



II : South Witham to Saltersford

Through the Kesteven Uplands

Leaving the village of South Witham, the young River Witham flows due north towards Grantham, some 10 miles distant. Opinions may differ but this is perhaps the most attractive scenery of the river's entire course, passing through the varied and pleasant countryside of the Kesteven Uplands with its gentle hills, limestone villages and country house parks. The river here is never far from the twin transport arteries of the Great North Road and East Coast Main Line, yet there is often a sense of quiet timelessness despite the constant stream of traffic on the A1.

The Witham here is still diminutive and tends to remain hidden and difficult to access in its valley. The winding stream has over millennia carved into the area's Oolite limestone. Typically, this has created a river trench set within a broader valley with convex sides rising to the Oolite plateau. The topography of the area is complicated by numerous tributary streams which join the main valley, especially from the west, where they too have cut into the plateau and extend for several miles. The longest is Cringle Brook which, like the Witham itself, rises west of Sewstern Lane within Leicestershire. Much shorter brooks join the Witham from

FACING PAGE: **Upper Witham, Stainby / Colsterworth**

RIGHT: **Great Ponton**

the eastern valleyside, where Ice Age till caps the plateau limestones almost to Grantham. The high ground on this side of the valley forms the watershed with the River West Glen in the catchment of the River Welland. Overall, therefore, the Upper Witham landscape covered in this chapter is a complex terrain of broad, plateau-like sweeps broken by intimate valleys in which nestle villages including North Witham, Gunby, Stainby, Skillington, Stoke Rochford and the Pontons.

