



The Lincoln Heath is probably the best example in Lincolnshire of upland common enclosed in the Parliamentary phase. The high plateau underwent conversion to farmland from unenclosed 'heath' in the period c. 1760 - c. 1800, having previously been used for centuries for common grazing and warrening by the villages on its periphery. The open, gorsy grasslands were enclosed to form private fields that were used mainly for mixed 'corn and sheep' farming, though commercial warrening continued into the 1820s around Temple Bruer (Mills, undated). The new fields were enclosed by drystone walls or hawthorn hedges, most of which are still present. Sadly, many of the walls are decaying as the shift to cash cropping since 1945 has reduced the need for stockproof barriers. The 'heaths' of the Wolds underwent a similar enclosure, though it took longer to complete and walls were rarely used.

LEFT: limestone wall detail, Scopwick Heath

BOTTOM LEFT: farmstead of Parliamentary era, Normanton Heath

FACING PAGE: stormclouds over Canwick Heath



fields and adding new, straight roads of a standard width. The extensive 'heath' commons of the Lincoln Heath and Wolds disappeared under the plough, as did all the remaining Fen wetlands. Agriculturally, it was certainly an audacious and remarkable undertaking that greatly increased Lincolnshire's arable acreage (though the contribution from ploughing up the old Fenland pastures should not be forgotten). It was also undeniably a key underpinning for industrial 'high farming' to develop in the 19th century, encouraging estates and tenant farmers to invest in improving their livestock, crop husbandry and farmsteads. Socially, however, there was a harsh corollary, as not all former smallholders or commoners gained a new

