

An Extra Dimension? Lincolnshire Farm Buildings as Historical Evidence*

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Abstract

The last decade has seen a growth of interest in historic farm buildings, but they have usually been seen as individual structures, and in isolation from other aspects of rural history. On the basis of a systematic survey of entire farmsteads in part of Lincolnshire, it is here suggested that the physical remains may contribute to understanding agrarian conditions. It is tentatively concluded that, if studied on a regional basis, farmsteads may provide evidence for the local realities which lie behind national agricultural trends and, more especially, that systematic examination of farmsteads can provide valuable evidence for a way of life soon to be lost to living memory.

IN 1993 and 1994, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England recorded over 250 farmsteads in five contrasting parts of England: north Northumberland, central Cheshire, south Lincolnshire, south Berkshire and east Cornwall. The main findings of the survey has been published elsewhere,¹ but the present paper seeks to examine the potential of the physical remains as evidence for agrarian history (in its widest sense), taking south Lincolnshire as a case study. The conclusions drawn are tentative, but it is hoped that they may stimulate debate concerning the links between farm buildings and social and economic history.

The area selected for the survey consists of two almost contiguous blocks of parishes which lie east of Grantham and south of

Sleaford (Figure 1). Within those areas all the extant buildings of almost all the farmsteads with pre-1930s structures were recorded; there are a few eighteenth-century buildings, but most are nineteenth-century. Only the farms with the most fragmentary or heavily converted remains were excluded, and, unlike many previous studies of agricultural buildings, the unit of record was the complete farmstead, rather than individual buildings.

I

The eastern survey area contains four parishes on the Black Sluice Fen: each parish contains a large amount of fenland, at the west end of which, where the land rises very slightly, is the main settlement; beyond, is a smaller area of land, in places referred to as the Common. Much of the area is strong clayland, described in 1851 as 'stiff clay, harsh and difficult to work'.² The western parishes are entirely on the higher land, which is predominantly heavy, cold clay.

Enclosure was achieved shortly after 1800 – and some of it much earlier – but realization of its full potential was hampered by inadequate drainage, particularly

* I should like to express my gratitude to my colleagues, A T Adams, Colum Giles and D A H Richmond, who read drafts of this paper and suggested a number of improvements, as also did Dr S Wade Martins. I am also grateful for the comments of the participants in a joint conference of the Historic Farm Buildings Group and the Society for Landscape Studies, held in April 1995, at which I delivered an earlier version of the material presented here. None of those who have been kind enough to share their thoughts would, however, necessarily agree with my views. Finally, I should like to thank A T Adams for producing the illustrations.

¹ The reports, drawings and photographs of the farmsteads surveyed by RCHME as part of its project are available to the public through the Public Services department of the National Monuments Record (RCHME's archive), at the National Monuments Record Centre, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ. The findings of the survey are published in P S Barnwell and Colum Giles, *English Farmsteads, 1750–1914*, Swindon, 1997.

² J A Clarke, 'On the farming of Lincolnshire', *JRASE*, XII, 1851, p 268.

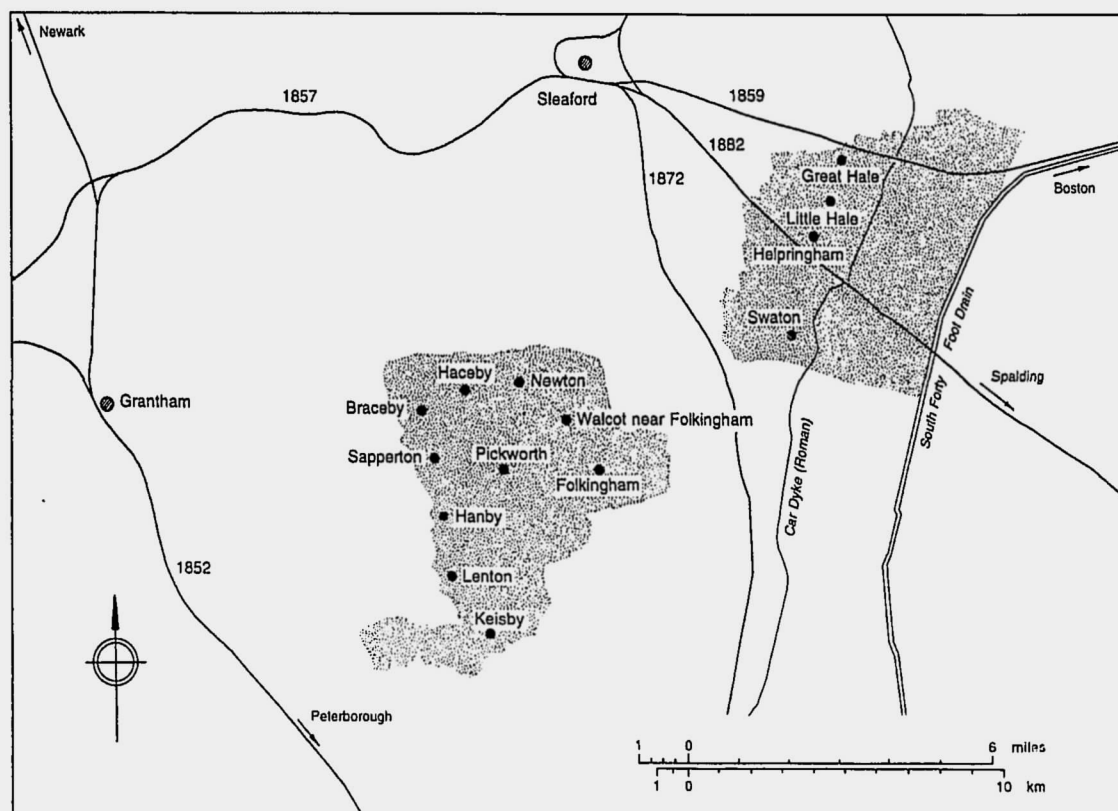


FIGURE I

The survey areas, showing features discussed in the text.

in the fenland parishes.³ Traditionally, such drainage as there had been was effected by the Roman Car Dyke, which runs along the western edge of the fen, near the villages. Although it took some of the downwash from the higher land, its effect on the fen proper was negligible. The first major improvement came in the late-eighteenth century, when the South Forty Foot drain (which marks the eastern boundary of the parishes) was created. Although this was a considerable advance, the improvement was not sustained, and there were annual floods between 1795 and 1801. The installation of windmills to lift water from the parish drains into the South Forty Foot made the land more secure, but

it was not until the late 1840s, when the South Forty Foot was itself deepened, and a steam pumping engine installed, that the system reached its full effectiveness.⁴ Although the western group of parishes was higher, drainage of a different kind – underdrainage – was required in order to render the highly water-retentive clays suitable for tillage: although commenced before 1851, it had not progressed very far by that date.⁵ In neither of the survey areas, therefore, was the maximum area of arable land available until the middle of the nineteenth century.

A second factor which affected the econ-

³ D B Grigg, *The Agricultural Revolution in South Lincolnshire*, 1966, p 33; A Young, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lincoln*, 1799, pp 54, 57.

⁴ Clarke, 'Lincolnshire', pp 298–302, 306–7; J A Clarke, 'On the Great Level of the Fens, including the Fens of South Lincolnshire', *JRASE*, VIII, 1847, pp 122–3; Grigg, *Agricultural Revolution*, pp 28–9; J Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: the agrarian history of Lincolnshire from Tudor to recent times*, 1957, p 210.

⁵ Clarke, 'Lincolnshire', pp 379–80.

omic potential of the region was the development of new modes of transport. The Car Dyke had once been navigable, and one source records it as being so in Great Hale and Helpringham as late as 1855. The South Forty Foot was certainly navigable during the entire nineteenth century, and in 1851 it was reported that a steam packet was to commence operation along its full length. These facilities meant that the eastern block of parishes had relatively easy access to markets served by the river Witham – westward to Lincoln and eastward to Boston and the coast.⁶

The situation was greatly improved by the advent of railways during the second half of the nineteenth century (Figure 1). The railways were probably even more important for the western area, since they provided the first easy means by which produce could be moved out of the region. The significance of this development for Lincolnshire as a whole was clearly seen at the time, James Caird, writing in 1852, being explicit about the impact of railways on agricultural practice, and land agents in the 1860s considering that rents could be increased in proportion to proximity to railway stations.⁷

A further factor which could affect both profitability and the nature of agricultural exploitation was that of land ownership; this is also directly related to buildings, since estates did not always invest in them at the same time or in the same way. For this reason, one of the criteria for the selection of the survey area was that it should include parts of a number of estates. In the western group of parishes, Newton, Haceby and Sapperton were largely owned by the Welby estate, while Walcot, Folkingham and Lenton (apart from the

hamlet of Hanby) were dominated by the holdings of the Heathcote family, and Pickworth by those of the duke of St Albans; smaller areas of land were held by a number of other families of varying status and importance. In the fenland area, the pattern of ownership was different: in Swaton all the land belonged to the Warners of Walsingham Abbey, but elsewhere the land was owned by a number of individuals and estates, including quite a large number of small freeholders. Partly, but not entirely, on account of the presence of the latter, the average farm size in the fen area was 140–160 acres, around half that in the clayland parishes to the west.⁸

II

These general background features are directly relevant to the nature of the agriculture which was practised in the survey area from the late-eighteenth to the early-twentieth century – the period from which the extant buildings survive. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, grassland predominated: one contemporary, speaking of a wider area of south Lincolnshire, appears to have seen this as being at least partly a response to poor transport links, since it was easier to move livestock than grain along bad roads to market. The main agricultural emphasis was on locally-bred sheep, and the finishing of cattle which were imported from as far afield as Scotland and Wales. In most of the western parishes, the largest arable crop in 1801 was wheat, but the acreages were generally small; the arable acreage was rather larger in the fenland area, with oats being the main crop except in Swaton.⁹

Between 1801 and 1866, the area under

⁶ Kelly, *Post Office Directory of Lincolnshire*, 1855, pp 110, 116–17 states that the Car Dyke was navigable in Great Hale and Helpringham, though the 25" OS maps of the 1880s show that it had ceased to be by the time of their production. On the South Forty Foot, see Clarke, 'Lincolnshire', note on p 303.

⁷ Caird, *English Agriculture in 1850–1851*, 1852, p 186; T W Beestall, *Agricultural Revolution in South Lincolnshire*, Lincoln, 1978, p 200.

⁸ Since the tithe records are so patchy, the figures are based on the records of the 1910 National Property Valuation for the relevant Income-Tax Parishes, held in PRO, IR58; for the wider context, see Grigg, *Agricultural Revolution*, pp 91, 108.

⁹ Grigg, *Agricultural Revolution*, pp 67–9, 105–6; Thirsk, *Peasant Farming*, pp 299–300; the 1801 Home Office Crop Returns for the relevant parishes are in PRO, HO 67/15.

cultivation expanded, as did the proportion of arable, particularly that used for wheat. The more striking change was in the fen-edge parishes, where wheat replaced oats as the dominant crop. In 1851, J A Clarke noted that quite a high proportion of the western area was still under grass (an impression strengthened by the tithe records), and that underdrainage had not progressed very far: in general, he thought the area to be backward and mean, particularly in relation to the feeding of cattle. Despite this, the main trend of the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century was the rise of mixed farming. It is difficult to date the change accurately but, in view of Clarke's comments, it may be that it took place at the same time as, or shortly after, underdrainage. Before then, production and, therefore, income, could be maintained by means of expanding the area used for agriculture, whereas thereafter the only scope for improvement lay in the intensification of exploitation, by the adoption of more balanced mixed farming. It is more difficult to determine the timing of change in the fen parishes, since Clarke did not comment upon them, and tithe coverage is poor: the change may have begun earlier, but is likely to have been given fresh impetus by the improvements to drainage made in the 1840s¹⁰ (see above).

The claylands generally were amongst the most severely affected by the late nineteenth-century depression. Analysis of a sample of the crop returns suggests that between the 1870s and 1900s the amount of arable remained roughly stable, but with some shift away from wheat, particularly in the fen. The major change was a large increase in the number of cattle, with sheep remaining a significant part of the regional economy. These trends may be confirmed

by an increase in the number of farmers described as graziers, butchers and cattle dealers in successive editions of *White's Directory* – though this could partly be a result of the inclusion of slightly greater detail in the later editions.¹¹

III

Turning to the extant buildings, the first question which may arise is their potential as evidence for the agricultural system which produced them. One of the problems with using buildings in this way concerns the difficulty of assigning accurate dates to them. By using a combination of the physical evidence, the tithe maps (where they exist) and the successive editions of the twenty-five inch Ordnance Survey plans (sometimes – though not in the particular areas discussed here – supplemented by estate and parish maps), it is usually possible to narrow the range to twenty-five years, and often to ten years: this means that any patterns which emerge will only be indicative of broad trends.

Despite the clear documentary evidence for the importance of both cattle and sheep in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century, the earliest buildings to survive from both survey areas are almost entirely those associated with arable farming – barns, stables and granaries (often above the stables). Accommodation for cattle is hardly represented until the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and for sheep not at all. That this is not a result of the later reconstruction of livestock housing may be demonstrated by cartographic evidence. At Old Manor Farm, Braceby (Figure 2), for example, the tithe map shows that the only agricultural buildings on the site in 1839 were the dovecote (dated 1701), the barn, and the stable range:

¹⁰ On the western area, see Grigg, *Agricultural Revolution*, pp 155–6; Thirsk, *Peasant Farming*, pp 299–300; Clarke, 'Lincolnshire', pp 268, 378–80. For the Kesteven Fens, see Thirsk, *Peasant Farming*, p 225. See also the 1801 Home Office Crop Returns for the relevant parishes (in PRO, HO 67/15), and the 1866 Parish Crop Returns (PRO, MAF 68/41, MAF 68/42).

¹¹ Thirsk, *Peasant Farming*, pp 320–1; the annual Parish Crop Returns from 1866 onwards (in PRO, MAF 68); W White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Lincolnshire*, Sheffield, editions of 1842, 1856, 1872.

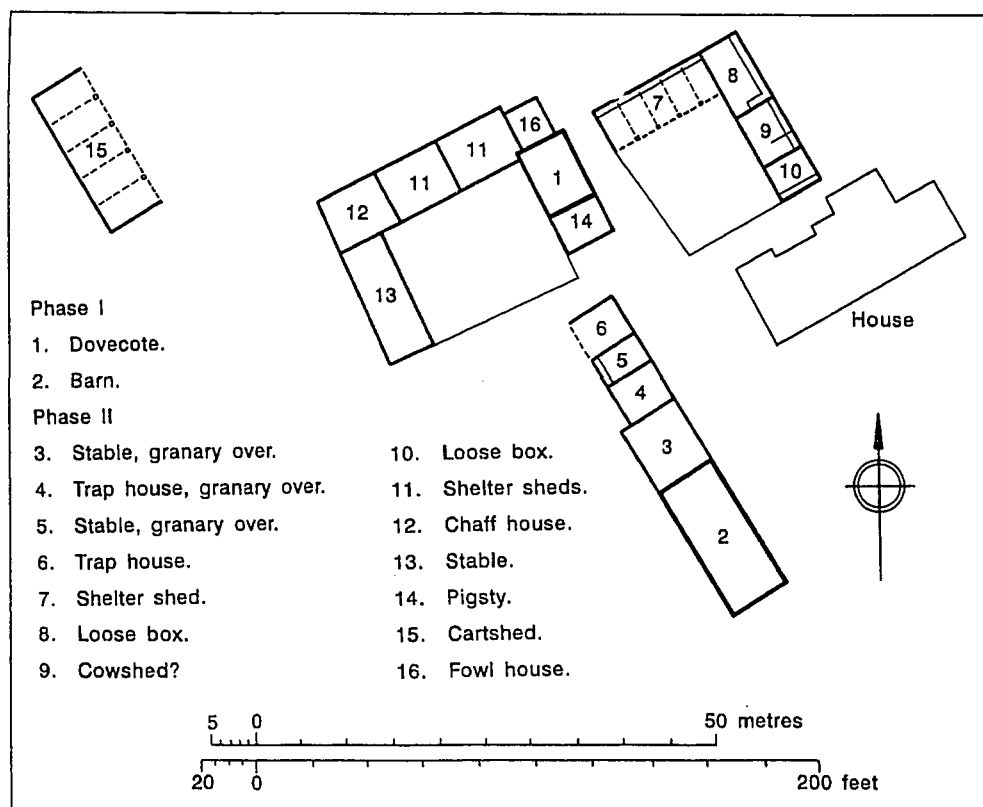


FIGURE 2
Old Manor Farm, Bracey (Bracey and Sapperton parish).

all the livestock accommodation is, therefore, a new creation of the period after 1840. This pattern is so common in the survey area that it is possible to suggest that it was also true of the majority of sites where the tithe map shows only one or two buildings which were later demolished in a complete reconstruction of the farmstead. It would seem that, in the early-nineteenth century the buildings reflect less the agricultural system, than the fact that before the mid-nineteenth century cattle were generally not housed – a point which may be confirmed by P Pusey's observation in 1843 that, in Lincolnshire as a whole, a lack of shelter for cattle was not uncommon.¹² In the same way, no special build-

ings were provided – either at this date or later – for sheep.

Although new barns and more particularly stables were built during and after the mid-nineteenth century, the bulk of new construction was related to the provision of accommodation for cattle and their fodder. The second and, more especially, the third quarter of the nineteenth century saw the provision of open-sided shelter sheds along the sides of formerly completely open cattle yards, and the construction of chaff and root houses, and a smaller number of spaces for other kinds of fodder preparation. These features are found on those farms (the majority) which developed piecemeal, and on those which were built in a single phase.

This is what would be expected given

¹² P Pusey, 'On the agricultural improvements of Lincolnshire', *JRASE*, IV, 1843, p 305.

the large amount of attention paid to the issue of cattle housing by nineteenth-century commentators. What the physical examples may do, though, is to indicate the time at which local estates and farmers began to seek to increase their profit by intensifying their activities rather than by expanding the area of arable. As noted earlier, the temporal distribution of documentary sources which illuminate this point is not even, resulting in some uncertainty in the chronology. While the buildings cannot provide the whole answer, they can go some way to filling the gap. For example, the fact that only nine shelter sheds appear to have been built in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, while three times that number may with some confidence be dated to the third quarter, may be significant. Given that cattle shelters and cow houses were being advocated as early as the late-eighteenth century, the provision of such buildings in the mid-nineteenth century is unlikely to be a reflection of advances in contemporary thinking about the best way to house the livestock.¹³ It may, however, be related both to affordability – the 1850s and 1860s being, in general, a period of agricultural prosperity – and the perception of need in the region – which may be allied to the necessity to maintain and even increase income by means other than expansion.

IV

It is in the sphere of the local manifestations of national trends that the buildings may have their greatest importance, but in relation to a slightly different aspect. The development of thinking concerning the ways in which farmsteads of various kinds were most efficiently laid out is well known from the extensive nineteenth-century literature. The purpose of that literature,

however, was to set out models – ideal building types and farmstead plans – and it almost always assumes that a completely new farmstead is being designed.

In reality, of course, relatively few farmsteads were completely reconstructed at one time, most receiving piecemeal additions and alterations. The pace at which this occurred varied considerably from one region – and, in some areas, from one estate – to another. In addition, the authors of the literature, although sometimes extensively travelled, often (perhaps inevitably) designed farms with particular regard to the regions with whose agriculture they were most familiar, and their solutions were not always readily applicable in all parts of the country. The only way in which to assess the impact on the majority of farmers of new ideas, of technological advance, and of changes in the wider economic context of farming (whether national or local) is often likely to be through the physical evidence, which can indicate the time at which the perception of need coincided with the financial means to implement change. Sometimes estate documentation, such as account books or farming diaries, or other written material, such as directories, may provide an insight into local conditions, but the number of such documents is relatively small.

One of the clearest examples of this in the survey area relates to the introduction of mechanization to the processing of grain crops. It is well recognized that the impact of any kind of mechanization on the way in which labour was deployed was immense, and its introduction marks an important point in social history. The timing and form of this development may therefore be of some significance. Neither of the survey areas was particularly advanced in this respect, and there is no positive evidence for the use of mechanical power before the 1850s.

¹³ For cattle accommodation in the late-eighteenth century, see N Harvey, *A History of Farm Buildings in England and Wales*, 2nd edn, Newton Abbot, 1984, pp 75–6.

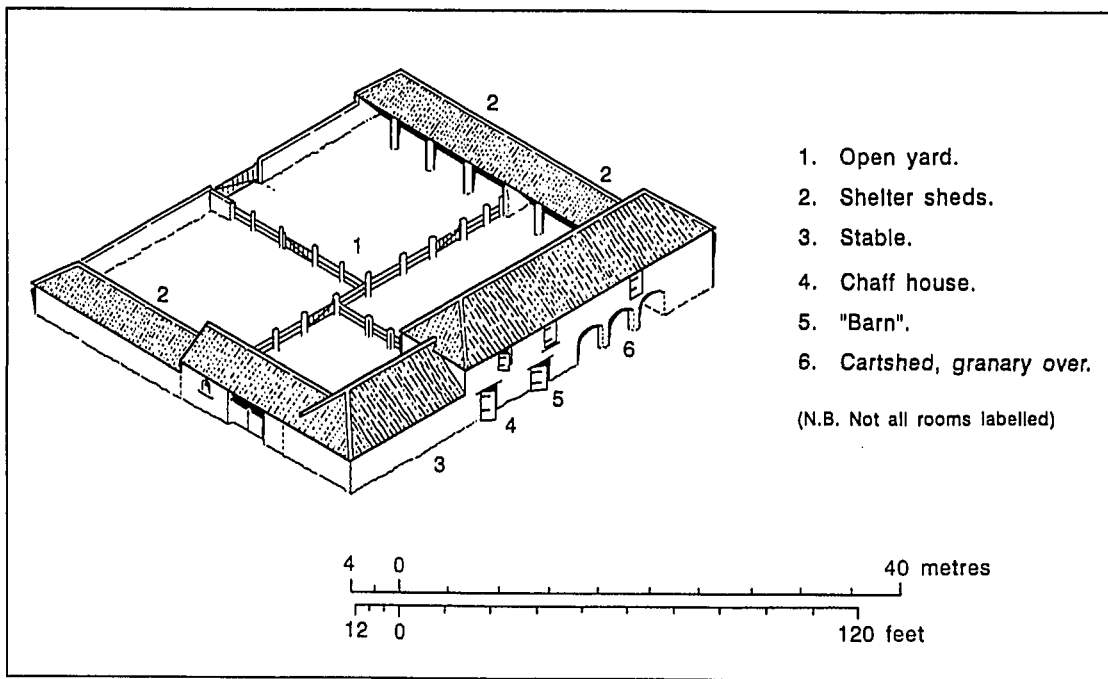


FIGURE 3
Unnamed farmstead on Helpringham Fen, Helpringham.

Until then, barns, however small, were built in traditional form, with large opposed threshing doorways. In the new farmsteads of the 1850s, however, barns are almost non-existent, being little more than compartments within larger buildings, as at an unnamed farm on Helpringham Fen, which is dated 1858 (Figure 3). Probably at much the same date an even smaller 'barn' – here more properly considered as a processing room – was built at Poplar Farm, Helpringham (Figure 4). These two farms, which appear to have been owned by different small landowners, are significant in that their design makes no provision for threshing – whether by hand or by machine – within the buildings: this strongly suggests that mobile steam power was envisaged. What the buildings indicate is not the date at which such engines became available (which the literature shows to have been in the 1840s), nor even the date at which they were introduced into the area, but

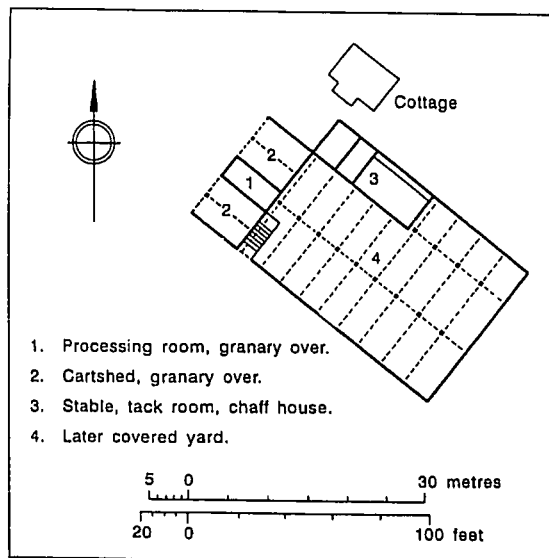


FIGURE 4
Poplar Farm, Helpringham Fen, Helpringham.

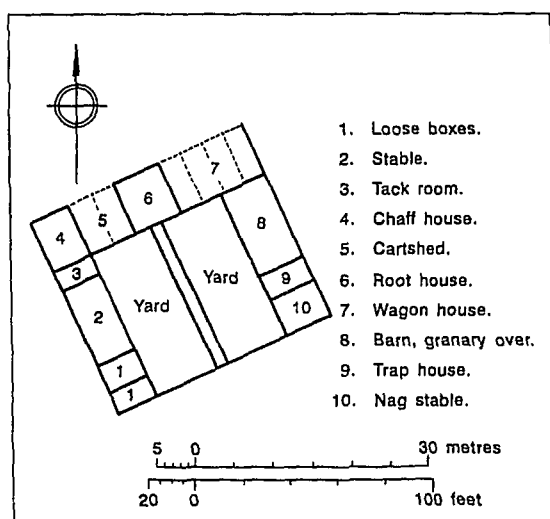


FIGURE 5
Hanby Lodge Farm, Hanby (Lenton, Keisby and Osgodby parish).

the date at which some landowners were so confident of its future that they were prepared to invest in buildings which could not operate in a traditional way.¹⁴

Not all landowners, of course, built new farmsteads or barns at the moment at which portable steam power became widely available, so that many farmers continued to use old buildings. In the eyes of contemporary commentators, traditional barns were inefficient, but the saving in labour costs cannot have been thought great enough to merit the investment required to replace structurally-sound traditional barns. What is even more interesting is that not all new farms built during the second half of the nineteenth century had new types of barn. At some, such as the planned farmstead of the earls of Dysart at Hanby Lodge Farm (Lenton, Keisby and Osgodby parish), the logic of portable power sources was taken further (Figure 5): as power was applied to the processes involved in preparing fodder for both cattle and horses, it was

possible to place the chaff and root houses next to the stable and cattle yards, and to move the engine(s) between them. The barn on this farm was a fully-floored two-storey structure, the first floor of which was really a granary; the function of the ground floor is less certain, but it may have been a cake store, and also have housed hand or mechanically powered machines for breaking cake as well as grinding and bruising grain. On other farmsteads, built at the same time, however, the form of the barn (though not the way in which it was used) was almost entirely traditional. An example of this is the planned farmstead built by the marquis of Bristol at Grange Farm, Little Hale, probably with money borrowed from the General Land Drainage Company in 1880-1.¹⁵ There, the barn communicates directly with the cattle yard, and may have housed some aspects of fodder preparation. However, although the building is a full two storeys in height, it was unfloored, suggesting that it was primarily used for the storage of straw – which many commentators thought could be done as effectively outside.

A similar point can be made with regard to the introduction of more sophisticated methods of keeping cattle during the second half of the nineteenth century. As indicated earlier, the most basic type of improved accommodation consisted of open-sided shelter sheds at the sides of the formerly open yards, and the majority of buildings of this kind were erected in the mid-nineteenth century. By then, however, other kinds of cattle housing system were being advocated, though they were not adopted on many farms for a considerable time. As early as the late-eighteenth century, stall feeding had been recommended, but no agreement was reached, and there was still considerable debate in the years around 1850 concerning

¹⁴ For portable steam engines in general, see N Harvey, *The Industrial Archaeology of Farming in England and Wales*, 1980, pp 102-3.

¹⁵ PRO, MAF 66/2.

the advantages of housing cattle in stalls or boxes.¹⁶

It has been suggested that, while stalls became common in south Lincolnshire as a whole, this was not the case in south-east Kesteven, in which the survey areas lie.¹⁷ This is borne out by the physical evidence: boxes were indeed built during the second half of the nineteenth century, but on most farms they did not provide accommodation for a significant proportion of the livestock – they were probably used for young stock and pregnant or ill cows. Once again, the pattern was not uniform, even in the small number of parishes in the survey area. The Dysart's model farmstead at Hanby Lodge Farm (Figure 5) adopted the covered yard (see below) in preference to a large number of boxes, but two farms in Walcot, which were effectively completely redesigned in 1883–4, retained open yards but had a greater number of loose boxes; and a small number of sites included enclosed cow houses for a larger number of animals.¹⁸

Similar variation occurs in relation to the adoption of covered yards, which were advocated from the 1850s onwards as a means of enhancing the growth rate of cattle and of improving the quality of manure. Some commentators recognized that farmers in parts of eastern England were more hesitant about covered yards than those elsewhere; the main reason adduced for this was that the low rainfall in the area did not cause sufficient damage to the manure for investment in covered yards to have been worthwhile, or to offset

the negative effects of a reduction of sunlight on the health of young cattle.¹⁹

The physical evidence not only confirms a general absence of covered yards before the 1880s, but quite clearly indicates that the debate had not been concluded. On the newly-planned farmstead of the early 1880s at Grange Farm, Little Hale (Figure 6), for example, cattle were kept in an open yard with a shelter shed along the north side. At the Dysart's planned farmstead at Hanby Lodge Farm (Figure 5), designed and built in a single phase dated 1883 by a datestone, fully covered yards were provided. On another, rather smaller, farmstead on the Dysart estate (Grange Farm, Hanby), known from a datestone to have been erected only two years after Hanby Lodge, the yards were open: if one estate did not have a clear policy on newly-planned farmsteads of the 1880s, any trends drawn from the literature are unlikely to reveal the considerable local variation in development.

What is perhaps even more interesting is that what may be the earliest covered yard (perhaps of the late 1860s or the 1870s) in the survey area – at Poplar Farm, Great Hale – was built on a farm which did not belong to one of the large estates. Taken in conjunction with the fact that the earliest farms built specifically for portable steam power also appear to have belonged to independent landowners, this may suggest – though very tentatively – that at least some men of this kind may have invested at different periods from some of the owners of large estates.

This point may be pursued further by reference to the dates at which completely new farmsteads were built, the only two which are reasonably certainly known to have been erected by freeholders were built in the 1850s – that is, at a time of prosperity.

¹⁶ For the debates concerning box feeding, see, for example, Caird, *English Agriculture*, pp 385–6; J Ewart, 'On the construction of farm-buildings', *JRASE*, XI, 1850, pp 241–2; T Tancred, 'Essay on the construction of farm buildings', *JRASE*, XI, 1850, p 194; J B Denton, *The Farm Homesteads of England*, 2nd edn, 1865, p 168; More generally, see D B Grigg, *English Agriculture: An Historical Perspective*, 1989, p 71.

¹⁷ Grigg, *Agricultural Revolution*, p 146.

¹⁸ The loose boxes are at Manor Farm, and Red House Farm, Walcot (near Folkingham); details, including the date, are confirmed by architect's plans – Lincolnshire Archives Office, 3 Anc 5/82 and 5/83.

¹⁹ For the advantages of covered yards, see W J Moscrop, 'Covered cattle yards', *JRASE*, 2nd ser I, 1865, pp 88–99, and Denton, *Farm Homesteads*, pp 129–30, where their absence in Lincolnshire attracts comment. For the fodder used in the area, see Caird, *English Agriculture*, p 180, and Clarke, 'Lincolnshire', p 380. The link between fodder and covered yards is discussed in Harvey, *Farm Buildings*, pp 131–2.

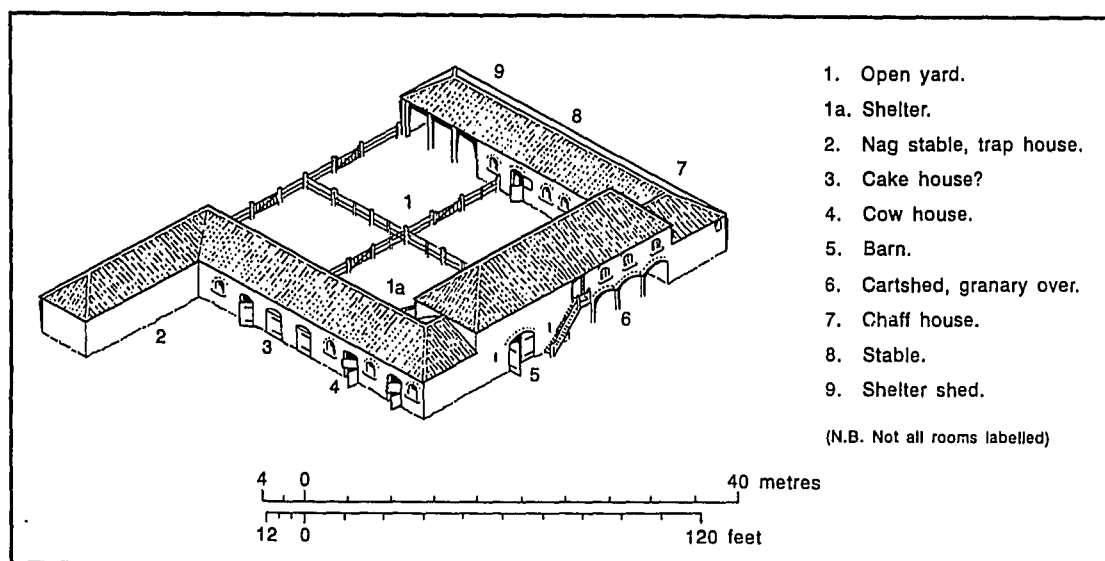


FIGURE 6
Grange Farm, Little Hale.

By contrast, the Ancaster, Bristol and Dysart estates all invested in new tenant farmsteads during the 1880s (and the Welby estate, in one instance, even later) – in other words, during the depression. Combined with what seems to have been significant investment by the Welby estate c 1800, and certainly was by the Warner estate in the 1820s, it may be possible to suggest that whereas small landowners may only have been able to afford major investment in periods of prosperity, larger estates (which may have had more diverse sources of income) may have been less concerned to invest when rents were high, but, by contrast, could afford to try to maintain incomes by investment in lean times. The volume of evidence from the survey area is not large enough to demonstrate this conclusively, but it may be a hypothesis worth testing in other parts of the country.

The new types of building adopted, and the speed at which they were introduced to an area are clearly subjects of considerable interest to historians of farm buildings, but is this material more widely relevant? The question cannot be fully answered

here, since detailed work on economic history has not been undertaken. It may be suggested, though, that analysis of the timing of the actual introduction of new kinds of building on different kinds of farm provides information concerning the nature and type of investment in farmsteads, which may, when analysed on a regional scale, have implications for the local economy.²⁰ While a certain amount of evidence concerning investment can be obtained from documentary sources, they are usually estate-based, and the distribution of suitable sources is considerably more uneven than that of farmsteads with intelligible historic fabric. As was shown earlier, in the case of the farms in the Hanby area, the type of investment was not uniform even on a single estate; to draw regional conclusions from patchy estate documentation alone would be unwise – particularly in an area like the

²⁰ For a similar suggestion, see A D M Phillips, 'Landlord investment in farm buildings in the English Midlands in the mid-nineteenth century', in B A Holderness and M Turner, eds, *Land, Labour and Agriculture, 1700–1920: Essays for Gordon Mingay*, 1991, p 210.

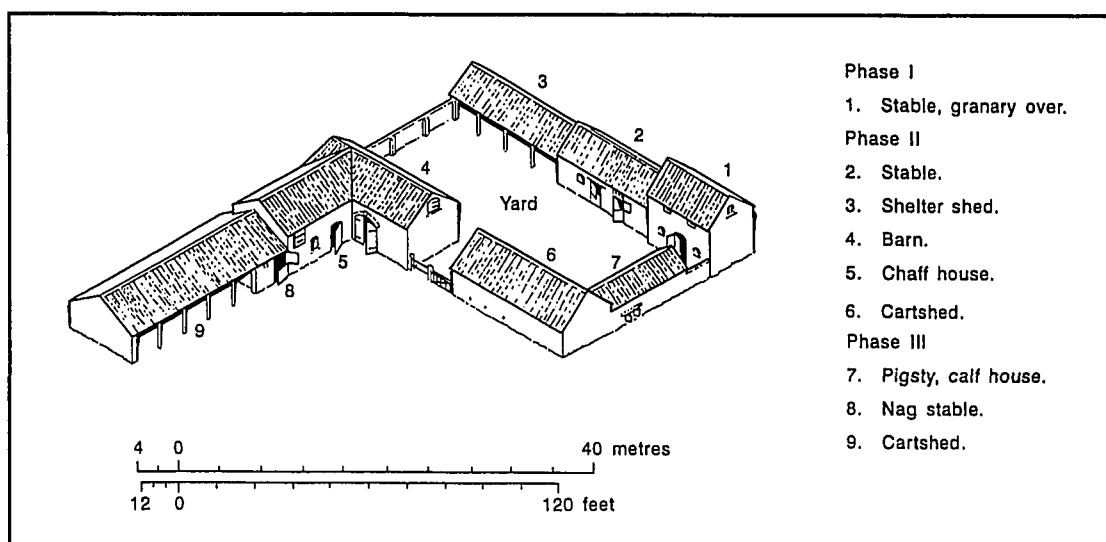


FIGURE 7
Village Farm (now Darwood House), Swaton.

fens, where there was a high proportion of undocumented freeholders.

V

A further aspect of rural life to which extant farm buildings have particular relevance is the way in which the farmsteads were worked. This can only be understood where a high proportion of the historic layout survives or can be reconstructed – often only in the final or penultimate historic phase (which typically, in the survey area, is the late-nineteenth century). One example will suffice – a small farmstead of several phases dating from the late-eighteenth to the early-twentieth century.

Village Farm in Swaton (Figure 7) is a small farmstead which has many features typical of the region. The first phase, which probably dates from the late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth century is a stable with granary above. It is not known whether other buildings of the same or earlier date were once associated with it, and nothing can be deduced of the way in which the farmstead as a whole was arranged at that date. The major phase of construction of

the surviving buildings was the second quarter of the nineteenth century and, with its completion, it becomes possible to understand the farmstead quite fully. The stabling was expanded, a shelter shed was provided for cattle, a cartshed (or possible another shelter shed) was constructed, and a barn and chaff house were built. The layout was not convenient, since the grain was still stored above the earlier stable which lay at the opposite corner of the yard from the barn where it was processed (probably originally by hand): the threshed grain therefore had to be carried from the barn across the yard and up through the stable to the granary (there being no first-floor doorway to the granary). The chaff was transferred from the barn to the adjacent chaff house, but, once processed into fodder, also had to be taken across the yard (after first passing round or through the barn), to the horses in the stable and the cattle in the yards. The stables had to be cleaned out regularly, and the cattle yard mucked out less frequently, the manure being taken either to a midden or direct to the fields. In addition, the horses had to be groomed and otherwise cared for on a

daily basis, so that the ill-lit and poorly-ventilated stable was the workplace of a number of men for part of the day.

The third phase, probably of 1850-1870 (and certainly complete by 1887), saw the addition of a cart and implement shed, the conversion of the probable former cartshed (opposite the stable) to a shelter shed for cattle or horses, and the building of a combined pigsty and calf house, which may also have included provision for poultry. The last was very small, indicating that pigs and fowl were probably primarily kept for domestic purposes; it was situated near to the house, and hatches were provided in the outer wall of the building to reduce the distance which the fodder had to be carried from the back kitchen where it was prepared. The final stage in the evolution of the buildings (not on plan) consisted of the construction, in the early-twentieth century, of a shelter shed to the west of the barn, and the roofing over of the southern half of the yard (since removed). While this may have improved profitability and conditions for the animals, it did little if anything to ease the lot of the workers.

The amount of labour involved, even on a relatively small farm such as this, is easily forgotten in our automated age, as is its heavy nature. Even when threshing and other forms of processing were mechanized, the distribution of crops and fodder around the farmstead was still extremely labour-intensive, as analysis of the plan of the model farmstead at Hanby Lodge Farm (Figure 5) will demonstrate. What the buildings show is something of the ways in which farms were worked, and the conditions in which a large mass of the population lived: by doing this, they provide oral history with a corporeal dimen-

sion. This aspect of the interpretation of farmsteads is becoming increasingly important as the last of the farmers who remember traditional ways are coming to the end of their lives.

VI

Students of social and economic history, on the one hand, and of farm buildings, on the other, have tended to work in isolation. What has been suggested above is that the work of historians may be given an added dimension by taking physical evidence into account: the study of buildings enables some of the local realities behind more general trends to be perceived in ways in which that of documents rarely does. The importance of this may be debated, but the local variability of agricultural development means that understanding of the broader national picture is likely to be deepened by appreciation of the local conditions of which it is the sum. For the buildings to be useful in this way, however, they have to be analyzed on a regional basis, and in context. Most existing studies of farm buildings concentrate on individual types of structure rather than on farmsteads as a whole, and even regional studies tend to concentrate on the best surviving examples (of either complete farmsteads or single buildings). This is understandable, since buildings in a poor state of preservation, and those which were always of poor quality, do not in themselves make exciting objects of study. Viewed in context, however, they may provide important evidence for regional prosperity, and for the conditions in which the majority of the farming population worked.