

# On the Course of the Ickneild Way through Norfolk.

COMMUNICATED BY

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ON the south coast of England in Dorsetshire is the southern termination of the cretaceous formation, which from thence strikes north-east and is continued through Wiltshire, Hampshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, and lastly Norfolk, where it loses itself in the North Sea at Hunstanton Cliff. Now the chalk where it reaches the surface is for the most part a deposit upheaved to some altitude above the sea level, and its strike is almost as clear on a physical map as on a geological one. For instance, there are the Dorset Heights and Cranborne Chase, then the Wiltshire and Berkshire Downs, and the Chiltern Hills, which are continued in the East Anglian Heights. Moreover, in some of the ordinary geographical maps of England this line is quite distinct, owing to the sparseness of the population in its locality. To the west of the chalk that is underlying it the greensand occurs; its exposed surface is never very wide, and often disappears altogether. It is a low-lying formation, and Charles Kingsley has spoken of it as the



HICKLING LANE, SWAINSTHORPE.

LOOKING WEST FROM THE RAILWAY BRIDGE.

Greensand Valley, which is represented in East Anglia by the Fens.

Along the whole length of the chalk downs and overlooking the Greensand Valley antiquaries have traced a road or trackway extending as far as Suffolk and presumed to have reached the sea somewhere on the coast of Norfolk. This trackway bears different names in different localities, but it is generally known to antiquaries as the Ickneild Way, a term which Dr. Guest has expanded into "Icen hilde weg," and his interpretation of it is "The highway or war way of the Icen."<sup>1</sup> It is closely associated with British hill forts and earthworks, and avoids Roman encampments, and is also said to shun rivers and towns; but the chalk ridge is not a place where one would expect to find the one or the other, so that the matter of the rivers at least is only a consequence, yet it must be confessed that it behaves in a peculiar way in the neighbourhood of certain towns.

Mr. Arthur Taylor, writing fifty years ago,<sup>2</sup> gave documentary proof of the existence of this road at Newmarket, between which place and Dunstable it is comparatively easy to trace it. He then goes on to shew its course to Thetford through Icklingham. Dr. Guest also traces it to Icklingham, but does not venture further.

Few have said anything on the site of the Ickneild Way between Icklingham and the coast of Norfolk, and they differ considerably in their opinions—one makes for Caistor, another for Norwich, another for Tasburgh—each appears to have settled upon one of these places, and more or less imagined the road to it. Now, if the geological and physical evidence is followed, and the chalk elevation in Norfolk examined, what is the result?

<sup>1</sup> *Essay on the Four Roman Ways, Archaeological Journal*, vol. xiv., p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings of the Archaeological Institute, Norwich*, p. 21.

Strangely enough two roads are found, and the difficulty is to determine which is the right one. For a long time the writer was of the opinion that it could be none other than the Peddar's Way, but his attempts to connect that road with the Ickneild Way did not meet with much success. After a while, meeting with Mr. Beloe's *Essay on the Great Fen Road*,<sup>1</sup> he discarded the Peddar's Way for the Ailesway. The course of this last, between Narford and Hunstanton, may be left entirely to Mr. Beloe. South of Narford, however, where it is no longer a part of the Great Fen Road, he conducts it to Brandon Ferry by a curving line, with its convex side to the west, and gets into some marshy tracts. Possibly he has good reasons for doing so, but the uninitiated may prefer a line through Ickburgh and Cockley Cley, having its convex side to the east. Faden's map of Norfolk, published just a hundred years ago, shows a very suitable road, which has apparently entirely disappeared since the inclosure of the parishes, leading to the latter place. By taking this route the higher ground will be traversed, and no very formidable obstacles encountered, the Wissey being crossed at Mundford. "From Brandon," Mr. Beloe says, "the Ailesway goes to join the Ickneild," presumably at Newmarket, after crossing Portway Hill. It is, however, sufficient for the present purpose to point out that he acknowledges the connection.

While the geological evidence leads to the conclusion that the Ailesway represents the original and probably prehistoric course of the Ickneild, its name is a proof that the Angles did not recognize it as such, and therefore it cannot be considered a portion of one of the four great roads mentioned in the laws of Edward the Confessor. The constant geographical changes occurring on the east coast may have produced a harbour in this

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Antiquarian Society's Proceedings*, vol. vii. pp. 112-130.

direction more convenient for the continental trade than the roadstead at Hunstanton, the latter perhaps deteriorating owing to the encroachments of the sea.

The former importance of Hunstanton is attested by the fact that no less than four ancient roads led to it, and it was the terminus of two of them. There was this Ailesway connecting it by the Ickneild Way with the south-western parts of the island, that is to say with the tin district. Next there was the Fen Road extending due west at least as far as the Ermine Street, and thus communicating with the north and north-west. Then there was the Peddar's Way leading to London and the south, and there was the Akeman Street lying between the Fen Road and the Ickneild, conducting to the west. It should also be noticed that the Fen Road coming from March has an easterly direction until it has passed the fen and reached the firm ground, where it turns at almost a right angle to the north, a fact which can only be accounted for by supposing that some place in the north-west corner of Norfolk was its destination.

As already stated, the four Roman roads mentioned in the laws of Edward the Confessor could not have included the Ailesway, and so the question still remains, viz., what was the recognized course of the Ickneild Street at that period?

In endeavouring to answer this question it is the design of the present paper to make use of such documentary evidence as is forthcoming, and to connect the points so demonstrated by what seems the most probable route.

Blomefield states in his account of Banham that one of the roads there was called Tycknald Street,<sup>1</sup> surely a corruption of "The Ickneild Street." It has not been possible for the writer to test this statement, but should it be considered insufficient, further evidence will shortly

<sup>1</sup> *History of Norfolk*, vol. i., p. 357.

be adduced shewing that there is reason to believe that the road in question passed through Banham. Now to connect Newmarket with Banham. Two intervening places at once demand attention—the one is Icklingham, the other Thetford, and Mr. Taylor conducts it to the former through Kentford and Cavenham, and thence by the division of the Hundreds of Lachford and Blackbourn to the latter, implying that the river Lark was crossed at Lachford. This is the generally accepted course, and there is no disposition to call it in question here if it is admitted that Thetford stood chiefly on the Suffolk side of the river. Beyond Thetford Mr. Taylor's objective was avowedly Norwich, and quite recently Mr. W. G. Clarke has attempted to fill in the intermediate points for him, and has supposed a line closely coinciding with the modern turnpike road from Norwich to Thetford. Probably Mr. Clarke has traced a road now no longer in existence, but he is evidently wedded to the Norwich theory, and the statement "that Norwich Castle Hill was one of the most noted British earthworks in East Anglia is undisputed," seriously discounts what is really a very valuable paper, and as he takes his road over the Thet at Thetford he is compelled to cross the same river again at Larlingford.<sup>1</sup>

It has been said before that the Ickneild Street avoids towns, and this paper suggests that on approaching Thetford it turned somewhat abruptly at Old Elvedon Gap to the east and reached the Little Ouse at a point which is now the south-east corner of Barnham Cross Common some mile and a half above Thetford and the junction with the Thet. There is here but a narrow strip of low ground on either side of the river, and the high ground of Snare Hill on the Norfolk bank would have tempted the prehistoric traveller. Then clinging to the

<sup>1</sup> *Knowledge*, February, 1899.

watershed of the two mentioned rivers, a district abounding in tumuli, of which the Seven Hills may be noticed, it passed the future site of Shadwell Park to the Harlings, and so by Up-hall and Kenninghall to Banham. In admitting that no trace of this road is known to exist, at all events on the heaths, the present writer is met with the same difficulty that others have encountered in the immediate neighbourhood, and he may be permitted to say with them that the continuous growth of the bracken has obliterated all trace of it. As an alternative, a line from Elvedon to Barnham and so over the river where Rushford Bridge now stands to Shadwell may be mentioned.

Leaving Banham, the next point is a still existing trackway about twelve miles distant, dividing the modern parishes of Swainsthorpe and Dunston, and to this day known as Hickling Lane. This way is mentioned in a seventeenth century conveyance as Icklinge Way, *e.g.* Thomas Steward conveyed to John Mingaye meadows and pasture in Swainsthorpe "between the highway leading from Newton to Norwich on the west part, and the river running between Stoke Holy Cross and the town of Swainsthorpe on the east, and between a way called *Icklinge Way* leading from the said river to Kenninghall on the north part, and the lands of Gilbert Havers in part, and the Common of Swainsthorpe on the south part." Also twenty-three acres in Swainsthorpe "between the highway leading from Newton to Norwich on the east, and the way called *Icklinge Way* on the north, and the way leading from the site of the Manor of Swainsthorpe to the Church of Swainsthorpe on the south."<sup>1</sup>

To say nothing of the similarity in the name, these items are sufficient to identify the track, at least so far

<sup>1</sup> Deeds enrolled within the County of Norfolk, 1st October, 1622.

as it was the boundary of the lands conveyed. It is an exceedingly pretty green lane, and though so near Norwich, is apparently known to few, for the writer has never seen anyone there saving those he had taken with him. The railway passes underneath it, and allowing for the making of the railway arch, it has perhaps not been touched for centuries, except that the hedges on either side may have been planted when the parishes were enclosed.

At first sight one would suppose that nothing would be easier than to trace this road to Kenninghall, and consider the matter settled; but one cannot proceed far before being completely baffled, for after walking a few hundred yards, Hickling Lane meets a farm road running at right angles to it, and comes to an abrupt termination, yet it is almost certain that the roads here are to all intents the same now as they were a hundred years ago. The alternative of starting from the other end, viz., Kenninghall, seems to be the most simple way of pursuing the enquiry. That the Ickneild Way ran from Kenninghall to Banham has already been asserted, and the continuation of this road to Norwich has long been considered the modern representative of the same street, and so lends colour to Blomefield's statement that a street in Banham was called Tycknald. The fact that William de Albini chose a spot adjoining it for the Castle and Town of New Buckenham is perhaps significant, while Old Buckenham Castle, dating from the Roman occupation according to Harrod, is not quite two miles distant.

Advancing towards Norwich, there is nothing to demand attention until Mulbarton is reached. The distance from this place to Hickling Lane is about a mile as the crow flies, and if the two roads are to be connected at all, it is necessary to turn towards the east here, making the most of what can be found. There is a right

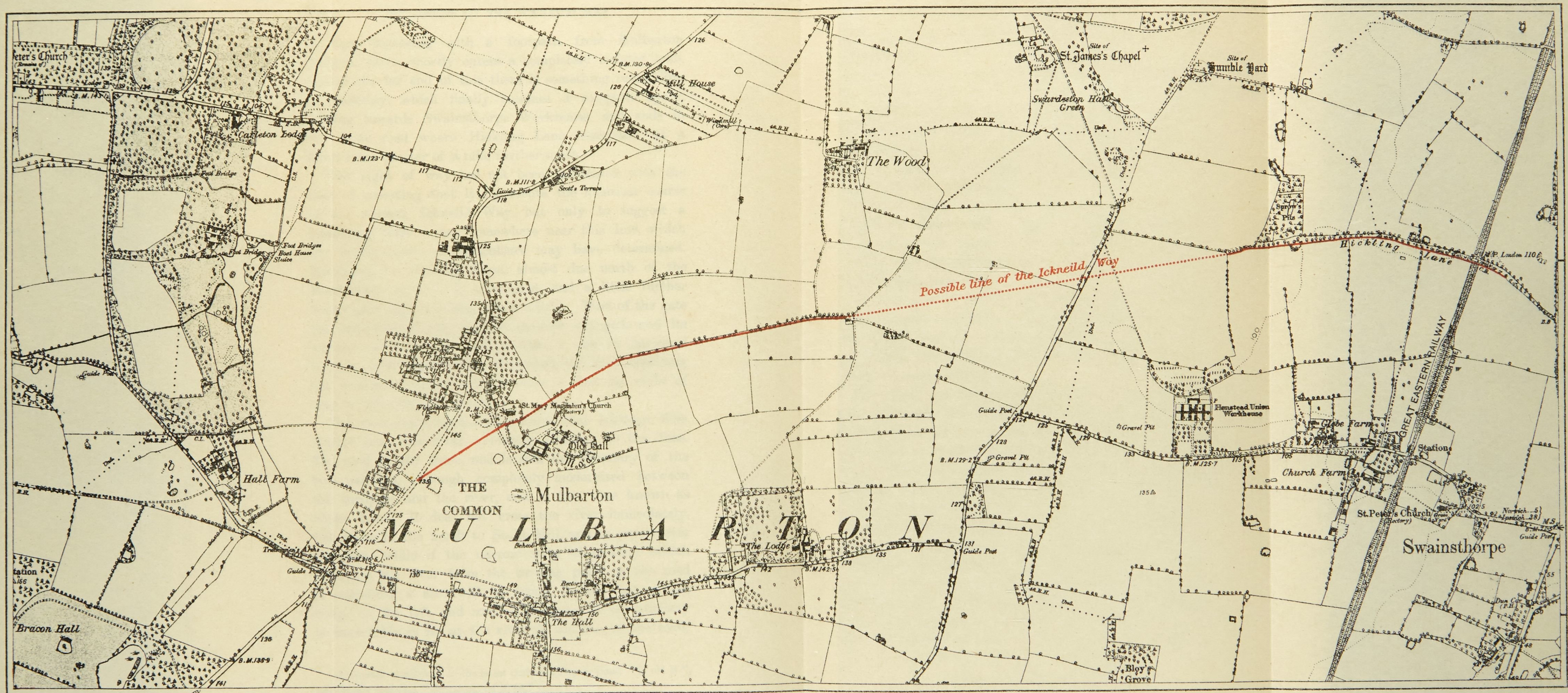


of way beginning with a footpath from Mulbarton Church, which shortly enters a completely isolated loke, and at the far end of this there is something resembling a trackway, which finally becomes a footpath again, leading towards Swainsthorpe Workhouse, and ends in the same road where Hickling Lane disappears, at a point some quarter of a mile further south.

This right of way has not been mentioned with the idea of asserting that it represents the identical course of the ancient Ickneild Way, but only to suggest a possibility that it ran somewhere near this line, which the requirements of agriculture may have determined. Returning to Hickling Lane, almost due north of the Workhouse, there is a plantation, and a little further west a gate where the lane enters a field. West of the gate the character of the road is entirely changed, and its ancient appearance is lost, so that it can be imagined to have once upon a time traversed the field adjoining the workhouse, which alone divides it from the right of way or footpath just noticed.

The conveyance quoted also states that Icklinge Way started from the river, evidently pointing to the Taas. The road is still there, and is still the boundary of the two parishes, although completely modernised between the turnpike and the river, and at this time known as Stoke Lane. It does not cross the river immediately, but turns to the north to Stoke Mill, and so passes over the dam, while if the narrow strip of meadow which separates the river from the turning point of the road is examined, a tree will be found in the line of the hedge on the left, and some appearance of a causeway is discernible as far as the river in the line of the road,<sup>1</sup>

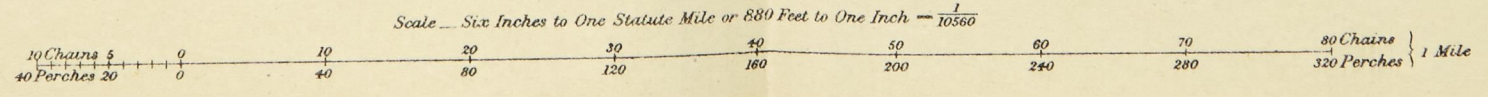
<sup>1</sup> This point is indicated in the latest Ordnance Survey thus: "C. old R.", presumably meaning "Course of old Road."



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PLAN SHOWING THE SUPPOSED COURSE OF THE ICKNEILD WAY THROUGH MULBARTON & SWAINSTHORPE

Starford's Geog. Estab. London.



which causeway may also be traced on the six inch ordnance map.

As to the river, it is surely a more formidable obstacle now than it was in pre-historic times, when water power was hardly used for grinding corn, for when the mill was constructed (some centuries ago) it was necessary to hold back the water for the motive power, and most likely a way over the mill dam was in course of time found to be more convenient.

The next piece of evidence must now be treated. It is from a Common-place Book<sup>1</sup> of Henry Appleyard of Dunston, who copied it in 1592 from an extent of Dunston, by Mr. William Lacy, Clarke of the King's Council, 20th Aug., 1482.

"Item A pece of marshe and lythe on the sowthe syde of Stooke mill environid w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> water of trane northe and east warde, and the common of Dunston on the west, and buttith on Hiclynge weye sowthe warde and conteynithe v acars of marshe."

This marsh can be no other than the narrow meadow just mentioned, but whether the river then ran in its present channel is not so certain. It is spoken of in the conveyance as though it were the division of the townships of Stoke Holy Cross and Swainsthorpe, and, strictly speaking, this is not now the case, although the distance between the two never exceeds two hundred yards, and the writer having studied the ordnance maps, inclines to the opinion that the present parish boundary (it is still a watercourse) represents the ancient channel of the stream. However that may be it is definitely stated that Hiclynge weye ran at the southern end of this piece of marsh, and this tends to confirm the existence of the causeway spoken of above. Here the parish boundary

<sup>1</sup> Norwich Castle Museum Library.

runs about one hundred yards east of the point where it is shown that the causeway struck the river.

It may perhaps be mentioned here that Faden, who gave particular attention to the ancient tideways in his map of the county, published in 1797, does not represent it as flowing higher up the Taas than Stoke Mill, so that he would make the road to cross the stream just above the spot reached by the highest tides.

The marsh on the right bank is much wider than that on the left, and there is an arable field between it and the road from Stoke Church to Caistor. Here the causeway may perhaps be followed for a few yards from the river, and here seems to have been the shortest passage of the marsh. No documentary evidence is at present forthcoming that will afford a clue till the road is crossed, where a mortgage gives some further information. Before it is examined let it be stated that the distance over which the track is lost is less than four hundred yards, and let it be supposed that Hicklinge Way pursued a straight course in traversing this distance, then it would have opened on to the Caistor Road opposite to a by-road now leading to Poringland mill. Whether this by-road is identical with the one which existed previous to the enclosures may be questioned. At all events the divergence cannot be great, and it may here be neglected.

The mortgage is dated 29 May, 1629, and by it Francis Style pledged his lands in Stoke Holy Cross to Edward Myleham. The schedule of the lands contains the following items: "Inprimis one messuage called Lachelowes, and the Stone House, one pightle parcel of the tenement Toogoodes, and three pieces of pasture called the Sled Close, Ints Close, and Home Close, in Stoke Holy Cross in divers wents, and adjoining to the said tenement Lachelows, and sideth in part and abutteth in part upon Maynes Grene and the common way leading from Porland

Heath to Stokefield towards the south, containing sixteen acres."

"Item, one other close called Dawes Close, newly divided with a ditch or hedge from the residue of the said close, containing thirty acres in Stoke in divers wents lying and heading upon the said Hicklinge Way on the south, and extending unto a brook or beck running from Halsted Grove unto Rockellwood, and upon the said wood in part, and Bromeclose in part, and the common field of Stoke in part towards the west, and upon or unto Wendlowe Close in part on the north."

"Item, one other close newly parted with a ditch in or near the middle thereof, lying in divers wents in Stoke, the said Hicklinge Way being on the south side thereof, and Rockellwood and the Brome Close on the north part thereof, and abuts upon the common field called Millfield towards the west, and upon the beck aforesaid towards the east, containing thirty acres."<sup>1</sup>

It is much to be regretted that the writer of the schedule was not more precise (if he is correct in the second item) in concluding that he has already alluded to Hicklinge Way: there is only "the common way leading from Porland Heath to Stokefield" to fall back upon, for no other road is mentioned. It is evident that Hicklinge Way held a course lying approximately east and west through Stoke Holy Cross, as is here required, and there is a suspicion that some point on it was not far from the mill.

Now the present by-road, which seems to be the site of Hicklinge Way, does lead to what was once Poringland Heath, under the name of Stoke Long Lane, and Faden's map does not show any other road that will answer the description, therefore if there is anything in circumstantial evidence, one must conclude that Hicklinge Way led to

<sup>1</sup> Deeds enrolled within the County of Norfolk.

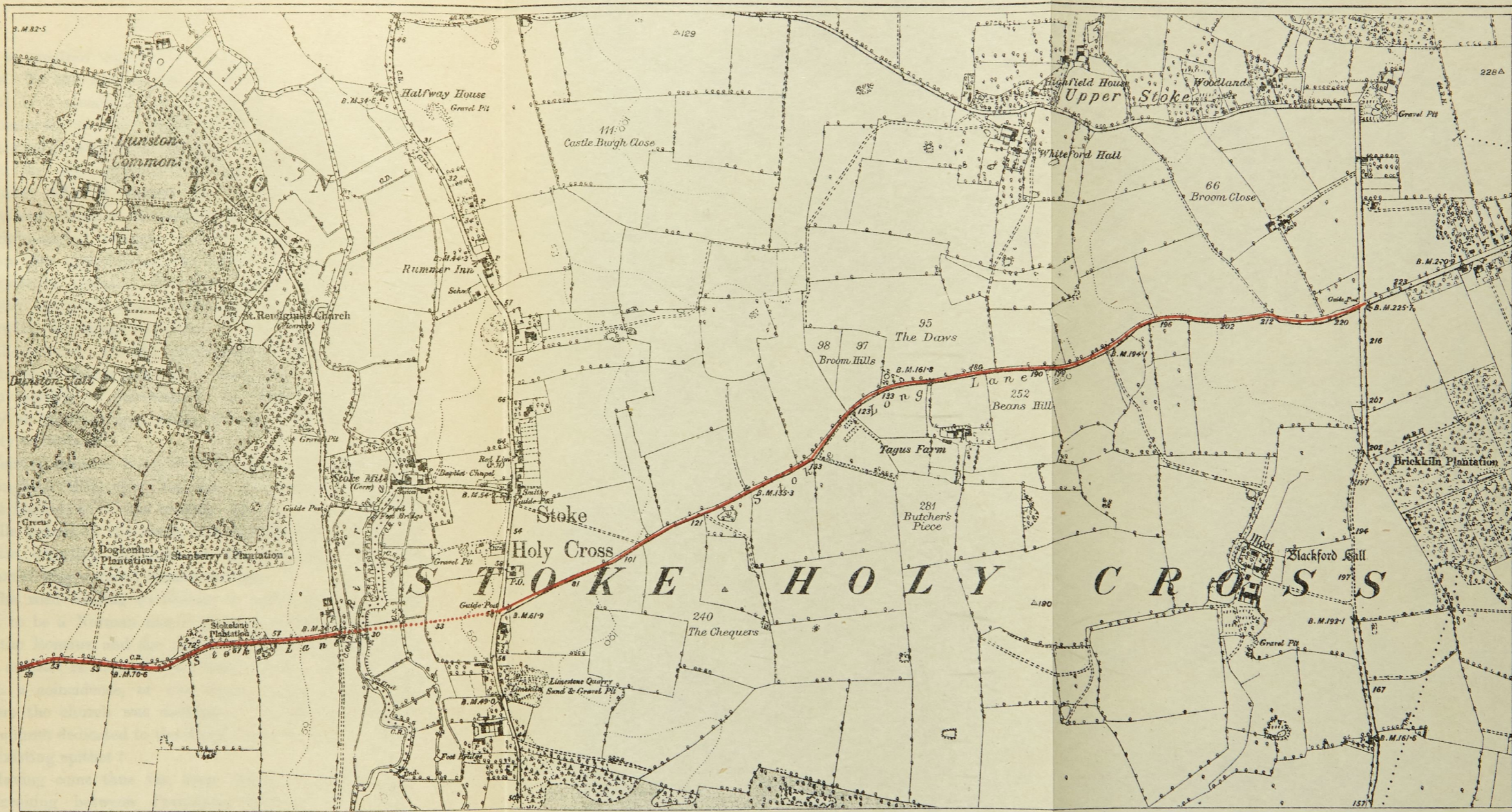
Poringland Heath, and if the modern road may be trusted, to the very top of Poringland Hill, which is about two miles from the Taas, and at one time thought to be the highest ground in Norfolk.

Again in 1658 William London conveyed to Robert London "two enclosures or parcels of land and pasture now converted into three enclosures in Stoke Holy Cross, containing together by estimation thirty acres, being parcel of the close commonly called Butcher's Close, in Stoke Holy Cross, as the same parcels do lie there together between the common way there called Hicklinge Way in part, and the lands and meadows late of Francis Style, now Francis London, called Oldsteade Grove and Beall's Hill meadow in part on the north part, and two other parcels of the said Butcher's Close, late the said Francis Style, now Thomas Lawse on the south part, and abutteth upon the land late the said Francis Style, after that Robert Parke, now the said Thomas Lawse, called Chequer Close towards the west, and upon the lands late Edmund Doyly, now Sir William Doyly, knight, towards the east."<sup>1</sup>

The majority of the field names mentioned in both deeds are entirely lost. Such as remain tend to demonstrate that Stoke Long Lane is the representative of Hicklinge Way, as is illustrated by the accompanying plan. A brook or beck passes under the road west-north-west of Tagus Farm, where the smallest figures indicating the altitudes occur, and although Broom Close is still to be found, Broom Hills probably occupy the site of the old enclosure of that name; the names of the other fields also show a slight variation.

Having ascended the hill, one desires a breathing space which may be advantageously occupied by viewing the surrounding country and ascertaining one's whereabouts,

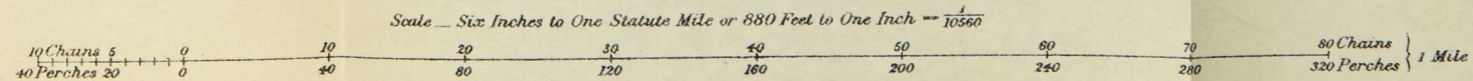
<sup>1</sup> Deeds enrolled within the County of Norfolk.



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Stanford's Geogr. Estab<sup>l</sup>, London.

PLAN SHOWING THE SUPPOSED COURSE OF THE ICKNEILD WAY THROUGH STOKE HOLY CROSS



not to mention that from this point documentary evidence fails. To the north-north-west Norwich Castle may be seen; it is already being left behind, and to reach it it is necessary to turn sharply to the left along the turn-pike road coming from Bungay. If Norwich is insisted upon as the objective of the Ickneild Way, the question why it should be approached in such a circuitous direction immediately occurs, for two sides of a right-angled triangle will have been perambulated where the hypotenuse, the direct route, presenting no insuperable obstacles, has been neglected. In fact, if anyone can prove that the Ickneild Way passed through Norwich the entire argument of the present paper falls to the ground. On the other hand, if there is anything to the point in this paper, it is most fortunate that it has been possible to demonstrate the path of the Ickneild Way at the very spot where Norwich and Caistor were likely to mislead.

Caistor, since it is on low ground, is not visible from Poringland Hill; that, too, has been passed where the road leading to it was crossed, that is to say, leaving it a mile distant on the north, and so, with Old Buckenham Castle, affording instances of the statement that the Ickneild Way avoided Roman stations.

The road leading to Caistor is called the Pye Road, said to be a Norman name<sup>1</sup> given to a trackway utilized by the Romans, and the parish in which the roads cross one another is Stoke Holy Cross. Is this nothing more than a coincidence, or was there a cross erected here before the church was dedicated? In other words, was the church dedicated to the Holy Cross in consequence of an existing epithet?

Having come thus far, there being but twelve miles intervening between Poringland Hill and a suitable

<sup>1</sup> *Local Names in Norfolk.*



termination for the road, it is hoped that the writer, for lack of anything better, may be permitted to express his crude opinion as to the direction in which enquiries should be pursued.

If it is admitted that had the ancient way any intention of crossing the Wensum, it would have done so at some spot where the river was fordable, and not, as would from this point be necessary, over what was formerly an estuary of the sea, a northerly course is denied. Moreover, having followed a north-easterly direction, the west, and to a less extent the south, appear utterly out of the question. The east alone remains open for the research, and it is advisable to keep near the watershed of the Wensum and the Chet as far as possible.

The modern road that has been followed from Stoke Holy Cross shews no sign of ending at Poringland; it crosses the Bungay Road, and then proceeds in a straight line nearly to Framingham Earl Church, where it turns to the right and left, leaving the enquirer very puzzled as to how he should proceed, and causing this last advance to be questioned.

Fortunately for the investigation, those who have spoken on the Roman roads of Norfolk have affirmed, with every show of reason, that a Roman road led from Caistor-by-Norwich to Haddiscoe, and so on to Burgh Castle,<sup>1</sup> while Mr. J. W. Robberds would conduct it, without much argument however, to Wheatacre Burgh.<sup>2</sup> Such a road must have run through Framingham Earl and then by Bergh Apton, the Venta Icenorum of Spelman, passing some British barrows there in the proximity of Thurton Church,<sup>3</sup> to Loddon, Raveningham, and Haddiscoe. This road, at all events between Haddiscoe

<sup>1</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. 23, p. 366. *Local Names in Norfolk*, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> *Eastern Valleys of Norfolk*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> *Norfolk Archæology*, vol. v., p. 180.

and Raveningham, is known as the Port Way, and Dr. Mason, speaking of the Ickneild Street, says that from (New) Buckenham "one route goes direct to Caistor, and the other route goes near Taseburgh, south of Hemenhale, north of Ditchingham Hall, crossing the road from Loddon to Beccles, passing between Toft and Heckingham, by Hadiscoe Church to Burgh Castle,"<sup>1</sup> demonstrating that he also would lead the Ickneild Street to Haddiscoe, although by a route that is not under discussion here, while the first route confirms much that has been stated.

Beyond Haddiscoe nothing is now essayed. It may very well be that a port existed here in Celtic times, and that the Ickneild Way had it for its termination.

Returning to Swainsthorpe, let the road be followed to the south-west. A hamlet of Mulbarton, once a distinct township, is known as Keningham. Next, in Old Buckenham, was formerly some spot called Kentlow; then comes Kenninghall, while in Icklingham there is said to be an encampment named Kentfield.<sup>2</sup> Cambridgeshire is entered at Kentford, with Kennet close at hand. Adjoining Dunstable on the south is Kensworth. In Berkshire the Kennet and Kintbury Hundreds are found. After leaving Andover a tumulus named Kentbarrow is passed, and finally beyond Exeter Kenn and Kenn Ford are met with.

Since there are many other places in England having the prefix Ken (Kensington and Kenilworth will occur to most readers), it may be suspected that the presence of some of those mentioned is only coincidence, on the other hand is it right to assume that the whole list is the result of accident?

<sup>1</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. xxiii., p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings of the Archaeological Institute, Norwich*, p. 20.

Now Kensworth in Herts. seems in former times to have been known as Ikensworth.<sup>1</sup> It almost touches the Ickneild Way, and perhaps affords a key to the puzzle. Let this key be put to the test in the case of Kenninghall, and the result will be found exceedingly interesting. In the first place the Celtic tribe inhabiting the district which afterwards became East Anglia, were known to their fellow tribes as "y Ceni," that is the head ones, "y" being the definite article. The Romans kept the name, expressing it in their tongue as Icenī, the initial "I" being very soft and the "C" very hard. Then came the Angles, and they too heard of the tribe whom they designated Ikenings as the nearest phonetic equivalent to the Roman name in their language. Secondly, the accepted etymology of Kenninghall is hall of the Kennings, of Ikenninghall it would be hall of the Ikennings, but to use a mathematical expression, the "I" goes out. Even the Romans did not attach much weight to it, for they spoke of the same people as the Icenī and the Cenimagni, and thus Kenninghall may be interpreted as hall of (the) Ceni. This reasoning has been anticipated by Camden, and it may be the foundation of the story that Queen Boadicea resided here, a statement which need not be believed. The writer is aware that Canon Manning declined to entertain the foregoing argument, still it may be questioned whether he has considered it more than superficially.<sup>2</sup>

Notice should also be taken of another point, viz., the two stumbling blocks that have caused so much confusion, the one Norwich, the other Bury St. Edmund's. The best authorities are now agreed that Norwich Castle Hill

<sup>1</sup> *Catalogue of Ancient Deeds*, vol. ii., c. 1963.

<sup>2</sup> *Norfolk Archaeology*, vol. vii., p. 290.

was thrown up by the Angles,<sup>1</sup> and there is nothing to prove that either Britons or Romans used the locality as a permanent habitation, while before the Romans guarded the estuary with their camps, the sea rovers would have rendered it untenable. Almost the same may be said of Bury. There is little or no proof of British or Roman occupation, and the idea that it was the Villa Faustina of the Antonine Itinerary no longer commands absolute belief. Now, after the Angles had settled at Norwich, and St. Edmund's Bury become a resort for

<sup>1</sup> When the basement of the Castle Keep was being cleared, at the time of its conversion into a Museum, excavations were made with a view to ascertaining the nature of the soil beneath. The following extract is from a letter written at the time (October, 1888), to the Rev. O. W. Tancock, by Mr. F. W. Harmer, F.G.S., a most competent eye witness:—

“After you left, Mr. Hudson and I went into the Castle. We then found that the trial shaft had gone down through made soil 43 ft. before it reached undisturbed ground. (At the bottom of the shaft the sand out of which the valley has been excavated was met with). Allowing 10 ft. for the height of the present floor line of the keep above the surface of the mound, this gives 33 ft. as the depth of the artificial portion, and this would bring us nearly to the level of the ground at the bottom of the Castle Hill. I think we may take it for granted that no architects, either ancient or modern, would have excavated the interior of the keep to this depth after the erection of the walls, and I think it is equally certain that no one destroyed the supposed spur of the high land of Ber Street for the pleasure of reconstructing it with made soil. If we have to go down 33 ft. from the surface of the mound before we reach undisturbed strata *on the side of the mound towards the high ground of Ber Street, a fortiori*, we should have to go at least an equal depth on the side towards the river, where the ground naturally slopes towards the lowest part of the valley. The earliest occupants of the Castle space naturally selected it as a point of vantage, but it was not high enough for their purpose, and so they raised it with the soil that was nearest at hand. The excavation of the different moats—40 ft. deep, as Mr. Hudson says—would provide an immense amount of material, and how could it be more naturally or conveniently utilized than in raising the mound, which no doubt grew in height from time to time. It occurs to me that a similar mound may be seen at Eye, and another at Thetford. Is not the Castle Hill at Cambridge artificial?”

See also the “Official Guide to Norwich Castle Museum,” p. 36.

pilgrims, the traffic on the Ickneild Way, running, as it does, conveniently near both places, was certain to be tapped in either direction, and the loops that are seen to-day passing through each of these towns are the result of the diversion, which has effectively caused the track, where it skirted these places, to fall into disuse, and to be almost obliterated by the lapse of centuries, the decadence of the terminus assisting the process.

In conclusion, the writer does not pretend that the last word on this obscure subject has been said—probably it never will be said—he only trusts that his opinions may be weighed with those of others, and credence given to the one who approaches nearest to the goal.