed the year when the adjoining house was built, but the Mill is perhaps newer.** It was later known as Kelk's, Capp's or Perkin's Mill, being occupied by Robert Perkins in 1882, but in 1900 it belonged to E W Gooch and was used as a cattle spice mill by Chamberlain & Co. It had a tall round chimney stack which was demolished in the 1890's. The Mill still survives and since before 1919 it has been occupied by Messrs G W Plowman & Son.

Apart from these principal mills there were many other merchants trading in corn, coal, timber and wine and spirits, as well as in groceries and feathers. The port was also a home for wharfingers, labourers in the warehouses and master mariners. Most of the master mariners in the port lived close together; in 1842 High Street was the home of fourteen of the twenty-one listed in White's Directory and in 1856 ten out of twenty-one

‡ Harmstone, 1846, 46

** 'Buildings of England - Lincolnshire', Pevsner and Harris.

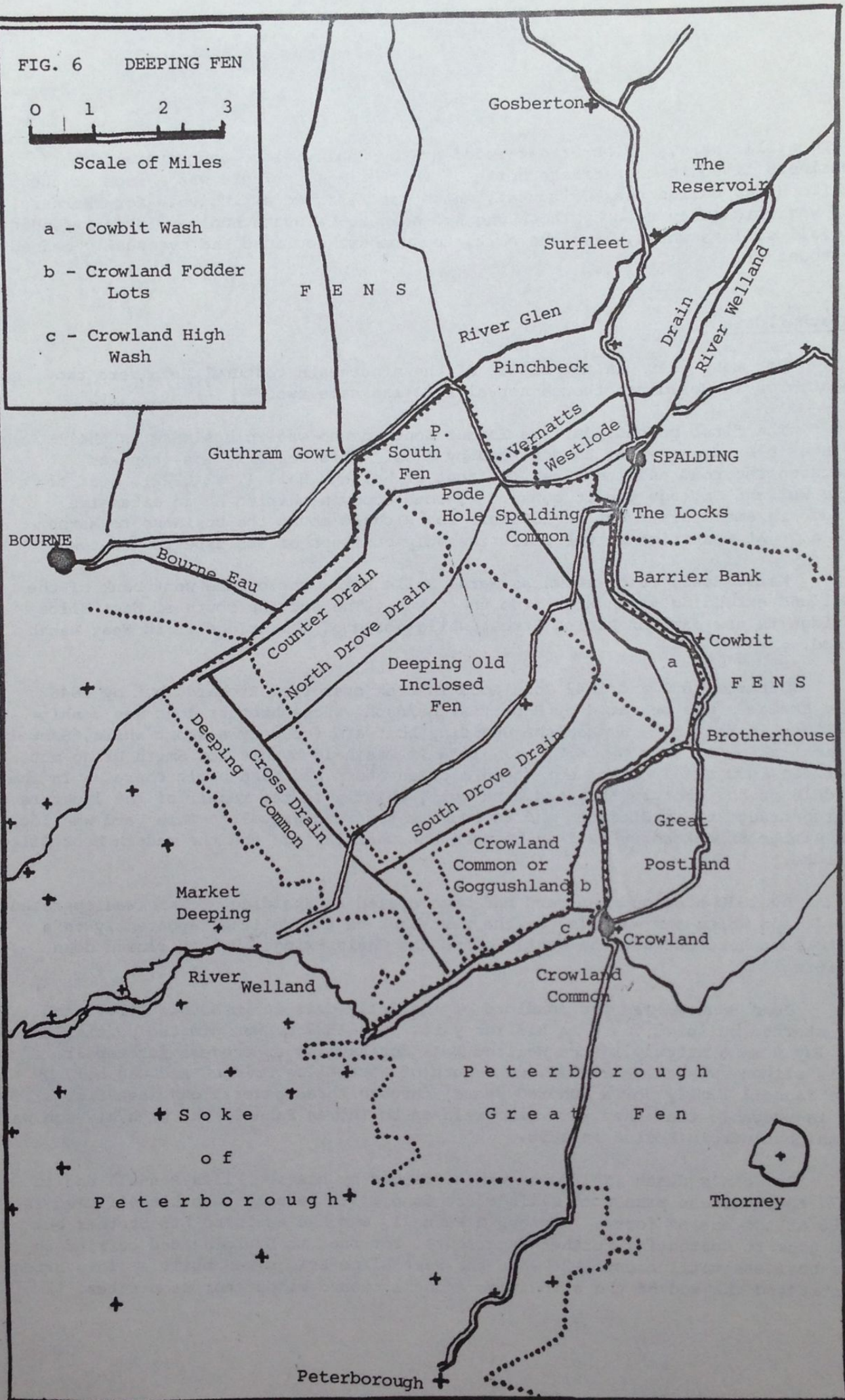
FIG. 6 DEEPING FEN

0 1 2 3



Scale of Miles

- a - Cowbit Wash
- b - Crowland Fodder Lots
- c - Crowland High Wash



were still there. High Street ended at the Chain Bridge and several other mariners lived in the streets north of that bridge. There was a room at the White Hart, called the 'Calcutta', which was reserved exclusively for mariners. It was originally used by those who had been to Calcutta and was later extended to all sailors until, like the port, the numbers declined and eventually ceased altogether.

Boatbuilders

For many years in the middle of the nineteenth century there were two boatyards in Spalding, though not always the same two.

The first boatbuilder was Thomas Goodwin who was in business in the Dinham's Bridge area of London Road by 1792. His boatwright's shop was between the road and the river in front of Welland Hall (TF 246222), near to the Welland Cottage public house. Thomas Goodwin carried on an extensive trade in small craft but in 1805 his son Richard moved the business to Marsh Road. At that time it was still the only business of its type in the town.

Marsh Road, later known as Marsh Rails Road, was on the west bank of the Welland extending northwards from the town. The section south of West Elloe Bridge is now part of Albion Street while north of the bridge it is West Marsh Road.

Between 1830 and 1842 John Goodwin took over from Richard, but by 1846 the business was operated by Robert Richardson, whose brother John was a shipbuilder in Boston. He had the Spalding boatyard for only a short while, Samuel Dring taking it over by 1852. In 1900 it was held by his son Smith Dring but between 1880 and 1900 not more than a dozen boats had been built there. In the middle of the century they had done well, chiefly in the repair of the lighters which traded up to Stamford and to Peakirk for road gravel. This yard was located in Albion Street about halfway between the Chain Bridge and the modern West Elloe Bridge.

By 1830 a second boatyard had been opened in Spalding. This was operated by Joseph White and was also on the west bank of the Welland, apparently on a site somewhere between the Westlode and the Chain Bridge, but it closed down before 1842.

John Pannell was the landlord of the Jolly Crispin in Double Street and he started building boats in his inn yard. In 1837 he was granted permission to lay down a slipway in the Welland bank for hauling up vessels for repair. This slipway was at TF 254235, due south of West Elloe Bridge, and was held by the Pannell family for a hundred years, through three generations (see Fig.7a). It is probable that they were also related to Thomas Pannell who with his son was a shipbuilder in Boston in 1856.

On John's death in 1843 he was succeeded by his son Ellis Pannell and in 1877 the business passed to Ellis's son John Ellis Pannell, who himself died in 1888 at the age of forty. Joseph E Pannell, who had assisted his brother but had gone to Boston for further experience, returned to Spalding and carried on the business until about 1926 when the West Elloe Bridge was built. This bridge obstructed the end of the slipway so Pannell ceased altogether soon after.

Ropemakers

Ropewalks were an essential subsidiary activity in any port and Hawkes listed two in 1792.

The first was William Cockett, whose ropewalk extended from St. Thomas's Road to London Road. The western end is now part of Priory Road while the eastern end passed south of the Classic cinema. This business ceased in 1797 and the ropewalk was subsequently a footpath known as Vise's Walk. When Haverfield House was built the east end of the footpath was diverted onto the line now followed by Haverfield Road.

The second ropemaker listed in 1792 was Ann Hames, but unfortunately the location of her ropewalk is unknown. The Hames's were ropemakers in Spalding throughout the nineteenth century. In 1826 two members of the family had ropewalks; Joseph in High Street and William in Pinchbeck Street. William was at the same address in 1830 but later moved; in 1842 he was in New Road and in 1856 Double Street. In 1830 Joseph, now also described as a flax dresser, was in Holbeach Road but he was not referred to in later directories. His ropewalk was probably taken over by James Rogers, who was listed in Holbeach Road in 1842.

In 1826 there were altogether six ropewalks listed in White's Directory, indicating a prosperous port, but the number declined over the next thirty years. By 1856 only one old ropemaker was still in business, William Hames. However a new maker, Isaac Elsom, was in business in Pinchbeck Street. By 1882 Elsom had a shop at 31 New Road but the ropewalk stayed in use until the middle of the twentieth century and the buildings were demolished only three or four years ago. By 1892 Isaac had retired and the business was run by George Elsom who was also a sack and seed merchant. By 1919 George had moved to premises at 9 Market Place, as well as in Boston, and seeds were his main concern. A few years later Elsom House was built in Broad Street and this is still in business as a seed and garden shop. In 1937 George Elsom still included the manufacture of ropes and covers amongst his occupations, using the premises in Pinchbeck Road (TF 247234).

Another William Hames was in business as a rope and twine maker at 12 Marsh Road in 1882 and 1892 and his use of the riverside is shown in Fig.16b.

Sailmakers

Ropemaking was a likely industry not only because Spalding was a port but also because the hemp and flax grown in the area was available as raw material. There was a similar incentive to produce sail cloths.

A 'sail-cloth manufactory' was established in 1749 by a Mr Ives but this had closed down by 1792, when Hawkes referred to it as 'an attempt to make sacking and mill sail cloths'.* This suggests that Mr Ives's products were used not only on the sails of the barges and ships using the port and navigation but also on the sails of the windmills being built in the fens, not to mention the sacks to carry the articles of commerce.

There were no operative sailmakers in 1792 but a couple of short-lived attempts to establish such a business were made in the first half of the century. In 1826 John Best was listed as a sailmaker at the High Bridge

* Hawkes Papers, Spalding Gentlemens Society.

and in 1842 Henry Gustard was doing the same in Holbeach Road. Allowing for some mistakes in the street names it is possible that they were using the same premises, but unfortunately the actual building has not been identified.

CHAPTER III

D E E P I N G F E N

Spalding's history is linked not only to the Welland but also to the very extensive Deeping Fen around which the river flowed (see Fig.2). The Fen lay between the rivers Welland and Glen and was bounded by the coastal ridge on the north-east and the higher ground of the heath on the west.

In the early seventeenth century the great landed proprietors started to concern themselves with the reclamation of the fens. The Earl of Lindsey took an interest in those lying north of the Bourne Eau and the Duke of Bedford called in Vermuyden to reclaim the Great Level, south of the Welland. Deeping Fen, lying between these two great areas, was eventually to be reclaimed separately from them but there were several unsuccessful attempts before the long process was completed.

On the western boundary the fen ended at the edge of rising ground but on the eastern side banks were erected to contain it. Spalding was protected by Hawthorn Bank, and the Great Postland estate extending eastwards from Crowland was protected by the Wash Bank. Connecting these was the Barrier Bank, erected under an Act of 1666 to protect the South Holland Fen from the waters of the Welland. Vermuyden constructed a similar bank between Crowland and the higher land at Deeping, on the south side of the river, to protect the North Level from flooding by the Welland. Barrier Bank and Wash Bank were constructed east of the river and the intervening spaces, up to a mile wide, served as reservoirs for surplus water in time of flood (see Fig.9). The area next to Barrier Bank was known as Cowbit Wash while adjacent to Crowland were the Crowland Fodder Lots and Crowland High Wash. In a map of 1829 these areas as far north as TF 237139 were shown as lying in the North Level of the Bedford Level, since they are south of the Welland.

About the year 1595 Thomas Lovell had undertaken the drainage of the extensive morass of Deeping Fen and he was allotted a third of the area of the fen by the Court of Sewers as his reward. However the work was unsuccessful and the fen returned to its previous condition, perhaps as much due to the inadequacy of the works as to the riotous opposition of the fenmen. Lovell lost his fortune on it and had to give up the undertaking to a company of gentlemen, called the Adventurers. These included Sir Philibert Vernatti, a dutchman whose name is perpetuated in Vernatti's Drain which carries the waters of the fen from Podge Hole to the Welland north of Spalding. The drainage of the fen was dependant on the Welland so the Adventurers made it wider and deeper and improved the outfall as well as cutting drains and making sluices.

In August 1634 some travellers crossing the fenland passed through Spalding:- 'Wee fear'd somewhat as we entered the Towne, seeing the Bridge pulled downe, that we could not have pass'd the River; but when we came to it, that fear was soone past, for the River had not soe much water in it, as would drowne a Mouse.

'At this we perceiv'd that the Towne and Country thereabouts much murmr'd, but let them content themselves, since the Fen-drainers have undertaken to make their River Navigable, 50 feet broad and 6 foot deep, from Frosdick Slough to Deeping, which they need not long be about, having 600 Men daily at work in't.'*

The district was declared drained in 1637 but this was only for summer use, the fen still being subject to flooding in winter. The civil war then intervened and in the confusion the works deteriorated, the fen was overflowed again and the fenmen reasserted their rights. The situation was not helped by the fact that Crowland was a Royalist stronghold in a Parliamentary area. The Welland, the fens and the drains formed natural defences, to which were added earthworks.

The area awarded to Lovell and taken over by the Adventurers was the central strip of the fen, about 17,000 acres, almost coterminous with the present parish of Deeping St. Nicholas. This enclosed area was surrounded by the Commons of the villages adjoining the fen. The county boundary between Holland and Kesteven flowed through the middle of the fen, about 10,000 acres of the Adventurers Lands lying in Holland and about 7,000 in Kesteven. It was not until the twentieth century that the county boundary was redrawn to include all of Deeping St. Nicholas in Holland.

Until the seventeenth century drainage works the Welland flowed through Crowland, dividing in the centre of the village where it was crossed by the famous Trinity Bridge. The river divided under the bridge, one section flowing to Spalding while the other, known as the South Eau, South Holland or Shire Drain, flowing westwards to join the Nene near Cross Keys Wash. Dugdale, writing in 1660, declared that this was the main channel and that the other flowed 'in a most slow course to Spalding and Surfleet.'**

After the Restoration the Adventurers again took up the task. The Act of 1666 repealed the grant to Thomas Lovell and empowered the Earl of Manchester and others to redrain the fen in seven years, a period subsequently extended by three years. The 'Adventurers Lands' were extra-parochial though the Act made the Adventurers responsible for the poor; the area was also free from drainage rates until 1801. It was only in the middle of the nineteenth century that a church was built beside the turnpike road and the Lands were recreated as the parish of Deeping St. Nicholas. Even then, it was 1866 before the parish was joined to the Spalding Poor Law Union.

The Adventurers efforts were successful to the extent of freeing the fen from flooding for several months each year so that the Adventurers Lands could be fenced and inclosed. But they were no more successful than Lovell in achieving a lasting solution. Deeping was the lowest of the fens and in consequence of wet seasons and peat shrinkage periodically deteriorated. In the early eighteenth century many landowners were receiving no rent and were finding it increasingly difficult to pay their taxes so that nearly half

* 'The Draining of the Fens', H C Darby, 43, quoting British Museum, Lansdowne MS. 213, f.316.

** 'The History of Spalding', Gooch, 379.



Fig.7a Pannell's Boatyard on west bank of Welland.
(TF 254235) S G S



Fig.7b Welland Hall, London Road, with a boat being
hailed up river towards Deeping and Stamford,
1828. Hilkiiah Burgess

the land was sequestered and sold. In 1729 this was conveyed for £4,000 to Captain John Perry, a sixty-year old engineer of great experience who had for the last five years been mainly engaged in issuing reports on various projects. In 1727 he had published 'Proposals for Draining the Fens in Lincolnshire' and he was now called upon to carry out his ideas as engineer to the Adventurers. One of his actions was to superintend the construction of Locks at the south end of Spalding where the Welland left Cowbit Wash and to puddle the banks through the town to Surfleet Reservoir.* Captain Perry died at Spalding in 1735 and is buried in the parish church, his memorial being at the west end of the inner south aisle. Although the works that he carried out were subsequently modified or replaced, the Locks being removed in 1813, nevertheless his analysis of the problem was correct and he laid the foundation for the solutions which were later attempted.

As improvements were made in the internal drainage of the fen the problems moved downstream, the waters being held back by silting in the river below Spalding. In 1738 it was stated that, because of trouble with the outfall, the fen was so flooded that little or no profit could be made of the lands and the works to recover the situation would cost about £15,000. The three main drains of Deeping Fen all converge on Pode Hole (TF 212220). There the waters enter Vernatts Drain which carries them into the Welland north of Spalding. The waters of Pinchbeck South Fen also entered the Vernatts at Pode Hole. (See Fig.8b). In 1741 two large scoop wheels worked by windmills were erected at Pode Hole; the wheels were sixteen feet in diameter with thirteen inch scoops. On the fen itself farms had their own windmills to lift the waters into the common drains and by 1763 there were fifty of them at work. Many were adjacent to the main road, known as Littleworth Drove, but they were removed to the other ends of the farms after the road was turnpiked in 1820. The visual effect of this is shown in Plate XVb in Rex Wailes's 'The English Windmill' which is a Burgess drawing of North Drove Drain in 1828.

Although the situation in Deeping Fen periodically deteriorated occasional works managed to keep it free from floods for a large part of the year. By an Act passed in 1744 the Vernatts Drain was extended about three miles northwards alongside the Welland to the Reservoir at Surfleet. Under an Act of 1774 new sluices were erected and channels improved, and under a 1794 Act the Welland was improved from the Reservoir to Fosdyke Wash. This latter Act also effectually stopped the use of the Westlode for the drainage of the fen.

In 1799 Arthur Young, in his survey of the agriculture of Lincolnshire, noted of Deeping Fen that over the previous twenty years the value of land had increased considerably. However the drainage of the fen was chiefly dependant on three windmills at Pode Hole. Since the fen was lower than the beds of the Welland and the Glen it was vulnerable to floods in periods of calm wind or when the river banks broke, as in 1798.

In 1801 an Act was obtained for the enclosure of all the commons around Deeping Fen. Initially this led to improvements in the drainage of the commons and major changes in their cultivation. But problems later arose, the peat shrinking as it dried out so that the land surface fell even further below the level of the river beds and increased the work of the drainage windmills at Pode Hole.

The first works in connection with the enclosure was the draining and

* 'Lives of the Engineers', Samuel Smiles, Vol.1, p.82; Harmstone, p.15.

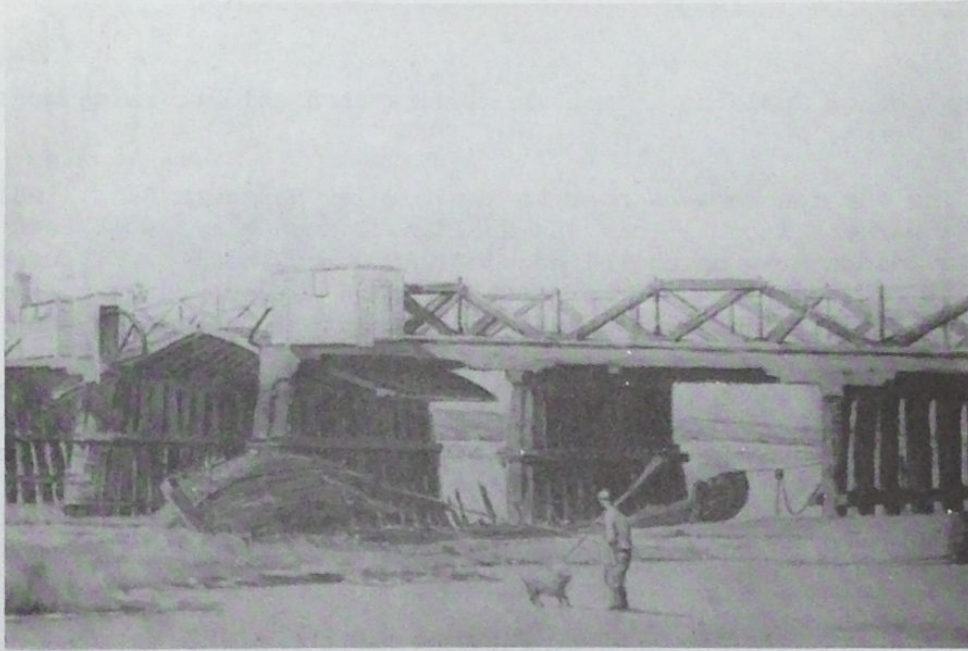


Fig.8a Old Fosdyke Bridge, built 1812-1815. From painting by G. W. Bailey, 1906, now owned by SGS.



Fig.8b Pode Hole, c.1830. This shows, left to right: Wind engine and steam engine to drain Pinchbeck South Fen; the main drain of that Fen; Counter Drain with a bridge over it; and the Pode Hole pumping engines. The South Drove Drain and North Drove Drain are off the picture to the right of the engine house. See Fig. 6 and the account headed 'Pode Hole'.
Hilkiah Burgess

fencing of portions of Spalding Common which were then sold to raise money for the rest of the works.

In Spalding the fen came as near to the town as Hawthorn Bank, less than a mile from the Market Place. This was Spalding Common and a small settlement known as Little London grew up on the edge of the Common beside the turnpike road to Deeping (TF 240212). West of Little London was an area used for horse racing in the eighteenth century and known to this day as the Raceground.

The main spirit behind the races was Mr Richards who then resided at Town End Manor, on the inside of Hawthorn Bank next to the Welland (TF 242212), and he erected stables in London Road (now the site of the Classic cinema) for his own racehorses and those of visitors. Stands for spectators were built beside the course. After his death in 1775 the races declined, the last one being run in 1788, and the stands being either taken down or destroyed by negligence by 1792.

For the rest of the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth the unsatisfactory state of the Welland Outfall continued to cause problems for the drainage of Deeping Fen. In 1800 a report was submitted by four engineers, including John Rennie, who described the fen as, 'I may almost say, in a lost state.' They saw that the best solution was to extend the Vernatts seaward, even as far as the Witham, but since this would be too expensive they suggested the erection of steam engines at Pode Hole instead. This the Commissioners decided to do. There were delays but finally two steam engines were erected at the end of the North Drove Drain and South Drove Drain to lift their waters into the Vernatts. The engines were completed in 1825, the total cost coming to £26,673, and for many years they were the largest steam installation in the fens. They ceased working in 1925 and were scrapped in 1952 although the building survives.

North west of Pode Hole was the Pinchbeck South Fen whose drains were connected to Deeping Fen by a tunnel under the Vernatts. After the opening of the Pode Hole steam engines this Fen was also drained by them, via the tunnel, but then there was disagreement as to the price demanded by the Deeping Fen Commissioners and in 1829 the people of Pinchbeck South Fen erected a steam engine of their own opposite Pode Hole. This engine was scrapped after 1900 and no trace now remains. The situation in 1830 is shown in Fig.8b opposite the preceding page.

One of the few steam engines still remaining in the fens is not far from this point, at Spalding Marsh in Pinchbeck (TF 262262). The engine was constructed in 1832 on the Blue Gowt Drain and worked until 1952, since when it has been preserved.

Under the 1794 Act one of the improvements had been a new cut for the Welland from the Reservoir to Fosdyke Wash but as improvements were made so the problem moved downstream. Acts to deal with this were obtained in 1824, 1837 and 1867 but the situation was still considered unsatisfactory in 1882 and 1917.

Fosdyke Bridge (TF 318322)

While the silting was obstructing the channels of the estuaries it was also serving a more useful purpose by facilitating the reclamation of the outmarshes. Before this happened in Fosdyke Wash an embankment was built across the estuary from Fosdyke to Moulton with a bridge over the tidal channel, next to the Fosdyke bank. The marsh behind the bank on the Moulton side

could then be reclaimed, a portion being allotted to Fosdyke as its share of the estuary.

The 'Act of Parliament for erecting a Bridge over the river Welland, at Fosdyke Wash, and for making a public way over the bare sands at that place' was obtained in 1811 and the work was executed by a company of proprietors. The bridge was begun in 1812 and finished in 1815. It was built of English oak, of very large dimensions, and had nine piers, each consisting of six large trees, except the two centre piers, which had twelve trees and supported two draw leaves that opened for the passage of vessels, as shown in Fig.8a opposite page 15. The length of the bridge was about one hundred yards and its width twenty two feet, which included a footpath four feet wide. It received extensive repairs in 1836 and in 1910-11 it was replaced by the present iron bridge at a cost of about £17,000.

The bank extended forty two chains southwards from the bridge to the Moulton embankment at an average height of twelve feet with a good road on top, forty feet wide. There were grassy slopes on each side, descending to the marsh which was often overflowed by the tides until being reclaimed within a few years.

The last major engineering project on the Welland at Spalding was the construction of the Coronation Channel in the 1950's. This was a relieving channel to carry the waters of the Welland around the eastern edge of the town in time of flood, since the river could be widened sufficiently within the town.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE PRODUCE OF THE AREA

The motto on the Spalding Urban District Council's coat of arms reads 'Vicinas Urbes Alit' which means 'The country supports the town'. The words are taken from the works of Horace and the full sentence is even more appropriate for the situation of Spalding. It has been translated as: 'The marsh, long time unfruitful and fit only for boats, now finds food for the neighbouring towns and feels the weight of the plough.'* William Cartwright, a local attorney, expressed the same sentiment less poetically in the following lines which were published in 1846.

'On Spalding

S - ince first I knew thy muddy lakes and bogs,
P - utrid with stench and organised with frogs:
A - poor man's cow, if had no winter's keep,
L - ay bleak and starved, and rotten were his sheep;
D - rained, ditch't, and fenc'd with good and thriving thorn
I - s thy rich soil, and covered o'er with corn;
N - umerous in cattle, sent away in flocks,
G - ot turnpikes good and pebbled o'er like rocks.'**

While the drainage and enclosure of the fens increased their productivity it is not altogether correct to say that they were completely unfruitful in their previous state.

Deeping Fen lay between the Welland and the Glen and the inhabitants of all the Lincolnshire villages lying between the two rivers had rights of common over it. On the west side of the fen were the villages of Baston, Langtoft, the Deepings and some more distant places comprised in the old distich:-

Uffington, Tallyngton, Barham and Stow,
One house in Greatford and ne'er an ane moe.***

These were all in the small Wapentake of Ness, along with Stamford and four

* Gooch, 330. The quotation is from line 66 of Ars Poetica of Horace as translated by the Rev. W.H. Judd of Wigtoft.

** Harmstone, 64; Gooch, 387.

*** Provincial Literary Repository, Albin, Spalding (1802), 164.

other small villages north of the Glen.

East and south of the fen were four Elloe villages: Pinchbeck, Spalding, Cowbit and Crowland. The last two now lie east of the Welland but Cowbit had rights on this fen because it was originally a part of Spalding and Crowland had commons in Deeping Fen and the Bedford Level because the Welland had previously flowed through the centre of the village.

The central area of the fen, awarded to the Adventurers in 1666, was divided into fields in individual ownership, and these fields were cultivated or grazed as the floodwaters allowed and as the occupier saw fit. The Commons on the edges of the fen were unfenced and the commoners had unlimited rights to graze cattle, asses, swine, goats and geese over the common allotted to their village or hamlet. Cultivation of the commons was impracticable since anything grown would be eaten or trampled by the livestock grazing unimpeded over the whole common. The commoners were only entitled to graze on the area allotted to their parish but in 1802 it was stated that, to prevent law-suits, the fen-reeves did not use their powers to enforce this rule by empounding any strays.

To the east the areas of fen were known as Pinchbeck South Fen, Spalding Common and Cowbit Wash; and to the south was part of the Crowland Fodder Lots and Crowland Common or Goggushland. To the west Deeping, Baston and Langtoft Commons were shared by the Ness villages south of the Glen. The soil and game of the commons belonged to the lords of the manors, though the tenants had rights to the brovage (ie browsing), fodder, fishing and gatherings, fowl-takings and other profits from the fens.

For the eastern portion of the fen there were four fen reeves, two for Spalding and two for Pinchbeck. They were chosen by the homage and sworn and approved by the steward of the Manor of Spalding according to ancient agreements made between the Lord and tenants in the time of Robert Holland, Prior of Spalding and Lord of the Manor, in 1422-3. The boundaries of the Lord Prior's portion of the fen were marked by several crosses, of which part of St. Guthlac's Cross at Brotherhouse (TF 260149) remains.

The Adventurers might see the advantages of draining, which would allow the good fen soil to be used to best advantage at least during the summer months, but the fenmen had a distinctive way of life which they were prepared to defend. After the Restoration of Charles II the two systems operated for about one hundred and fifty years, with the Adventurers Lands in the centre of the fen and the commons encircling it.

Geese

Before the commons were drained and enclosed geese were considered the fenman's treasure, and large flocks were kept and attended, during incubation time, with great care. Some individuals were known to have possessed a thousand geese which, on average, would produce seven-fold in a season. The young quickly became saleable or speedily contributed to increase the flock. They were kept not only for their meat and eggs but also for their feathers and quills, which were valuable articles of commerce.

In 1792 Hawkes list of inhabitants in Spalding included one 'Gooseherd and Farmer' and Thomas Collins, a feather merchant. In 1826 Richard Everard was described as a feather merchant, with premises in Double Street. From these beginnings he went on to become a draper and one of Spalding's most



Fig.9a Wildfowlers on Crowland Wash, early 19th century. Hilkiah Burgess



Fig.9b Punt-gun on Cowbit Wash, 1930's. SGS.

successful sons.

During the breeding season the geese were lodged in wooden houses adjoining those of the gooseherd or gozzard, though frequently they were accommodated in the same house, and sometimes even in the bedroom. In every apartment were three rows of course wicker pens, placed one above another; each bird had its separate lodge divided from the others, which it kept the whole time of sitting. A gozzard attended the flock and twice a day drove it to water. He then brought them back to their habitation, 'helping those that lived in the upper stories to their nests, without ever misplacing a single bird. The geese were plucked five times in a year; the first plucking was at Lady Day, for feathers and quills; the same was renewed, for feathers only, four times between that and Michaelmas.'* Goslins only eight weeks old were not spared, being plucked to increase their succeeding feathers. In 1802, perhaps in defence of inclosure, attention was drawn to the barbarities of the practice. In a cold season large numbers of geese died but this custom had prevailed ever since feather beds came into general use. In North Holland they pulled their geese thrice a year, and the poor birds could be seen raw with the plucking, and their legs and wings frequently disjointed by rough hands, so that they fell a prey to crows.

The trade in feathers and quills was very extensive but it was considerably reduced after the enclosure of the commons and eventually died out.

Wildfowl

As well as profiting from their flocks of geese the fenmen also harvested the wildfowl, using decoys, nets and devices of various sorts. As the fens were drained and guns improved wildfowl became more difficult to catch and the old methods of netting tended to be replaced by carefully constructed decoy ponds and the use of punt guns, as shown in Fig.9b. Examples of netting are shown in Figs.8b and 9a.

There were several decoys in the area of Deeping Fen, there being five grouped together at the north end of the fen (TF 185205) as well as Borough Fen Decoy (TF 200080) south of the Welland. This latter still exists and is illustrated in Darby's 'Draining of the Fens' as Fig.18 and Plate 18.

In 1790 Lord Torrington, when passing this way, recorded that in Spalding they fattened ruffs and rees 'whose numbers voluptuousness or agriculture has thinned';** they then sold for 5/- the couple, male and female. A ruff is a bird similar to the woodcock, a species of pigeon, and the ree is the female bird. Two years later when Thomas Hawkes drew up his directory he listed a Thomas Townes not only as a breeches maker but also as 'feeder of Ruffs and Rees for the King's Poulter'.***

The Produce of the Area about 1800

Although geese and wildfowl were important products of the commons,

* Provincial Literary Repository, 165.

** Gooch, 317

*** Hawkes Papers, 5 & 6, SGS.



Fig.10a Cattle Market in the New Street, about the turn of the century. SGS



Fig.10b Horse Fair in Pinchbeck Street, about the turn of the century. SGS

particularly for the poor commoners, the main use of the fens was for grazing cattle and sheep, which Hawkes said in 1792 was 'what the soil is best calculated for, and what brings the greatest riches here.'* Cattle, sheep and oxen were fattened and sent up in large droves to supply the London markets but the production of wool was even more important. Tens of thousands of sheep grazed on the open fields, commons and fens. In 1792 Hawkes listed twenty seven graziers in his list of inhabitants, forming the largest group. With regard to wool he had the following to say:-

'The Produce of this flat Country in Wool is a very valuable article, it is chiefly bought up by the Speculating dealers, and sent at their own risque to be sold by Factors who keep the Wool Halls at Norwich, Bury Bocking and Sudbury - also to Bradford Leeds and Wakefield in Yorkshire. Other purchasers supply the Mills lately invented for the spinning of Worsted yarn. This wool is afterwards manufactured at the above places into a variety of stuffs - such as Camblet, Crapes and Bombazines at Norwich and in Yorkshire into Shalloons, Tammy etc, which Goods are some for home consumption and others for Marketts of Old and New Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany and Russia. Thus the goods made from the Lincolnshire longwool are dispersed all over Europe, South America and they are also sent to China by the India Company.'**

The main arable crops were hemp and flax but at the end of the eighteenth century they gave way, to a considerable degree, to the more profitable growth of corn, oats in particular by 1802. Quantities of coleseed and rape were also a traditional crop, being crushed in local mills to produce vegetable oil and cake.

Market gardening was also established in the area by this time and Hawkes listed eight 'Gardiners' in 1792 and wrote as follows:-

'All about the Town of Spalding are Gardens, cultivated by Gardiners and Nurserymen - who dispose of their Crops in the Town, and in all the small Towns and villages in the neighbourhood, & during the season they keep the marketts of Boston, Stamford & Peterborough with vegetibles. Asperigrass of superior excellence is produced here, this place is also noted for an apple called the Spalding rennett by the Gardiners.'*** In this connection note the number of orchards shown in Fig.1, the plan of 1732.

Fairs

There were then five annual fairs in Spalding, spread through the year. The two oldest, coming at the end of the year, were probably very ancient and were perhaps founded by the Lord Priors of the Abbey since they were held on the saint's days of two churches in the town. The largest fair, called the Summer Fair, was held on 25 September (or 14 September old style - Holy Rood), and was for horned cattle and other stock, hemp and flax, and all merchandise. In 1792 Hawkes wrote that this fair was one 'at which till within a few years**** there used to be a general Feasting of the Country neighbours by the Inhabitants.'** The St. Nicholas Fair on 6 December was probably the most ancient and was for all cattle, merchandise, etc.

* Hawkes Papers, 5 & 6, SGS

** Ditto.

*** Ditto.

**** Ditto.

Two other fairs were held under a charter granted by George I at the request of the Duchess of Buccleugh, who was then lady of the manor of Spalding. They were held on 27 April and 29 June for stock, hemp, flax and town fair, the one on 29 June also for horses. The fifth fair was on 25 August for horses only. In addition to these there were two statute fairs annually for hiring and retaining servants, held a short time before Lady Day and Martinmas at one of the principal inns in the town, named by the chief constable for Holland Elloe.

The weekly market is held on Tuesdays. At the present time it is still flourishing, occupying part of New Road as well as the Market Place, but for several years after 1763 there were only three stalls: William Keen's worsted stall and two gingerbread bakers.

Different types of produce were sold in different parts of the town as the name Sheep Market indicates. In the nineteenth century they spread out a bit but Grundys plan of 1732 indicates the situation then. Cattle were sold near the point where Hall Place and the Sheep Market Market join, hemp and flax around the Town Hall in the centre of what is now Hall Place and butter and general wares in the Market Place. Part of Red Lion Street was marked as Hogg Market while the other part of the street was called Osses Lane and was thus the site of the Horse fair. Some of these later moved, the Cattle Market to New Street (Fig.10a) and the Horse Fair to Pinchbeck Street (Fig.10b). The Sheep Market and general Market Place are shown in Figs.11a and 11b. All the livestock markets were taken off the streets in 1938 when a building was opened off Swan Street.

Textiles

Spalding is not a manufacturing town and Hawkes laboured the point, contrasting it with the fact that 'the raw materials of three of the most principal natural productions of this kingdom for manufacture are produced here, viz Wool, Hemp and Flax.' These products were exported to Norfolk and Yorkshire but although the wool was bought up by 'speculating dealers' the hemp and flax was sold at the markets and fairs in Spalding. In 1792 there was still a cottage industry of flax spinning and his list of inhabitants included two spinning wheel makers.

He wrote that 'the Hemp and Flax produced in this country is made into ropes and cordage. The flax is spun by many families into yarn which is woven into Linnen for the use of such families. The rest, which is by far the greater quantity, is sold to Strangers who come many miles to these markets to purchase these articles, and by them it is prepared and manufactured.'

The Wool produced in the area was stored in Spalding before being packed up and afterwards sent off. The textile industry was one of the first to be affected by the industrial revolution and some attempts were made to establish factories in Spalding, as one of the sources of raw materials. Accounts of the sailmakers and ropemakers have already been given.

In 1792 there was also a 'little worsted yarn produced here' and Hawkes lists two individuals, Thomas Jackson and William Keen, each as 'Wool Combers and Worsted Yarn Makers'. He also described William Hames as a 'Twine Spinner and Linen Manufacturer', Ann Hames being a ropemaker. In 1802 it was said that Mr Presgrave, who came to Spalding from Bourne in 1795 'imported a quantity of linen yarn from the continent, and setting up a weaving factory, employed several hands; but upon his relinquishing his mercantile concerns at Spalding, that also was declined.* His factory was probably in the Herring Lane area

* Provincial Literary Repository, 203

because he erected a crane on the riverside near that lane.

In 1826 James Wilson was listed as a hemp merchant in Double Street, but hemp had become relatively less important as more corn had been grown after the turn of the century.

Although the factories did not survive in Spalding there was a flaxmill in the area until 1879. This was at Pinchbeck and in 1856 was operated by Martin Irving Aitkin and Andrew Aitkin, jun., 'flax manufacturers and merchants', as a 'flax scutching mill'* It was said that they employed about a hundred hands. The mills were said to have been erected at a cost of over £6,000, but they closed in 1879 during the great agricultural depression.

In 1897 there was a locally promoted drive to get the mills reopened but this was not successful. Nevertheless the mill still stands and the location is commemorated by the name Flax Mill Lane to the north of the village. Some cottages on the site also survive.

Enclosure of the Commons

In 1801 an Act of Parliament was obtained for the enclosure and draining of the commons on the eastern and western edges of Deeping Fen. It was expected that this would increase the production of cattle, sheep and oats but there would be less geese and wildfowl. 'This neighbourhood is likely soon to experience the advantages which must accrue from the cultivation of so many thousands of acres of land which, in great measure, have hitherto been useful only for the rearing of geese, and as a harbour for wildfowl.'**

The first drainage and embanking works on the Common started in 1803 and by 1808 the work was sufficiently advanced for the common rights to be ended. The furrows or division lines were drawn on 13 July 1808, later known as the Hot Wednesday. The first corn that grew on the new inclosures was barley, on the farm occupied by John Freeman on part of the racecourse. The first thrashing machine worked by horses in this part of the country was on the same racecourse, and it was said to have occurred in 1807.***

Since Deeping Fen was subject to Intercommoning its enclosure had two stages, firstly dividing it between the parishes and places and secondly each parish dividing its own area amongst its commoners. Spalding acted quickly but it was 1813 before West Deeping obtained an Act to divide its portion and 1815 for Market Deeping and Deeping St. James. Those villages on the western side of the fen received less land than Pinchbeck or Spalding so the incentive was not so great.

Spalding was the venue for the Lincolnshire Agricultural Show several times during the nineteenth century, and on these occasions the event was usually held in the park behind Cley Hall, now covered by a housing estate laid out in the 1930's (TF 253228).

Other crafts and industries arose in the town in connection with the surrounding agricultural area.

* White's Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856.

** Provincial Literary Repository, 165.

*** Harmstone, 29.

Windmills

The tower mill shown in Fig.3a was erected at Pigeon End in 1788 and was occupied in 1792 by George Lowden, who was still there in 1846. It was erected on the site of an old mill which in 1619 had been the only one in the parish. In 1846 there were six windmills in Spalding but none of these survive.

The largest was the six-storey four-sail tower windmill south of the Union Workhouse. It was built by Mr Ward of Boston and William Rowles of Spalding and the first brick was laid on 29 May 1819 (TF 247233). Perhaps the best known mill in Spalding was the Locks Mill which stood on St Catherine's Island in the Welland (TF 242210). It was demolished in 1899 and the materials sold to Mr Perkins, miller.

Steam Mills

The first steam engine in Spalding was in an Oil Mill or Seed Crushing Mill purchased by a Mr Gardiner about 1786 for £930. In 1792 it was said to be owned by Gardiner and Ayre and it closed down about 1816. The location of this mill is not known although it was reputed to adjoin Welland Hall, the home of the Hawkes family (see Fig.7b). The idea may be attributable to the fact that Henry Hawkes Junr. was later the owner of another oil mill in Winsover Road.* He purchased a hydraulic press mill for seed crushing from Messrs Rose, Downs and Thompson in 1838 and established an oil mill in Winsover Road. In 1856 the Winsover Steam Mills were occupied by Benjamin Bowles and John William Moats as Corn Mills.

The production of vegetable oil had been a well established industry in this area since before 1696, when it was reported that large quantities of rape seed or cole seed were grown between Spalding and Crowland for crushing in the fenland 'Oyl-Mills'.**

Other oil-cake merchants, including one bone-crusher in Double Street, are referred to during the nineteenth century but they do not appear to have had steam mills. In 1846 there were three steam mills in Spalding, Hawkes' Winsover Steam Mill and the two riverside flour mills already mentioned, Albion and South Holland.

Limeburners

As well as premises which used the produce grown in the adjacent countryside Spalding also had others which served the farmers. In 1792 two limeburners were listed and in 1830 there were also two, including one newcomer. One of these was in London Road and was operated by William Rowles. Another lime kiln was on the riverside in Commercial Road, opposite the Gas Works. It is not known who operated it but it was pulled down in 1893 after being disused for several years.

In the early 1880's the area generally began to feel the effects of the importation of large quantities of wheat from America and the harvests locally were poor. In September 1882 the Spalding Improvement Commissioners decided

* The History of Seed Crushing in Great Britain, H W Brace, 155.

** Brace, 21.

not to invite the Lincolnshire Agricultural Society to hold their next Show in Spalding as had been suggested 'in view of the present state of the district.'* The harvest of 1886 was the worst of a bad series and was reflected in the drop in railway freight tonnage in potatoes and grain, and in the difficulty to raise subscriptions to Queen Victoria's Jubilee, only £80 having been raised in Spalding by May 1887.

An Allotments Act was passed in 1887 and under this local authorities could be compelled to provide allotments for the labouring classes if they demanded them. The Spalding Improvement Commissioners hoped that landowners would voluntarily make allotments available so despite petitions from several hundred labourers received by December 1887 they did not act. A year later they unsuccessfully tried to form a voluntary committee of interested parties and then accepted responsibility. They leased their first land for the purpose in May 1889; twenty acres in Spalding Common which were divided into allotments of one rood, practically all of which were let by November. Other areas were leased in 1890, 1891 and 1892.

Bulb Industry**

Spalding's modern fame is largely due to this industry, celebrated every spring since 1958 by a parade of floats decorated with tulip heads. Tulips are the best known side but the narcissus and daffodil bulbs are equally important. This crop was pioneered in Britain at the end of the last century and gradually developed. It has expanded considerably since the Second World War and during the peak of the season it is also a major tourist attraction.

It was in the late 1880's that two or three people in Spalding began the collecting and selling of snowdrops in quantity to retailers in London and other large towns. The pioneer was John Thomas White of Little London who had a marine store business at the corner of the Sheep Market and the Crescent. It appears that the first demand was for snowdrop bulbs for medicinal purposes but as J T White acquired more bulbs than he could dispose of he planted some on a piece of land in Little London and sent their flowers to London as an experiment.

About 1890 he and others, including R Wellband, Phillip Clarke and George Dickinson, began to plant a few Double Daffodils to produce cut flowers for the market, each having less than one acre. In 1890 White bought seven acres of land with warehouses and greenhouses. He planted the land with daffodils and in three or four years had extended his cultures to twenty acres. The other growers were also increasing their planting but not to the same extent.

At this time the disposal of the bulbs was a secondary activity, although J T White was selling them from about 1893. In the early years narcissus was the main flower and about 1895 the industry extended to Wisbech where R H Bath Ltd and W T Ware started planting.

The industry took a new turn in 1905 when the Darwin Tulip was introduced and soon after considerable quantities were planted by Mr Ware at Wisbech. The industry was restricted during the First World War as it was not producing a food crop but it increased considerably after the War. In 1933 there were about 2,500 acres of bulbs between Spalding and Wisbech and the number of growers in the Spalding area had increased from about fifteen to 150. The advantage of growing bulbs at that time were that they required more labour per acre than

* The Improvement of the Town of Spalding, Thesis by Mrs B Webster (1968), 62.

** For much of the information in this section I am indebted to an article published in the Lincolnshire Magazine in 1933.

other crops and gave many smallholders a higher return per acre. In 1933 the consignments of flowers leaving Spalding amounted to about 100 tons per day and about 6,000 tons in the course of the season.

The forcing of bulbs by the growers in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire did not start until about 1920 when glass began to be erected in a small way. By 1933 there were twenty-five to thirty acres of glass for the forcing of Tulips, Narcissus and Iris, requiring about twenty-five million bulbs per annum.

After the Second World War the bulb industry moved rapidly forward again and in 1958 the annual Tulip Parade was started in Spalding. The emphasis is now on bulb production rather than cut flowers and the heads are superfluous. The locally formed 'Publicity for British Bulbs Ltd' opened Springfields at Fulney on the outskirts of Spalding as a shop window for the British bulb industry in April 1966.

Low Fulney Land Settlement

In the 1930's one measure to combat unemployment was the Land Settlement Scheme to provide smallholdings for the unemployed in the industrial areas. One estate was purchased at Fulney, on the east side of Spalding, to take about thirty families. The first men arrived in 1936 and their families followed when houses were built for them.

Sugar Beet Factory

The Sugar Beet Factory in Spalding was erected in 1926 by the Anglo-Scottish Beet Sugar Corporation Ltd and was the first in Lincolnshire, others being opened at Bardney in 1927 and Brigg in 1928. Many attempts had been made to establish beet sugar growing in this country but without any real success until 1924. During the First World War the danger of dependance on imported sugar was realised and the result was the Beet Sugar Subsidy Act 1925. By 1933 private companies had built eighteen factories at a cost of between four and five hundred thousand pounds each. As well as the factory at Spalding there was also one at Peterborough.

The Spalding factory was north of the town, between the Welland and the Vernatts Drain (TF 259248). The Spalding Urban District Council had offered the Company a short-list of sites and agreed to provide public services to the factory, including the construction of West Elloe Bridge and West Elloe Road as a northern bypass to the town and the widening of Marsh Road to the factory. These improvements enabled beet to be delivered to the factory from areas north and east of Spalding without passing through the town.

The factory is now operated by the British Sugar Corporation and every year some 200,000 tons of beet are dealt with in the season.

CHAPTER V

ON THE HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

In its early history one of the safest ways of reaching Spalding was by wate, not only coast-wise from Boston, Lynn and places further off, but also from Bourne, Stamford and other towns lying on higher ground west of Deeping Fen. In early times the Priors of Spalding had constructed a causeway across Deeping Fen but in such a desolate area maintenance was even worse than in more populous parishes.

There were only two high roads from Spalding, running along the coastal strip of higher land between fen and marsh (see fig.2). One road went east through all the villages to the Nene at Wisbech. The other went north through Pinchbeck and Gosberton to Donington. From Donington there was a main road to Boston, though from Gosberton there was a more direct route to Boston across Bicker Haven. After the Haven became dry land this became the main road.

For cattle, sheep and travellers wishing to get from the north of England into Norfolk it was not necessary to pass through Spalding or Wisbech. There was a shorter but more dangerous route which forded the Welland and Nene well below the lowest bridging points. This was the Washway Road, so called because it involved crossing the wide and dangerous Fosdyke and Cross Keys Washes. Through these washes the rivers were constantly changing their courses, and the main danger came from the tides and quicksands. Anyone wishing to cross needed a guide and even then accidents were not unknown. This route became safer after the construction of the Fosdyke Bridge and Embankment (TF 320320) in 1812-15 and the Cross Keys Bridge and Embankment (TF 490207) in 1827-30, and it is to this day one of the main routes between East Anglia and the North of England.

Turnpikes

Acts for turnpiking the three main roads out of Spalding were obtained in 1759, 1763 and 1764. The first was for the road from Spalding to Donington, a distance of about eleven and a half miles. This trust was also responsible for part of the Gosberton-Boston road, finishing at a milestone in Wigtoft parish (TF 262338). The road to Donington was an old paved causeway with posts for the guidance of foot travellers, and apparently very little was done under this turnpike act. The Spalding Bar on this turnpike was in Pinchbeck Road, due south of the junction with Pennygate Lane (now King's Road) (TF 247230). The old road had been wide at this point, opposite the castle site, and the tollkeeper's house and garden were on land taken from the highway.

The 1763 Act related to the turnpiking of Littleworth Drove across Deeping Fen, from Spalding to Deeping St. James, a distance of about six miles. The maintenance and improvement of this road was made difficult by the drainage problems of the fen. The nearest toll-bar to Spalding was at the east end of Hawthorn Bank where the road left the fen and started to run alongside the Welland (TF 242213). To the south-west of the toll-bar a small settlement grew up after the enclosure of the fen and, being on the road to London, was named Little London. The settlement included blacksmiths, shoemakers, corn millers, inns, beerhouses, shopkeepers and wheelwrights and grew up at this point so that the inhabitants of Spalding Common could obtain these services without passing the toll-bar to go into the town.

The third of these turnpike Acts was apparently the most successful. It was obtained in 1764 and related to the road between Spalding and Wisbech, though it terminated on the county boundary at Tydd Gote. It ran through Weston and all the villages of the eastern half of the Wapentake of Elloe, a distance of about nineteen miles. The first toll-bar was at Pigeon End on the Holbeach Road, where the road left the Welland side and turned eastwards (TF 255237). This was some distance north of the town and became the nucleus of a notorious small settlement of about a dozen houses, illustrated in Fig.3a.

The next Turnpike Act to affect Spalding was passed in 1795 and concerned the Barrier Bank on the east side of the Welland between Spalding and Brotherhouse, the northern limit of Crowland. Under the Deeping Fen Act of 1666 the Adventurers had erected the bank from Brotherhouse to Spalding High Bridge and the 1795 Act was for the 'better preservation of the great bank of the river Welland and making and . . . repairing a road thereon.' The bank was to be topped with gravel to form the road and responsibility for maintenance and repair was vested in the South Holland Drainage Trust who were granted the right to levy tolls on all horses, cattle and vehicles using the bank. No toll-bar could be nearer to Spalding than Handkerchief Hall and the bar was actually erected about half a mile south of it, at TF 252184. At the southern end of the bank was Brotherhouse Bar, which collected toll from those using the road across the Great Postland estate from there to Crowland village. At the end of the eighteenth century Thomas Hawkes wrote that the journey to London was three miles shorter by Deeping Fen than by 'Crowland-bank', which was then so little used that the 'turnpike' paid very little interest.* This statement might have been misprinted since it was Littleworth Drove rather than Barrier Bank which was a turnpike, unless he was referring to the Great Postland road.

In 1838 the road on Barrier Bank was declared a turnpike and the committee of the South Holland Drainage were placed in the same position as other turnpike trustees. The right to levy tolls was extended to 1869 after which the maintenance passed to the Surveyors of Spalding and Cowbit and the Cowbit toll-bar was removed. Tolls continued to be collected at Brotherhouse Bar until the Crowland Council bought out the right in 1892.

Spalding's first turnpikes had appeared as a result of three Acts passed in a short space of time. There was a similar flurry of activity about sixty years later, in the 1820's. In 1820 itself, following the enclosure of the Commons around the edges of Deeping Fen, a new Act was obtained in respect of Littleworth Drove, from Spalding to the county boundary on the western edge of the Adventurers Lands.

Two years later an Act was obtained for a new turnpike between Spalding

* Hawkes Papers, Spalding Gentlemen's Society.



Fig.11a Sheep Market, with Sessions House (1842)
in background. Pens were erected in 1876
but have since been removed. SGS



Fig.11b Market Place, with Corn Exchange (1856-
1972) in background. SGS

and Bourne. This ended at the county boundary at Guthram Gowt, a distance of just under six miles. Work on the road was carried out in 1823 and it was said that before then the road had been virtually impassible. The nearest toll-bar on this road was at Winsover at the northern end of Hawthorn Bank (TF 236223).

Then in 1826 a new Act was obtained in respect of the Spalding-Donington turnpike and its side-turning from Gosberton towards Boston.

In the 1820's we have some idea of the income to the turnpikes from the advertisements announcing meetings at which the trustees would let the tolls. On the Spalding-Donington turnpike it is clear that most traffic used the Gosberton side turning and very little went on to Donington. For the three-year period from April 1818 to March 1821 the Spalding Bar on Pinchbeck Road was let for £427 plus the fines for overweight vehicles, the Gosberton, Gosberton Marsh Bank and Lingerhouse Bars for £443 and the Crossgate Bar in Donington for only £78.

Most traffic on the Spalding-Tydd turnpike did not even come into Spalding but passed between Wisbech and Fosdyke Wash, thus using the Washway Road and the recently opened Fosdyke Bridge and Embankment. The Washway Road joined the turnpike in Fleet parish and for the three-year period commencing in April 1819 the Fleet Bar and Fleet Side Bar had been let for £404. The Tydd Gote and Tretton Bridge Bars had been let for £390 while the Spalding Bar and Spalding Side Bar at Pigeon End, including the 'money raised at the weighing machine' had been let for £252 and the Sutton Wash Bar for £171. This latter figure increased considerably after the opening of the Cross Keys Bridge and Embankment in 1830.

A map dated 1846 in the possession of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society shows another turnpike in addition to those already mentioned but I can find no reference to it in Harmstone or Gooch. This started at the north end of Halmer Gate (TF 257229) and extended west along modern route B.1165, apparently in competition with the existing turnpike to Wisbech.

The middle years of the century saw the turnpikes controlling all the main roads out of the town but within a few years this changed and by 1870 the only toll bars in the vicinity were on the Deeping Road about four miles out of town (TF 222179) and at Brotherhouse. There are now no surviving tollhouses in Spalding itself and I do not know of any of the turnpikes radiating from the town, but the pattern of main roads still reflects the turnpike era.

Coaches

In spite of Gooch's comments that very little was done under the 1759 and 1763 turnpike acts in relation to the Spalding-Donington and Spalding-Deeping roads, the route was sufficiently satisfactory for stage coach services to start running by the end of the century. At the height of the coaching era, about 1840, there were three coaches passing through Spalding daily as well as two omnibuses to Boston several times a week and daily Mail Carts to Swineshead and Kings Lynn.

The first coach to run through Spalding was the Perseverance, its name perhaps reflecting the quality most needed in a pioneer coach service on Lincolnshire roads! This service started before the end of the century and ran from the Saracen's Head in Snow Hill, London, north-west of St. Paul's Cathedral, to Boston via Peterborough and Spalding. The coach left London



Fig.12a Sending bulbs by train, in the 1930's. SGS



Fig.12b Chain Bridge, Spalding, 1828. Replaced by
Albert Bridge in 1844 (TF251230).
Hilkiah Burgess

at 6.0 am every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The passengers slept overnight at the Talbot in Peterborough and got into the White Hart in Spalding by 8.0 the following morning. The return journey to the Saracen's Head left the White Hart in Spalding at 3.0 pm every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the passengers again sleeping at the Talbot in Peterborough overnight.

About 1800 a second coach service was commenced, running between Boston and Stamford via Spalding. This new coach was called the Imperial and at first it ran from the Red Lion in Boston but it later moved to the Peacock. In Spalding the Imperial stopped at the Talbot in Bridge Street, but Thomas Hawkes did not say how frequent this coach was. The advantage of this service was that it connected with the many coaches passing through Stamford, including those passing along the Great North Road. In 1830, the peak year, forty Mail Coaches and thirty stage coaches passed through Stamford every day.

The principal inns in Spalding about 1800 were the White Hart in the Market Place and the George, now called the White Horse, next to the High Bridge. The latter was an ancient building and had been much frequented by travellers but unfortunately its site was too small for use as a coaching inn. The George had two post-chaises for public use and the White Hart also kept chaises and post horses as the town was 'a great thoroughfare from Norfolk and the Isle of Ely into the north' and was also 'much frequented by those who came from Leicestershire etc. for sea bathing at Freestone (ie Freiston Shore near Boston), Skegness or Claythorpes (Cleethorpes)'.*

In spite of the turnpikes most roads, even including the Great North Road, were often impassable in winter and the Post Office did not entrust the east Lincolnshire mails to coaches until the enclosure and drainage of the commons around Deeping Fen was undertaken. Until then the mails went on horseback to meet a coach at Stilton on the Great North Road. The first mails by coach left Spalding on 5 July 1807, the town being on a route between Louth and London.

With the Royal Mail offering a daily service the others soon followed suit and in 1826 there were three daily services through the town. The Perseverance from Boston to London had changed its venue in Spalding to the Red Lion Inn and its London venue had apparently been changed to the Kings Arms Inn, a few doors from its original starting point, shortly before 1814. The Imperial and the Royal Mail called at the White Hart. In 1814 the Spalding-London fares on the Perseverance were £1 6s Od inside and 14s Od. outside but the following year they had shot up to £1 12s Od inside and £1 2s Od outside.

By 1830 there had been a further refinement of the services. The Royal Mail and the Perseverance called at the White Hart and the Cross Keys in the Market Place on alternate days. On the journey south both called at Peterborough but the Royal Mail then went via Cambridge while the Perseverance went via Biggleswade. The Imperial had returned to the White Hart and had extended its route further west to Leicester.

In addition to these there was a daily Mail Cart to Holbeach running from the Old Bell in Bridge Street. It was a carrier's cart operated on a daily basis by James Buffham, leaving Spalding at 9.30 am and returning the same day. In 1836 this service was operated by J. Rainey of Spilsby and could carry up to three outside passengers. Ther service did not run on

* Hawkes Papers, 5 & 6, SGS.

Sundays. In Holbeach passengers could catch the daily Union coach which passed through on its way between Norwich and Newark. This coach had started running when the Cross Keys embankment and bridge were opened in 1830 and from the beginning was extensively well supported so that there were soon complaints about the uncertainty of obtaining a place.

By 1836 the Perseverance was operated by James Hearn & Co of London who ran sixteen coaches from London.

The 1830's were the heyday of the coaching era and further improvements were made in the early 1840's but it was by then already clear that the expansion of the railways would bring an end to this age. While the first railway lines were being constructed the coach routes were adapted to take account of the opening of new stations. In 1842 the Imperial between Boston and Leicester via Spalding included the Blisworth Station near Leicester as one of its stopping places but in 1844 a new coach service, the Princess Alice, started to run between Boston and Leicester via Sleaford and Grantham. It is not clear whether this immediately replaced the Spalding service but the Imperial had ceased by 1847 at the latest. In 1842 there was a service between Boston and Spalding on Tuesdays by E. Evinson's Sociable, leaving from the Spread Eagle, Pinchbeck Road, at 4.0 pm. The Spread Eagle was demolished in 1856 and the Independant Sunday School built on the site. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays M. Storey's Omnibus travelled between the two towns, leaving the Peacock, Pinchbeck Street, at 7.0 am. Both of these must have ceased in 1848, when the railway opened, if not earlier.

By 1842 there was also a daily Sociable to Wisbech via Holbeach, Sundays excepted, leaving the Peacock in Pinchbeck Street at 11.0 am. This was in addition to the Holbeach Mail Cart, whose service had been extended to Lynn by 1842, leaving at 10.0 pm. Because of these services the Peacock inn on the Pinchbeck Road is today known as the Mail Cart and has an appropriate painted sign. A second Mail Cart had also started running, leaving Spalding at the inconvenient time of 3.30 in the morning to meet a coach at Swineshead and hand over the mail for Grantham, Birmingham, etc.

The London and Birmingham Railway reached Peterborough in 1845 and the Ely to Peterborough line of the Eastern Counties Railway, giving more direct access to the metropolis via Cambridge, was opened in 1847. By 1847 the Perseverance had ceased running altogether and the Royal Mail only ran between Louth and Peterborough Station, via Crowland instead of Deeping. In August of that year it was said that the 'Louth Railway Coach' was the only safe means of travelling to north Lincolnshire, persons travelling that way leaving Louth in the morning and arriving in London at 9.0 pm. This coach continued to run so long as there were no railways in operation in east Lincolnshire, but this ceased in 1848.

This was the end of the main stage coaches but the Mail Cart between Spalding and Lynn continued to run for another ten years until it too was replaced by a railway.

Carriers

The stage coaches transported passengers and some parcels about the country but goods, when not shipped by water, were moved by carriers. There were two types of carriers, those who travelled long distances and those who connected a market town to its surrounding villages. The latter survived until the twentieth century, except when in direct competition with a convenient railway, and were succeeded by rural bus services. They mostly only operated

on market days, Tuesday in the case of Spalding, and gathered at the smaller taverns in the town, such as the Rams Skin and the Red Lion. In 1856, for example, there were twenty carriers from an area extending out to Bourne, Donington, Long Sutton and Market Deeping. In 1892 there were twenty three covering the same area plus Sleaford.

The regular long-distance carriers were largely replaced by the railway; in 1856 it was stated that the Great Northern Railway were 'carriers to all parts' and that 'Goods Trains' left Spalding daily, using similar phrases to the old carriers notices.* Thomas Hawkes did not list any carriers about 1800 but Gooch states that in 1814 the rate for goods carried by land from London to Spalding was 6s per cwt, parcels under 20lb 1s. Parcels under 12lb could be sent between London and Spalding by 'coach, fly or post machine' for 1s. Between Boston and Spalding the rate was 1s 6d per cwt or 2½d per stone of 12lb.

In 1826 there were three carriers listed as offering a regular service to London in addition to eighteen offering local market day services. Mrs Rowell sent a Waggon every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and Charles Pinder sent Waggons there every Wednesday and Saturday and to Louth every Wednesday and Sunday evening. In 1830 Mrs Rowell had apparently ceased but there was still a Waggon every Wednesday and Saturday from the King's Arms.

The third main carrier were J Hearn & Co, operators of the Perseverance coach, who sent a Van from the Cross Keys and the White Hart to London every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday on alternate weeks.

By 1842 there were only two carriers to London, Parker & Co who sent fly and heavy waggons between London and Boston every day, and William Ward who went to London from the New Bell Inn, High Bridge, every Thursday and Saturday.

Bridges

Since the main streets of Spalding were on both banks of the Welland and the Westlode the bridges were more important to its internal communications than in many other towns. Most of the bridges were shown on the 1732 plan opposite page 2.

The High Bridge was the main one, crossing the Welland to connect the Market Place and the church. When the Adventurers reclaimed land in Deeping Fen they carried out various works on the Welland, as one of the main dangers to the fen would come from the overflow of that river, and these included the reconstruction of the High Bridge in 1634 (see page 14). They remained responsible for the bridge until the early years of the twentieth century when the Holland County Council took it over. The cover of this booklet shows the bridge in 1822. It was then a timber bridge but in 1838 the Adventurers replaced it with the present stone structure. The new bridge is no longer adequate for modern traffic and it will probably be rebuilt or replaced within the next few years.

A little higher up the river was a wooden footbridge known during the eighteenth century as Dr Dinham's Bridge. It existed before 1732 and crossed the river from Dr Dinham's house in London Road to the end of Love Lane (TF 247222).

* White's 1856 Lincolnshire Directory, 858.

In 1837 this wooden bridge was replaced at a cost of about £300 raised by subscription, by 'a fine showy and commodious suspension Bridge of cast-iron', cast by Tuxford and Sons of Boston.* It collapsed about 8.0 pm on Sunday 26 January (probably in 1844) with a tremendous crash. The night was windy with a high tide and an unusual number of boats on the river and it was believed that the bridge had been brought down by vessels running against it and breaking the stays. The new bridge was erected in 1844 and called the Victoria Bridge. It was apparently wooden but it was replaced in 1868 by the present iron structure.

At the lower end of the town was the white Chain Bridge, illustrated in Figs 12b and 15a (TF 252230). This was also a wooden footbridge but as the illustrations show it was a double draw bridge whose centre portion could be raised to allow vessels through into the port. This was also in existence by 1732 and was replaced by a wooden swing bridge romantically or patriotically named Albert Bridge in 1844. This bridge has now gone and there is a modern single-span concrete bridge in its place.

These were the three original bridges over the Welland but until about 1800 there were also several over the Westlode. This was originally one of the main drains for Deeping Fen, passing under the Welland at the north end of Spalding to join a drain which then flowed northwards for about six miles to enter the Welland at Wragg Marsh.

The main bridge over the Westlode was a wagon bridge in the middle of what is now New Road, almost opposite the end of Red Lion Street (TF 246228). This was used by main road traffic between Boston and Spalding. The other main bridge was almost at the east end of the drain near the Welland and it connected Double Street with Albion Street (TF 251229). It was a stone bridge, perhaps the first such in the town. At the western end of Spalding was Codlin's Bridge opposite the end of St. Thomas's Road (TF 242226). In addition to these road bridges there were two or three footbridge, one linking the old prison (now the Methodist Chapel in Gore Lane) to the Sheep Market, one between the White Swan and Hall Place, and one opposite the end of Pinchbeck Street.

The South Holland Drainage Act of 1794 prohibited the Deeping Fen Adventurers using the Lords Drain and the Westlode became useless and was abandoned. By 1824 all the bridges had been removed and a great part of it had been filled up and possessed by the frontagers, except between the end of Pinchbeck Street and the Welland where it was used as a common sewer for that part of the town. Silt was brought from the Welland to cover the eastern part of the Westlode at 1s per load and the remainder of the drain was filled in by the owners of adjoining property.

The tunnel under the Welland was closed shortly before 1802 and by 1813 the end of the Westlode between Double Street and the Welland had been filled in over a tunnel. In July 1813 this piece of new land was sold by the Adventurers.

In the nineteenth century two railway bridges were built over the Welland, the Norwich and Spalding Companys bridge on the Holbeach line in 1858 and the Great Northern Companys bridge on the March line in 1867. The Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway replaced the N & S bridge with a new one in the 1890's, the new bridge including a footbridge at the request of the Spalding

* Harmstone, 33.

Improvement Commissioners. The old bridge was re-erected at Little London (TF 242212) to form a road bridge across the Welland, being ceremonially opened by the Urban District Council in 1895. The railway to Holbeach was closed in 1965 but the bridge remained until November 1972, when a new footbridge had been erected by British Railways.

CHAPTER VI

S P A L D I N G A N D T H E R A I L W A Y S

Until the mid-1840's there were no railways in Lincolnshire but then came the second railway mania and the county was the subject of dozens of competing schemes. 1846 saw the opening of the first stations in Lincoln and Stamford and the passing of several Acts of Parliament for railways which would penetrate right into the county and connect all the main towns.

Great Northern Railway

One of these schemes was for the Great Northern Railway which would pass through Spalding and connect the town with Peterborough, Boston and Lincoln. The GNR's main line went along the western edge of the county, but the 'Lincolnshire Loop' went up the middle. Another railway which would have connected Spalding and Boston with Nottingham was authorised in 1846 but was not built east of Grantham.

The GNR started construction of their Lincolnshire Loop Line before their main 'Towns Line'. This would link Yorkshire to Peterborough from where there were two routes to the capital. Work started in the spring of 1847 all along the line but in the early months most activity was concentrated towards the northern end of the Loop, moving southwards from Lincoln. Later work also started at the southern end moving northwards from the Werrington Junction.

During the summer large quantities of material, particularly timber for sleepers and bridges, was shipped into Spalding. Most was landed in the port but some was forwarded to Deeping since the railway was to cross the river near Peakirk. The Midland Railway had opened a line between Peterborough and Stamford in 1846, part of the Syston and Peterborough Railway, and the Loop Line was to connect with this at Werrington about four miles north of Peterborough. At Peakirk the railway crossed the river gravels of the Welland valley and these were used as ballast on the railway.

In the latter half of 1847 work in the Spalding area started with construction of the bridge over the South Drove Drain (TF 228197). It was expected that this would be finished before the end of the year but this was not to be. All the bridges on the GNR except the Grand Sluice Bridge in Boston and the Vernatts Bridge near Spalding were built of timber in an effort to save costs but it was only a short-term economy. The South Drove Bridge required more materials and labour than had been expected and was not completed until April 1848.

The engineer in charge of the construction of the GNR was Joseph Cubitt and he shared the work with three Sub-Engineers, including Mr Brydone who was based in Spalding. The Contractors were Peto and Betts but they also delegated and many of the bridges, aqueducts and tunnels in this area were built by John Moore of Spalding.

The bridge over the Vernatts Drain was commenced in the middle of February 1848. It consisted of cast iron girders on timber piers and also presented problems in its construction.

In December 1847 the site to the north of Winsover Road where the station was to be built had been cleared and prepared for the laying of the line. At the same period railway iron was being imported but no lines could be laid until the gravel trains could cross the South Drove Drain, which was about two miles south of the town.

In the early months of 1848 work on the line continued south of Spalding and the gravel trains increased in frequency and size. In March the gravel train ran five or six times a day pulling upwards of forty waggons, each carrying three tons or more, and in April it was reported that more than two hundred ballast waggons were daily employed on the Loop Line south of Spalding.

For almost the whole of its length south of Lincoln the line was to be built across the fens but at Peakirk it crossed the Welland on the edge of the higher land and there was gravel and clay for brick making. The ballast came from gravel pits north of Peakirk, a large pit being dug on the west side of the line in Deeping St James parish due north of the Welland. A brickworks was established on the site in 1848, under the charge of John Moore, to produce about two million bricks for the GNR. About one hundred men, including delvers and brickmakers, were employed at the gravel pits and brickworks and a temporary settlement was created. 'Several neat little, cottages, brick and slated, have been erected for labourers, and there are numerous offices, such as blacksmiths' and carpenters' shops, engine-house, stables, sheds, &c., giving the place more the appearance of a village, than of a fen which a few years ago was inundated and not habitable.'* Although I cannot identify any buildings the site of these workings is perhaps indicated by the very large waterfilled pits, one almost a mile long, between Deeping St James Station and the bank of the Welland (TF 180080); this was the south-western corner of the old Deeping Common. Ordnance Survey maps indicate that the pit to the west of the railway was in use first and was abandoned while the eastern pit was still in use in the twentieth century.

The spring of 1848 saw a great increase of railway activity in all aspects. Thousands of tons of materials of every description were landed on a plot of land contiguous to the works, within a mile of Spalding. This included about 1200 tons of rails, 800 tons of chairs and 30,000 sleepers. The stability of the South Drove Bridge was tested on the morning of April 14 1848 and from that date the ballast trains could move rapidly northward towards Boston. In the preceding weeks labourers had been levelling banks and removing obstructions through Spalding, though not many houses had to be demolished as the line crossed fields north-east of the old town, going diagonally across Winsover Road and Pinchbeck Road. There were then five hundred men and thirty horses working on the railway in the area.

Work on the railway continued during the summer and in June 1848 the

* Stamford Mercury, 21 April 1848.

station buildings were commenced. These buildings on the GNR were all designed by John Taylor of Parliament-street, London, and have a family likeness. The original appearance of the Spalding buildings is indicated in Fig.14a which shows them to be similar to the buildings which still survive at Peakirk station. The main block was on the up platform, dominated by a tower above the station masters residence. This block still survives although it is obscured on three sides by later developments. The 1848 picture also shows the goods shed on its present position to the right of the tower and a small building on the down platform.

The roof was put on the main station building in September 1848, at which time the walls of the goods shed were almost complete. The water tower was twenty feet tall and topped with an iron tank capable of holding fifty tons or more. The coal yard lay between the station and the road and had a depot 212 feet by 36 feet, divided into eight compartments.

The GNR's Loop Line was opened between Peterborough and Lincoln on 17 October 1848 and had access to Hull via the East Lincolnshire Railway and part of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway which had been opened earlier in the year. On the opening day seven trains ran from London to Peterborough, three on the Eastern Counties and four on the London and North Western, to connect with the first Great Northern trains to Hull.

One of the results of the opening of the Loop Line was a loss of trade by the port of Spalding. The coasting trade in particular was gradually taken over by the railway although some vessels continued to use the port until 1939. The effect was indicated by the fall in the dues collected by the Drainage Works Trustees from vessels navigating the Welland. These fell from £6,000 in 1846 to less than £1,000 in 1865.

The construction of the Loop Line was part of a great scheme of national significance, the provision of an east coast route between London and the north, but the next twenty years saw the opening of three branch lines radiating from the town. These were only of local significance when constructed but they all later became parts of long-distance lines in joint ownership.

In the mania of 1846 many projects for railways to or through Spalding were unsuccessful but within fifty years the objectives of several of them had been achieved by a gradual process of extension.

The unsuccessful projects included a Grand Junction Railway between Nottingham and Kings Lynn, via Spalding, to connect the railways of the Midlands and East Anglia. This railway would cross the Welland at the Chain Bridge. Linked to this scheme was a proposed Spalding and Brandon Junction Railway, which would leave the Grand Junction Railway at the Chain Bridge and proceed eastwards to join the Eastern Counties Railway line at Brandon in Norfolk. The Grand Junction scheme was abandoned in favour of an Ambergate, Nottingham, Boston and Eastern Counties Junction Railway which would run between Spalding and Ambergate in Derbyshire with branches to Boston and Nottingham. Separate companies proposed branches to link the Ambergate with the main railways south of it. One of these was the Peterborough, Spalding and Boston Junction Railway which would run from Peterborough to join the Ambergate in Spalding. The other was the Leicester, Melton Mowbray and Boston Direct Union Railway which would leave the Midland Railway Companys Syston and Peterborough line at Saxby in Leicestershire and join the Ambergate in Folkingham, near the

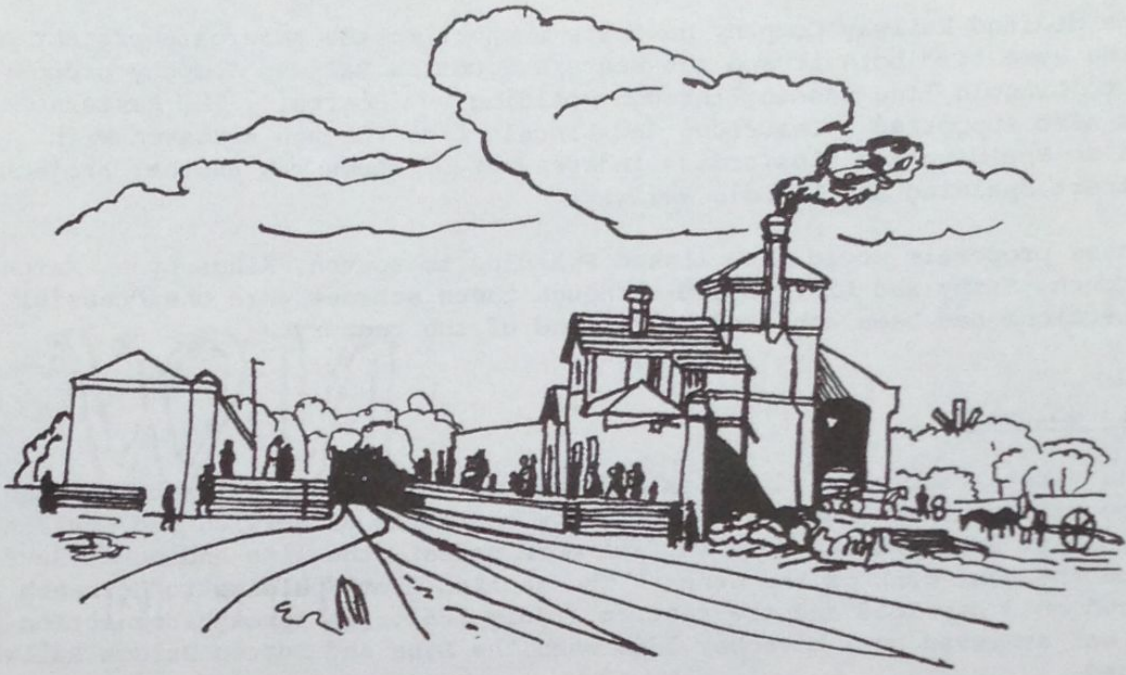


Fig.14a Spalding Station in 1848

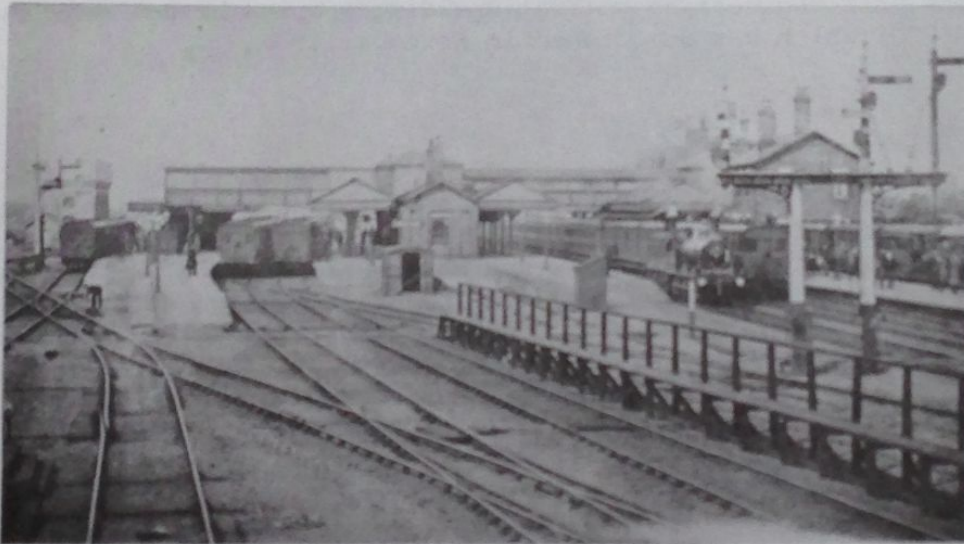


Fig.14b Spalding Station in 1900. The original buildings are on the right, behind the footbridge. SGS

junction with the Boston branch.

The Midland Railway Company gave its support to the Ambergate project and at the same time both it and the Eastern Counties Railway Company proposed a March to Lincoln line passing through Spalding and Boston. The Eastern Counties also supported a Cambridge and Lincoln line through Kesteven with branches to Spalding and Sleaford. Independent of these was another project for a direct Spalding and Lincoln Railway.

These proposals would have linked Spalding to Boston, Kings Lynn, March, Peterborough, Saxby and Lincoln and although these schemes were unsuccessful the connections had been achieved by the end of the century.

Branch to Holbeach

The first branch line from Spalding was the one going eastwards through the Elloe villages, its purpose indicated by the title of Norwich and Spalding Railway. Its achievements were in fact more modest, the line ending at Sutton Bridge on the west bank of the Nene. The section from Spalding to Holbeach was opened on 3 May 1858 and the rest on 1 July 1862. A through connection to Norfolk was achieved on 1 November 1864 when the Lynn and Sutton Bridge Railway was opened.

The project had been mooted in 1852 and had enjoyed extensive local support. The Act of Parliament was obtained in 1853 but construction took some time. All eight villages between Spalding and Sutton Bridge had the benefit of a station on the fifteen-mile line. In Spalding the line crossed the Welland, curved northwards to join the Loop Line south of the Bourne Road level crossing and then ran into the GNR station. It was single-track and was worked by the GNR from the beginning. The main engineering work at Spalding was the bridge over the Welland (TF 246220) which was demolished in November 1972.

Branch to Bourne

The second branch to be opened was the short line to Bourne, nine miles to the west. In October 1853 Francis Thomas Selby, a local solicitor, had proposed a Spalding, Bourne and Stamford Railway and Waterworks Company. This would not only provide a railway between Spalding and the GNR's station at Essendine but would also provide Spalding with water from the River Glen at Tongue End (TF 153187). The water supply would be carried in a pipe alongside the track. Essendine was north of Stamford and a short connecting railway branch was authorised in November 1853 and opened in 1856. The railway and water project was favoured in Spalding but there was not sufficient support to carry it through Parliament. In view of the delay a separate project for a water company was taken to Parliament in 1859 and an Act obtained in 1860. This would draw its supply from a spring on the west side of Bourne and carry it through pipes which for most of their length ran underneath the Spalding-Bourne turnpike road.

This was the end of the dual project but the success of the water bill stimulated the railway supporters and the Spalding and Bourne Railway Act received the Royal Assent on 29 July 1862. This railway did not need to build west of Bourne as a separate Bourne and Essendine Railway had been opened in 1860. Construction work on the line started in April 1864 and proceeded slowly. The line was opened in August 1866, by which time it was part of the Midland and Eastern Railway.

This branch did not pass near any settlements yet it was provided with

three intermediate stations to catch the agricultural traffic. As three of the four parishes through which the line passed already had stations it was necessary to name the stations on this line after other geographical features. South Drove Station in Pinchbeck and Counter Drain Station in Deeping St. Nicholas were named after the drains on whose banks they were sited, but Twenty Station was named after a milestone in Bourne Fen.

In Spalding this railway left the Loop Line about half a mile south of the Bourne Road level crossing and then went in a straight line due west to Bourne where it made a sharp double curve round the small town to join end-on to the Bourne and Essendine Railway. These two, like the Stamford and Essendine branch, were both single track.

Midland and Eastern

With the passing of the Spalding and Bourne Act the prospect began to emerge of a group of independent companies owning a cross country route between Kings Lynn and Bourne (see Fig.13). Both the line from Holbeach and the line from Bourne entered Spalding from the south and the original plan of the Spalding and Bourne Railway had included a bypass line so that trains could run between Bourne and Holbeach without entering Spalding station. This proposal was not passed by Parliament and it was thirty years before the avoiding line was built.

Early in 1866 the Lynn and Sutton Bridge Railway proposed to amalgamate with the Spalding and Bourne Railway under the title of the Midland and Eastern Railway and to leave the 'Norwich and Spalding' line and construct a westward extension from Bourne to the Midland Railway at Saxby. The Midland Railway supported the scheme but the Great Northern Railway opposed it and the result was a compromise.

The Midland and Eastern Railway came into existence on 23 July 1866 but did not build its western extension, instead being granted running powers over the lines between Bourne and Stamford via Essendine. The Bourne and Essendine had been purchased by the GNR in 1864 and the Stamford and Essendine was acquired by that company in 1872. The Midland and Eastern was to be worked jointly by the Great Northern and Midland companies and also had running powers over the Peterborough, Wisbech and Sutton Railway which was opened on 1 August 1866 and worked by the Midland Railway. Trains on the M & E through Spalding still had to enter the station and reverse out onto the other branch.

GNR Branch to March and the GN & GE Joint Line

The form of the Midland and Eastern was the result of rivalry between two of the principal railway companies and the next branch from Spalding was the result of similar rivalry between the GNR and the Great Eastern Railway which wanted access to the coalfields of the north.

By an Act of 1863 the GNR was authorised to build an extension south-east from Spalding to join the Great Eastern line at March. This line took some time to construct as the GNR was more concerned in impeding the Great Eastern's northward development than in actually building the line. The GNR had decided to provide the line itself in order to prevent the Great Eastern doing so without GNR control.

This railway needed a bridge over the Welland (TF 243216) but this had to be double track, unlike the Holbeach branch which was single track. The line

joined the Loop Line south of the Bourne Road level crossing and made this junction extremely complicated, trains going in four directions as they left the station.

In 1865 the Great Eastern, in a fit of enthusiasm, had suggested the creation of a shorter route north by the construction of a direct line from Spalding to Lincoln but in February 1866 a reassessment of the companies financial position put an end to that suggestion. They also abandoned the idea of joint ownership of the line north from March.

The GNR's nineteen mile line between Spalding and March was opened on 1 April 1867 and to make the most profitable use of this new route to the north it was desirable for the Great Northern and Great Eastern to reach some sort of arrangement. Even without such an agreement there was a great increase in traffic at Spalding and the station was improved and enlarged.

After several unsuccessful attempts agreement was finally reached in 1878 for a joint GN & GE line from Huntingdon to a point south of Doncaster, the middle section to be a new line constructed between Spalding and Lincoln. At several points the Joint Line had to use lines which stayed under the control of the GNR or the GER separately. Thus the line through Spalding station remained in GNR control and was not part of the Joint Committee's responsibilities.

The new line was authorised by Parliament later in 1878 and the first section of the line, twenty four miles from Spalding to Ruskington, was opened on 6 March 1882. The remaining nineteen miles to Pywipe Junction near Lincoln were opened on 1 August 1882 and from that date the new line, plus 51 miles of the GNR and 23 miles of the GER, came under the control of the new Joint Committee. Spalding was then on a main line between London and the north and saw a great increase in traffic.

M & GN Joint Line

On 1 July 1882 the Midland and Eastern, which ran between Bourne and Lynn, amalgamated with the Peterborough, Wisbech and Sutton and three lines in Norfolk, which were the only remaining independent lines in the eastern counties, to form the Eastern and Midland Railway. East of Kings Lynn this new company operated its own services but the line between Peterborough and Sutton Bridge was operated by the Midland Railway and the line through Spalding was jointly worked by the Midland and the Great Northern.

The Midland Railway found it difficult to use this line and transferred traffic to the Great Eastern in Peterborough as an alternative. To try and obtain the Midland Railway's traffic into East Anglia the Eastern and Midlands revived the 1866 project for a westward extension from Bourne to Saxby. This was authorised in 1888 and in 1889 the Midland and the Great Northern jointly acquired the western section of the E & M, including the Bourne and Lynn line through Spalding. In the following years some sections were widened to double track and other improvements made.

The 1889 Act authorised the construction of a bypass line at Spalding so that through trains would no longer need to go into the station. This was to be a high level line on an embankment crossing Hawthorn Bank and St. Thomas's Road as well as the Loop Line and the GN & GE Joint Line. As the M & GN was being widened to double track at Spalding a new bridge was necessary and under pressure from the Spalding Improvement Commissioners the old bridge was reerected in 1895 as a road bridge near Little London. The Improvement Commissioners also succeeded in persuading the M & GN to incorporate a footbridge in the new rail bridge.

By 1900 the railways of Spalding had reached their maximum extent and there were few major changes in the first half of the twentieth century apart from the changes of ownership in 1926 and 1948. By 1900 several extra platforms had been constructed to serve the new lines, and Fig.14b shows five trains in the station at one time.

Since then the main developments have been negative with lines closing, buildings being demolished and staff reduced. The M & GN line was closed for passenger traffic on 28 February 1959 though the section between Spalding and Sutton Bridge remained open for goods traffic until 2 April 1965. The M & GN yard south of Bourne Road, including a Goods Shed, an Engine Shed and sidings, has also been cleared. The bridges on the avoiding line were removed in the mid-1960's but the embankment itself is only being slowly removed. The bridge over the Welland was taken down in November 1972.

The Loop Line between Boston and Peterborough was closed on 5 October 1970 but the Holland County Council, Spalding UDC, Spalding and East Elloe RDC's negotiated with British Railways for the retention of a small scale service between Spalding and Peterborough. The negotiations were still incomplete when the line closed but in 1971 the local authorities agreed to subsidise the service and it was reopened with two trains a day each way. They are diesel motor units, one in the morning and one in the afternoon; there are no intermediate stations. The future of this line is dependent on the continuing support of the local authorities.

Although the GN and GE Joint Line remains open at present the service on that is no better than on the Peterborough line. It is at present dependent on the cross-country boat train between Harwich and Manchester, which stops at March, Spalding and Sleaford twice a day each way. British Rail have recently announced that they propose to re-route the boat train between Sheffield and Ely to a new route via Nottingham, Grantham and Peterborough as from 7 May 1973. At the same time a through service will be introduced between Doncaster and Cambridge calling at Sleaford, Spalding and March amongst other places.

This reduction of services had been accompanied by the demolition of buildings at the station, including all the buildings on the island platforms. At the present time the buildings on the main platform still remain, including the original 1848 building with subsequent additions around them.

CHAPTER VII

O T H E R I N D U S T R I E S

Breweries

Before the availability of a supply of wholesome water and the greater availability of tea and coffee the main drink for most people was beer. Much was home brewed and practically all public houses brewed their own. Even in the late nineteenth century there were at least thirty six public houses in Spalding brewing their own beer. The tendency was for most of the business to pass into the hands of three or four main brewers in each town and then, in the twentieth century, to one brewer in a town and then to regional breweries.

In 1792 Thomas Hawkes listed three breweries, one of whom was also a limeburner and brickmaker, but not much is known about any of these. The main one was Glasspoole and Co who are called Common Brewers but unfortunately their address is not given. In 1826 there were four 'brewers and maltsters' listed and it is known when two of these were founded. If one of the others had taken over Glasspoole's then the original brewery would have been either in Broad Street or on the site of the Victoria Brewery on the corner of Cowbit Road and Love Lane. In 1826 the brewery in Broad Street was occupied by Mills and Holeywell but in 1830 it was occupied by Henry Dean and by 1842 John Penford Harvey had it, Edward Holeywell then occupying other premises in High Street. J P Harvey was also a corn and coal merchant and corn miller in Broad Street but by 1846 he had built the South Holland Mills. Both the Broad Street and High Street breweries had closed by 1856.

The principal brewery in Spalding was Buggs in Cowbit Road (TF 247221), now occupied by Watney Mann (Midlands) Ltd as a depot. This was built in 1809 by Henry Bugg and was situated in Cowbit Road near the junction with Love Lane. Henry was later joined by his son Henry the Younger and they quietly prospered, living in a fine house in front of the brewery.

Henry Bugg had his own boat for importing wines and spirits and he set up the private bank of Bugg & Co, the only such bank to have its head office in Spalding. He closed it in 1831 and the following year the two partners became shareholders in the Stamford, Spalding and Boston Banking Co Ltd formed in that year. In 1842 the manager of the bank's Spalding branch was George Bugg. Country banks needed to be related to London banks and the S S and B drew on Barclay & Co who took them over about the turn of the century.

Henry Bugg the Younger took the brewery over from his father before 1846 and carried out several alterations and improvements. He himself had retired

by 1872 and his son Joseph H Bugg was in charge of the brewery. Henry died in May 1876 and seven months later Joseph changed his surname to Burg. Joseph ran the brewery for several more years but by 1892 he had retired and the business had passed to Soames & Co who were a limited company by 1919. The premises are now owned by Watney Mann who use the fine house as offices and the rest of the brewery as a depot. Most of the old buildings have gone.

The Albion Brewery of John Richard Carter was the other main brewery in the town although it was only in existence for twenty years. It was built in 1824 and is illustrated in Fig.15a. It was in two halves separated by a cutty connecting Westlode Street to the bank of the Welland. Part of the area south of the passage was erected over the infilled Westlode. This part of the Westlode was leased in July 1813 by Cawood Robinson, who occupied the cottage and yard south of it in Double Street, from the Adventurers for sixty years. By 1818 'a large shed or building fit for the use of a Timber Merchant or Carpenter'* had been erected on part of the site and this and property to the south and north, on both sides of the cutty, was purchased by Carter in 1824. The brewery was quickly erected and Fig.15a indicates its appearance in 1827. Carter was an attorney and in 1842 he was also a vessel owner. The brewery was built on a large scale, bigger than Buggs, but it evidently did not give Carter the return he wanted and after twenty years he gave up the brewery and sold it to the Buggs on 6 April 1846.

In 1826 the fourth brewery in Spalding was James Robinson of Cowbit Road and he was still listed in 1842. By 1856 Robinson had gone but Wensor and Eldred had established the Victoria Brewery in Cowbit Road - perhaps they had taken over Robinson's? The Victoria Brewery was located at the corner of Cowbit Road and Love Lane (TF 248222), a few yards north of Buggs Brewery. It stayed in operation until after 1882 but changed hands several times, being operated by Benjamin Bowser in 1872 and Mrs Susan Hawkins in 1882.

Another brewery was established in the second half of the century. In 1856 Edward Thompson was listed in Bourne Road on the western edge of the town. In 1872 and 1882 James Shepherd was listed at 21 Winsover Road, perhaps in the same premises.

Mineral Water Factory

After the Buggs had taken over the Albion Brewery it was used by merchants and at one time was a guano store. It later became a chicory factory managed by Joe Laming and was purchased by Messrs Lee & Green in 1890 for £350. George Ranyard Lee was landlord of the White Hart Hotel, Sleaford, as well as producing mineral waters and the Bourne Royal Seltzer and dealing in wholesale cigars. Arthur Green was the Spalding partner, living at 10a Albion Street, and they had premises in Bourne as well as Spalding and Carre Street, Sleaford. They were only in operation for a few years before being taken over by Soames & Co after 1919. In 1934 the Spalding Urban District Council purchased the building south of the cutty and altered it to form the central fire station which is still in use today.

In 1882 James Barnes was manufacturing aerated water in premises in Westlode Street but little more is known about him.

* 'Particulars of Sale' dated 1818 amongst the deeds of the property, now held by the Holland County Council.

Cheavins Filters

By the time the mineral water factory was opened Spalding had a piped supply of pure water from Bourne but before 1860 the breweries were dependant on water that was locally available. Both Carters and Buggs breweries were on the banks of the Welland, though Carters had a twenty foot deep well of its own.

In the 1840's Squier Cheavin of Donington developed a new type of filter to purify impure river water and by 1849 this was in use in Buggs brewery. The filter was so successful that by 1853 he had moved to Spalding and established a partnership in the Market Place to manufacture his 'Belt Water Clarifyer'. Squier was a plumber and glazier by trade and he carried on that business from premises in Bourne Road. His partner was apparently William Skeeth (Skeef or Skeath), a tinman and brazier who later had premises in Red Lion Street.

Squier made further alterations to the filter but these were not apparently so successful. In 1861 the filter works was in London Road but he soon moved to Boston and died later in 1862. The opening of the waterworks perhaps had an adverse effect on his business. His young son George made several improvements to the filter and later built up a successful business in Boston before moving to London.

A fuller account of Cheavins filters was published in 'Lincolnshire Industrial Archaeology', Vol.6, No.1 of 1971.

Newspapers

The first printer in Spalding was John Albin, who started in business about 1775. In 1800 he started publishing a periodical called the Provincial Literary Repository but this only lasted a few years. The first weekly newspaper printed in Spalding was the Lincolnshire Free Press published by Henry Watkinson, who also did the reporting, wrote it up, set the type and minded the shop. The first number appeared on Tuesday 5 October 1847 under the name of Spalding Free Press and Eastern Counties Advertiser, and the paper was run by Watkinson for most of the century. The Spalding Guardian was formed at a later date and both papers are now owned by the Eastern Counties Allied Press and published from the same local office, the Free Press on Tuesdays and the Guardian on Fridays.

Ironworks

Spalding had no large engineering works but it did have enough demand to support a few iron works producing mainly agricultural machinery.

The first references to 'Iron and Brass Founders' in Spalding are in the 1842 Directory when Richard A. Goodwin was listed as an engineer and millwright at Holbeach Road and Seth Grassam was a machine maker in Pinchbeck Street. Three or four years later the Crescent and a few other new lanes were laid down east of the Sheep Market and an iron foundry was established in what is now Foundry Lane. In 1856 Seth Grassam's address was given as 'Sheep Market', probably referring to these new premises at 8 Foundry Lane which in 1872 were occupied by William Henry Grassam.

By 1856 the Winsover Iron Works had been established by William Garner at Winsover on the Bourne Road. This was the principal foundry in Spalding in

the latter half of the century but passed through various hands. In 1872 it was occupied by Charles Dickinson Jennings who had been in New Road in 1856, and in 1882 and 1892 Edward Smith and George Limmer were in partnership as cart and wagon builders and general wheelwrights at the 'Wagon Works' at 158 Winsover Road. They apparently closed about the turn of the century.

Since 1900 the only ironfoundry in Spalding has been Stanton's, although it is now closed. It was established before 1908 when it provided the pipes for the Urban District Council's new water main to Bourne. It was operated by Charles Stanton and occupied 21 Winsover Road, which had previously been Shepherd's Brewery.

Department Stores

In the later years of the nineteenth century Spalding's position as a market centre for south Lincolnshire was marked by the development of modern department stores, which grew out of drapers businesses. There were two principal firms, Pennington's in Hall Place and Cash and Plowman in Bridge Street. In 1902 Cash and Plowman became Berrill and Enderby, Mr and Mrs Berrill having previously worked for leading firms in Lincoln.

This firm was later known as Berrills and continued trading as such even after it was taken over by Mawer and Collingham of Lincoln in 1935. With increasing mobility and changes in shopping habits the firm became no longer profitable and parts of its premises were closed in 1969, the rest following in January 1971. Their premises are still empty and some at least will be demolished in due course.

The other concern was founded by Charles Maltby Pennington at 12 Hall Place before 1882. He was then a draper, silk mercer, milliner, hearse proprietor and funeral furnisher. By 1892 his son had entered the business and they had acquired their whole site, 10-13 Hall Place. This business was later added to the Keightley group of Boston and a new building erected on the site. It continued to trade under its own name until 1969. It was then closed down, the Keightley group as a whole having been sold. This building is now in business as a supermarket.

Other businesses in the town included Beales's cycle works and shop in New Road, which was destroyed by fire on 11 July 1900 but later rebuilt. He later became one of the first electrical dealers in Spalding.

George Bailey had established a mushroom ketchup factory in Clay Lake by 1882. It was still in operation in 1892 but had closed down before 1919.

Spalding had one of the first cinemas in Lincolnshire, the Picture Theatre being established before December 1912. It had premises in the Sheep Market and had opened the Savoy in Westlode Street by 1937 when the managing director was G. Aspland Howden. But in 1938 competition arrived with the erection of the Odeon in London Road, on the site of Haverfield House. The Odeon is now part of the Classic group but the Sheep Market premises have gone completely and the Savoy is a bingo club.

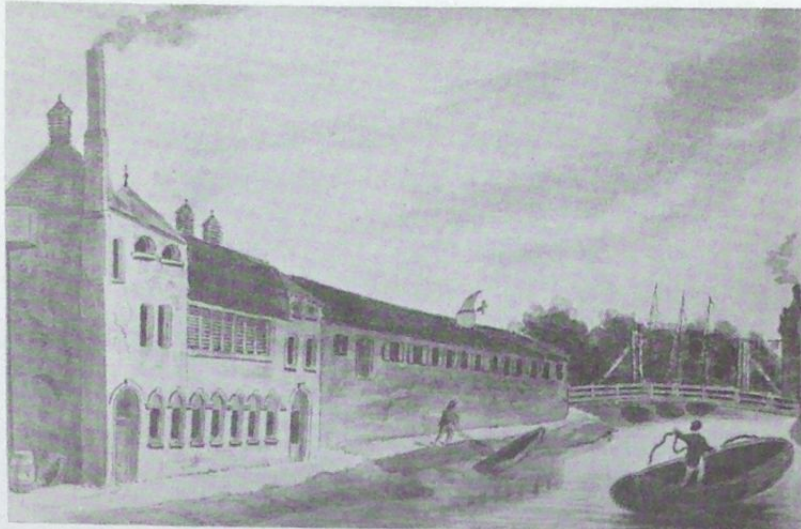


Fig.15a Albion Brewery and Chain Bridge, 1827. The building on the left is now part of the Fire Station and the one in the centre is part of a garage. A short cutty runs between the two. From the river side only the roofs and the top floor of the near building have changed substantially in 1973. Hilkieah Burgess



Fig.15b Spalding Market Place, with Town Hall in distance. The characters include George Naylor, Town Crier, Arthur Pratt on horseback, Samuel Marr with his gravel barrow and Richard Everard speaking to a lady; he was a draper and feather merchant. Drawn and engraved by Hilkieah Burgess and published by him 1st January, 1822.

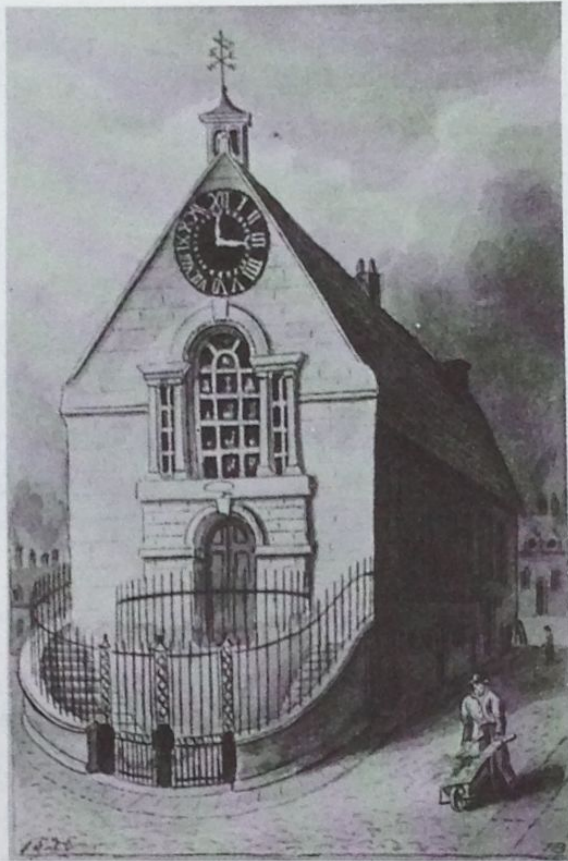


Fig.16a Town Hall, Spalding. It stood in the centre of Hall Place until demolished in 1854.

Hilkiah Burgess



Fig.16b Spalding Gas Works, about 1900. The large Retort House on the right was erected in 1898. The three-bay section at the left-hand side was demolished for a later extension in the 1920's. Also notice William Hames' ropewalk along the river-side.

SGS

CHAPTER VIII

PUBLIC SERVICES

Before the suppression of the monasteries by Henry VIII the Priors of Spalding had also been lords of the Manor of 'Spalding with its members', and as a religious house had succoured the poor. After the King acquired the lordship it passed through several hands. The lord of the manor remained important in the town until the nineteenth century, sharing local government with the parish vestry, the county magistrates and an increasing number of ad-hoc bodies. Spalding did not seek to obtain a Corporation with the status of a borough.

One of the first ad-hoc bodies, and one of the few still surviving, were the Town Husbands. They were in existence by 1591 to administer various charitable donations left for the benefit of the poor. The parish was also given responsibility for paupers as well as for highways and a parish work-house was erected on the north bank of the Westlode, opposite the end of St. Thomas's Road.

The Town Hall

The main public building in Spalding was the Town Hall, a new one (shown opposite) being erected in 1623 at the north end of the Market Place. The main rooms were on the first floor, a courtroom and record room, with shops or spaces underneath which were let for rents which supported the minister and poor of the parish. The court room was used for quarter sessions, courts leet and baron, and courts of request and sewers. It was also used for theatrical performances until 1745, when it was renovated and the erection of proscenium arches and other temporary theatrical alterations in the courtroom were banned. A building on the site of the Club in Broad Street was later used as a theatre for about a century, being part of Thomas Shafto Robertson's Lincoln Theatre Royal circuit about 1800.

The 1745 alterations to the Town Hall included the venetian window shown, sash side windows and new benches and panneling inside. About 1790 a new wing was added at the north end, with a card-assembly room on the first floor and rooms underneath for storing the fire-engine, wooden pens for the markets, and other purposes. One of the ground floor spaces was later used as an overnight lock-up.

Spalding's importance as a county centre of Holland (an honour jealously shared with Boston) was enhanced in the nineteenth century by the erection of three important public buildings. Spalding House of Correction was erected

1823-5 on the south side of the Sheep Market at a cost of about £15,000 (demolished about 1885, the site is now covered by Victoria Street), the Workhouse for the Spalding Union of nine parishes was erected in Pinchbeck Road, the foundation stone being laid on 9 May 1836 (it was demolished in 1972) and the Sessions House was built next to the House of Correction in 1842 at a cost of £8,000.

Spalding Improvement Commissioners*

At the same period the government was concerned about public health and in response to a local petition Spalding was visited by a government inspector in 1851. He surveyed living conditions and sanitary arrangements in the town and found an unsatisfactory state, seeing 'more squalor and misery, which could scarcely be surpassed in the crowded lanes and allies of the Metropolis itself'.** He considered that Spalding's main needs were a supply of cheap, good and abundant water and a general and efficient system of sewers and house drainage.

In response to this report local people obtained the Spalding Improvement Act which received the Royal Assent on 4 August 1853. The fifteen Improvement Commissioners elected under the Act were more concerned with the town's trade than with its public health, as indicated by the full title of the Act:- 'An Act for Paving, Lighting, Watching, Draining, supplying with Water, Cleansing, Regulating, and otherwise Improving the Town and Parish of Spalding; for making a Cemetery; for erecting a Corn Exchange and Market House therein; and for other purposes.'

The Commissioners were responsible not only for public health but also the highways, police, fire and street lighting, and they had power to provide gas, water, a cemetery, a corn exchange, a sewerage system and other improvements. They gave no priority to water and sewerage and neither of these were provided by the local authority until the twentieth century. Some of the first actions of the Commissioners were to purchase a site for a cemetery on the Pinchbeck Road, which was opened on 15 November 1854, and to erect a Corn Exchange. The old Town Hall was demolished and used as rubble in the construction of the cemetery chapels and its clock was repaired and re-erected on the Corn Exchange, which was opened in March 1856 (see Fig.11b). The following year they built an arcade of shops on the site north of the Corn Exchange for the sale of butter, poultry and other produce on market days.

The Commissioners also took over the policing of the town. From 1830 there had been eight nightly watchmen employed by a committee which had levied a rate of 3d in the £. At one of their first meetings the Commissioners appointed two full-time policemen and in 1854 some stables in Red Lion Street were altered to form a 'watch-house or lock-up'*** in place of the one under the old Town Hall. On 22 May 1857 the new County Police, formed under an Act of 1856, took over responsibility for the town and the Commissioners constable was dismissed. In 1857 the present Police Station was built to the rear of the Sessions House.

In 1854 the Commissioners also took over the voluntary fire brigade, which had existed since at least 1802. After the demolition of the Town Hall

* For much of the information on the Improvement Commissioners I am indebted to a thesis by Mrs B Webster 'The Improvement of the Town of Spalding 1851-1894 with special reference to Public Health', 1968.

** Report by William Ranger, Inspector to the General Board of Health, published HMSO, 1852.

*** Gooch, 564.

the engine was stored in unsatisfactory premises in Vine Street until 1858 when the Commissioners built an engine house in Double Street at the rear of the Corn Exchange. They negotiated with the insurance companies as to the financing of the service but they decided in November 1859 to send the engines to all fires and to make no charge. Between 1882 and 1892 a new Engine House was built in Station Street.

Until 1874 the lord of the manor's market rights were leased by the Gooch family but when Mrs Gooch gave up the lease they were purchased by the Commissioners as the Market Place and Sheep Market needed attention and there was felt to be a need for a Beast Market. For £4,000 they acquired not only the lord's rights over tolls, rents and payments in the Sheep Market, Market Place and other streets but also the lords interest in the freehold of those streets, the Stall-house in Hall Place and the Pinfold in the Sheep Market. Samuel Kingston, an auctioneer, planned permanent pens to replace the temporary ones erected every week in the Sheep Market and these were erected in 1876 (see Fig.11a). They were removed after 1938 to provide car parking space. The Beast Market was held in New Street until 1938 (see Fig.11b). As motor traffic increased in the early twentieth century a scheme was mooted for the erection of a livestock market building so that the streets could be cleared. The scheme was postponed because of financial stringencies but it was revived in the mid-1930's and the Urban District Council purchased a site near the railway station. The market, including auction area and pens, was opened in 1938 and is still in operation as the Spalding Bulb and Livestock Auction.

Urban District Council

On 1 January 1895 the Improvement Commissioners were replaced by a Spalding Urban District Council. Even after the UDC took over it continued to use the powers of the Spalding Improvement Act until 1928 when it was largely repealed.

Ayscoughfee Hall and grounds were purchased from the Johnson family as Spalding's memorial to the Jubilee of 1897 and are administered by the Urban District Council who for a long time used them as offices.

The Council's first important action was the purchase of the Waterworks but their main attention was then given to the construction of a sewerage system. This took several years and was completed in 1935 at a cost of nearly £107,000, the expenditure taking 2/6d of the 5/5½d rate in that year, compared with 10½d on housing and 10½ on refuse collection. The system was constructed under great difficulties because of the presence of running silt under various parts of the district.

The UDC began its first housing project in 1913 when thirty houses were built in Queens Road, costing slightly less than £200 each. The next scheme was attempted in 1919 and in striking contrast these houses in Pennygate and Marsh Rails Road cost close on £1,000 each. Other houses were erected in the next twenty years and in 1939 there were 576, with a further hundred to be completed that year.

Gas Works

The original gas works were erected in 1832 by George Malam, the first stone being laid on 8 June by Theophilus Fairfax Johnson. Like most early gas works they were located next to a waterway and in Spalding's case they were on the riverside at the northern end of Albion Street, with a quay constructed in front of them (TF 252233). The works were opened in November, the Independant and Wesleyan Chapels being lit on the 11th for the first time.

Two years later George Malam also erected a gas works in Holbeach but he went bankrupt and the Spalding works were sold in 1841. The Holbeach works were also sold and in 1856 they were owned by Henry Ellis, a local ironfounder. The Spalding works were purchased by Ashley Maples of Spalding and W Croskill of Beverley. The latter acted as manager, and many street lamps bore the name 'Malam' or 'Croskill'. In 1850 they produced about four million cubic feet of gas which they sold at 7s 6d per thousand cubic feet. The streets were lighted under the General Lighting and Watching Act 1833 and an 8d rate was usually laid every year, which paid for ninety two public lamps at £3 per lamp, the gasworks proprietors finding everything and paying for all breakages. By 1856 they had reduced the price to 6s 3d. Two gasometers then held 22,000 cubic feet and there were about 100 public lamps paid for by the Improvement Commissioners.

In 1857 the Commissioners offered £8,500 to Maples for the works but he refused. The matter was raised again in 1862 when Maples agreed to sell for £13,700. The Commissioners took possession on 1 October although the deeds were not signed until 17 December. Croskill stayed on as manager until 1891 when he retired due 'to the weight of increasing years'. The new manager was appointed at a salary of £100 p.a. plus house, coal and gas.

Over the years there were alterations to the works and by 1892 the Commissioners were said to have spent £7,500 on improvements. The price was 5s in 1872, 4s 6d in 1882 and 3s 9d in 1892.

Gas and Electricity under the UDC

In 1895 the Urban District Council took over a successful gas works and in the following years it continued to expand. A large new retort house was erected in 1898 (see Fig.16b) and they continued laying mains well into the twentieth century. Many premises in the town had gas engines, including the Lincolnshire Free Press, the Picture Theatre and the Waterworks. In 1912 and 1913 they spent £3,450 on replacing the old Horizontal Retorts with new Vertical Retorts. During these years they were converting the street lights to the new Incandescent type at the rate of about fifty a time. They were still importing much of their coal by water, Captains J C Atkins and R A Hayes each delivering it from Keadby or Goole to the crane on the gasworks wharf for about 5s 3d per ton. Some coal was imported by rail from the 1880's but the advantage of water was that the coal was delivered straight to the door of the works. The disadvantage was that boats could only get up to Spalding when there was sufficient depth of water. In 1906 and 1914 the Gas Committee sent deputations to the Welland Trustees asking them to dredge the river.

The Urban District Council were quite satisfied with their gas works and saw no need for electricity in Spalding. To prevent any company or individual seeking to provide electricity the UDC obtained a Provisional Order from the Board of Trade in 1904. In November 1908 the Board asked the UDC what they had done under the Order and they replied that 'owing to the modern improvement effected in the Gas Lighting by the introduction of Incandescent Mantles there was no local demand for Electric power in the Town.*' The Board of Trade gave them twelve months to make proposals or have the Order revoked. In October 1909 the UDC confirmed its decision and, on the proposal of Councillor G F Birch it informed the Board 'that a canvas has been made of the principal business part of the Town to ascertain whether there wish any demand for Electric Lighting

* Spalding UDC - Minutes of Gas and Gasworks and Waterworks Committee - November 1908.

and that the response was that out of 145 enquiries 40 only were in favour; 41 were neutral and 64 adverse.*

The matter lay dormant for some time and the Council followed a policy, expressed in 1912, of not seeking to obtain Electric powers and discouraging applications by any other person or company. Street lighting was then provided at no cost to the ratepayers and the cost of gas to consumers was 2/6d per thousand cubic feet. Despite this there were some Councillors who campaigned for electricity. In 1921 the UDC appointed a Committee to consider the matter and a technical report was commissioned from a consultant engineer, A Hugh Seabrooke, but on 31 January 1923 the Council decided not to apply for an Order. Thereafter the proponents of electricity gave up the direct approach and achieved success by another route.

The Council had already decided in principle that it wished to provide a modern sewerage system for the town. This would require electrically driven plant and consequently an electric generator located at the gasworks was an essential part of the scheme, supported even by those who opposed electric-light.

The consulting engineer was C Franklyn Murphy and the scheme was approved by the Council in March 1924. In November the draft Spalding Electricity Special Order was submitted to Parliament, to authorise the Council to provide electricity in the Urban District and the surrounding Rural District. Boston and Peterborough already had electricity and the Council was pressed to take bulk supply from one of those places rather than generate their own.

The Council met deputations from the Boston Electricity Supply Company (Besco) and Peterborough Corporation and decided to obtain their supply from Peterborough, to be carried by underground cable from Eye Green to Spalding gasworks via Crowland. The Spalding Order was sealed in April 1926 and in December the Council obtained loan sanction for £26,955, the estimated cost of the main Peterborough-Spalding cable and the distribution system in the town. Besco supplied Holbeach and other places in east Elloe. Over the next few years the UDC agreed to supply Crowland, Newborough and most villages in Spalding Rural District.

Work on the laying of the main cable, the erection of transformers and the provision of a distribution system proceeded during 1927 and at the same time work started on the first stages of the sewerage scheme.

The electricity service was officially opened on 23 September 1927 and between 28 November and 8 December the General Electric Company laid on a demonstration of electrical appliances in Ayscoughfee Hall, which had been wired up for the purpose.

In Crowland the Spalding UDC not only provided current but also provided street lighting at the request of the Crowland Rural District Council at a cost of £1,715 16s 2d. Moulton Chapel was provided with electricity at a cost of £1014, tenders being accepted in 1928. At the end of 1930 the line from Spalding to Donington was opened, supplying electricity to the villages along its route. The supply was extended to Moulton in 1934 and to Deeping St Nicholas in 1939.

Spalding at first obtained its electricity from Peterborough Corporation

* Spalding UDC - Minutes of Gas and Gasworks and Waterworks Committee - 21 October 1909.

but while its line to Donington was under construction the Central Electricity Board were erecting a line between Boston and Bourne as part of their national grid. These two lines crossed at Surfleet and in 1931 the UDC decided to use the CEB supply for its area north of the gasworks and as a standby in case the Peterborough supply failed. On 30 June 1934 they ended their agreement with Peterborough and went over completely to the national grid for their supply.

The electricity service was the Cinderella while both it and gas were owned by the Council. Until April 1930 it was administered by the Gas Department and even after that date the expansion of the service was restrained in favour of the older department. Even in 1932 it could only provide power for industrial concerns and individuals who could afford it; street lighting, council houses, cooking and heating were reserved for the gasworks.

This was justified because in October 1927 the Council decided to reconstruct the gasworks at a cost of £34,274, in addition to thousands spent in 1924/5 for new offices. This sum included the extension of gas street lighting and in February 1928 it was decided that West Elloe Bridge would be lit by gas. This contrasted with the fact that the UDC was providing electric street lighting in Crowland and power to the villages in Spalding Rural District. In June 1932 the Gas Engineer stated that since 1929 he had lost about 800 established customers to electricity and had only held his ground by pushing the sale of gas cookers and appliances.

In 1934 the Electricity Department opened a Showroom in Winsover Road and the Gas Department opened one in Station Street in 1936.

One result of the competition between the departments was that gas was extended to Pinchbeck in 1932. Then in April 1938 the UDC purchased the Holbeach Gas Light and Coke Company and provided gas to Holbeach and part of Fleet, laying a main from Spalding to Holbeach and opening a showroom there.

The Electricity Act 1947 and the Gas Act 1948 nationalised these functions and the Council was no longer committed to favouring either. After nationalisation a large new gas plant was constructed but it was demolished within twenty years. Most of the old buildings still remain although gas is no longer manufactured there; the whole area is now on natural gas.

Waterworks

Spalding lies in the middle of a low-lying country near the sea and although there were 330 wells in the town in 1850 the nearest supply of pure water was in the town of Bourne, though acceptable water could be obtained from the Blue Gowt Drain or the Vernatts. In 1850 householders could buy water at ½d for 3½ gallons from the water carriers or ¼d for two buckets of water a day.

As was mentioned on page 40 the first proposal for a water supply was made in 1853 but came to nothing. The Commissioners continued to take no action themselves in this matter so a company was incorporated by an Act of Parliament in 1860, with a capital of £13,000, to erect a waterworks in the town.

The works were in Pinchbeck Road (TF 246235) and consisted of filtering beds, two steam pumping engines and a brick tower with a tank into which the water was pumped and from which it descended to the town. The works were next to the railway line and a coal siding was laid down next to them. The company at first used local water but in 1870 they obtained powers to raise £5,000 more capital to enable them to obtain the water from Bourne. The water was brought from there by six and seven inch diameter pipes to the works.

In 1875 the Long Sutton Local Board raised the idea of water being supplied from Spalding to the villages on the railway line to Long Sutton but the idea was not taken up by the company.

The first major project of the UDC was the purchase of the waterworks, which was achieved by the Spalding Water Act 1900. This allowed them to provide water to the adjacent parts of Pinchbeck and Deeping St Nicholas and to negotiate with the South Lincolnshire Water Company to obtain a bulk supply of water but they had no immediate plans to use these powers. The Company had been formed in the late nineteenth century to provide water to parts of the rural area around Spalding.

In the first few years there was no major expenditure on the waterworks but in 1907 the main between Bourne and Spalding was in such bad condition, four breakages occurring in August alone, that the Council agreed to the laying of a new main of larger size. The steam engines at the waterworks in Pinchbeck Road were also replaced by gas engines.

During the summer of 1908 the eastern end of the main, from Pinchbeck Bars Bridge (TF 200245) to the waterworks was replaced by a new 12 inch main. In 1909 the Council replaced the western half of the new main at an estimated cost of £8,200, the 12 inch main to the Council's bore in Bourne having been completed by December. The Council took no action on a suggestion by the Board of Trade that they used the powers of their 1900 Act to obtain water in bulk from the South Lincolnshire Water Company.

The Council considered using the old 6" pipes to lay down a main to serve Pinchbeck, the cost coming out of the balance left from the construction of the new Bourne main. Unfortunately the pipes were not suitable, the balance could not be used for that purpose and no other scheme was economic. The UDC had made the proposal to prevent the South Lincolnshire Water Company obtaining powers to serve the village and in this they were successful, leaving Pinchbeck without mains water for some more years.

In 1912 the Spalding Rural District Council took over the South Lincs. Water Co. and it approached the UDC to provide water to Pinchbeck and Deeping St Nicholas. The two Councils reached agreement in 1913.

The UDC later erected Swimming Baths at the southern end of the waterworks site and they are still in use although they will be replaced within the next few years.

At a later date the waterworks were replaced by a much larger tower near the station known as the Chatterton Tower. In November 1907 the waterworks manager had been allowed to fit up one of the rooms in the water tower as an office and when the Chatterton Tower was built it incorporated a two-storey office building in its lower part.

By 1930 the UDC was supplying Bourne's water and in that year it agreed to supply a Joint Committee of east Elloe authorities, delivering water in bulk to a tank next to the Holbeach Road on the eastern boundary of the Urban District. They provided an extra engine at Bourne. In 1935 they agreed to provide water to the Boston RDC, laying a pipe to Sutterton on the Rural District boundary.

The UDC retained its Water Department until the 1960's and the main event since the war was the erection of the Chatterton Tower, which is now the headquarters of the South Lincolnshire Water Board. In 1947 the Water Department decided that it needed high level water storage. In 1948 they chose a site

in Kings Road next to the Livestock Auction and applied for loan sanction for £65,500. Work on piling the foundations started in September 1950 and construction started in April 1951. The tower was named after the Chairman of the Water Committee and was completed by 1955 when the old tower in Pinchbeck Road was demolished.

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In 1939 the Urban District Council provided the people of Spalding with their water, gas and electricity and ran its own Fire Brigade as well as providing the Corn Exchange, housing, street lighting and sewerage. The people of Spalding had some control over these services since they elected all the members of the Council. Since the war this local control has been lessened or eliminated as the administration of these services has been organised on a larger scale. After 31 March 1974 the UDC will be replaced by a new District Council for south Holland, covering the whole Wapentake of Elloe plus four parishes to the north. Spalding will have less than half of the members on this authority and, of the services already listed, it will only take over housing, street cleansing, the Arts Centre which is being built to replace the Corn Exchange (demolished 1972), and possibly sewerage. Some of the other services are now administered by the County Council but others are part of regional or national organisations none of whose members are elected by or connected with Spalding.

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