

EAST MIDLANDS GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
EXCURSION REPORTS, 1966

EXCURSION TO RUTLAND, NORTHAMPTON, THE FENS, AND THE WASH: - THE TRIAS,
JURASSIC, CRETACEOUS AND QUATERNARY ROCKS TO THE SOUTH AND EAST OF NOTTINGHAM

Leader:- P. C. Stevenson

Sunday, 1st May 1966

The party of about 40 persons left Shakespeare Street at 09.45 and took the A606 to Melton Mowbray. Much of this part of the journey was over familiar ground, but the leader pointed out the Keuper Marl plain near Edwalton (600340) and the escarpment formed by the Rhaetic (635315). The recent road works at Widmerpool cross-roads (653290) had shown that the Lias rocks here were covered by boulder clay, but the exposures were no longer open. The hilly country near the Broughtons (685265) appeared to be due both to boulder clay and to sandstone bands in the Lower Lias. As demonstrated on a previous excursion, the sharp rise of Broughton Hill (713214) was caused by the Middle Lias Marlstone, but because of the southerly dip, no corresponding escarpment is found on the generally declining road to Melton Mowbray, which lies on the Lower Lias.

The next stage of the journey showed rolling country, with the road passing up again over the Middle Lias on which Oakham stands (860090). Then taking the A 6003 up through the Upper Lias, the excursion passed into country between Manton (880046) and Uppingham (865000), where outliers of Inferior Oolite lie on a plateau of Upper Lias.

The Welland valley has been cut down deeply into the Upper Lias and is floored by thick alluvium. On its south side, the strong escarpment formed by the Inferior Oolite was seen, and the route climbed it at Rockingham (868910). After the beauty of this village, a prospect of Corby administered an unpleasant shock. A brief halt enabled an ironstone pit on the north side of the road (876908) to be viewed from the bus. The leader explained that the Northampton Sand was about 25 ft. thick, the upper fifteen feet being worked as ore, and that it was covered by up to 20 ft. of Lower Deltaic clays and sands: in this case, it is further overlain by about 30 ft. of Lincolnshire Limestone. A diversion was then made around Corby to a point near Kirby Lodge, where the party left the bus to examine a disused pit (915920). The succession here was sensibly the same as at the previous pit and typical of the succession seen in most of the Northampton Sand ironstone pits of the area.

The journey then continued via Little and Great Weldon (927895) on to the A 427. An appreciable rise in the ground surface (935891) marked the presence of the Great Oolite Limestone, and this cream coloured stone was noted in buildings hereabouts. The journey to Oundle was over a very smooth surface formed by the limestone, with here and there a thin skin of Cornbrash and clays. The Nene at Oundle (046889) has cut down into the Upper Lias, but this is generally unexposed and covered by a wide spread of valley alluvium. The A 605 road from Oundle was found to rise on to a shelf near Tansor Lodge (055899) because of the presence of the Cornbrash, and the brash in neighbouring fields was noted. From Elton (090939), the leader pointed out the way in which the topography, hitherto fairly well marked, became more and more subdued as the Oxford Clay, itself a soft formation, became enshrouded by the Quaternary gravels, clays and peats of the Fens.

The A 605 was held to through Peterborough and a brief stop was made at King's Dyke (245971) so that a brick pit on the north side of the road could be seen from the bus, showing a thick Oxford Clay.

with an overburden of gravels. The leader remarked that the pits were not easy to visit because of the unsympathetic attitude of the brick companies.

From Whittlesey, the B 1097 was followed to March, and the true fen country was seen. Mr. Taylor remarked that the name "The Turves" seen on a sign was, he believed, one of the few Celtic survivals in an otherwise Scandinavian area. The leader pointed out how March stands on a gravel 'island' appreciably above the fen level, and then called a halt for lunch to be taken in the town.

After lunch, the party took the B 1099, and turned left on to the B 1098 at Bedlam Bridge (468949). At 485977 the bus was stopped and the party got out. The leader described the fen deposits and explained the nature of the fen roddons. He then pointed out that the place where the party was standing was on such a roddon, a ridge running across country about 250 ft. wide and perhaps 6 ft. above the surrounding fens. The roddon, as is often the case, is occupied by a Roman road and by a line of farms; it was quite apparent to careful observation, running approximately East-West through the place where the party stood. After about fifteen minutes, the party rejoined the bus and followed the roddon along the B 1094, which crossed it several times. From Nordelph (555010) the journey continued uneventfully by A 1122 and A 1101 to Wisbech, and by A 47 to King's Lynn.

The next exposure seen was in the Cretaceous Sandringham Sands, in a quarry showing a face about 18 ft. high (682295). The Sands were white and cream in colour, ironshot, weakly cemented, and current-bedded. The pleasant warm weather now caused the tourist traffic to increase so much that the excursion was jeopardized, but by taking back roads through Shernborn (714324) and Fring (736347), the bus got to the Lighthouse at Old Hunstanton (675420). From here the party walked down to the beach and examined the classic section of the Carstone, overlain by the Red Chalk and the white Chalk. This concluded the field work for the day. After a short wait, the bus reappeared from the holiday crowds. The long journey back to Nottingham was broken briefly at Spalding for refreshment. Mr. Taylor proposed a vote of thanks, to which the leader replied. The party reached Nottingham at about 21.40.

P. C. S.

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