



1 : Introduction

Lincolnshire lies on the east coast of England between East Anglia and Yorkshire, forming a blunt protrusion of land that stretches as a physical and historic entity from the Wash to the Humber. The long, sandy arc of the North Sea coastline defines Lincolnshire's present terrestrial limit, while inland it reaches to the lower Trent Valley on the west and links with the rolling Jurassic scarplands of central England on the south-west. The southern and north-western boundaries lie almost hidden within England's two largest former wetlands – the Fens and Humberhead Levels respectively – which Lincolnshire shares with adjoining counties.

Thus bounded, Lincolnshire is still something of a land apart, with natural and historic characteristics that have moulded a distinctive landscape and a quiet sense of separateness from surrounding regions that persists today despite modern communications. This is due mainly to its physical distance from major centres of population and its largely rural character. Industry has touched all of the county to some degree, especially Lincoln and the larger towns, and makes a significant contribution to the landscape in the far north around Scunthorpe and the Humber Bank. However, Lincolnshire is still dominated by its vast, rural countryside, which has some of the lowest population densities in lowland England and an unsurpassed feeling of spaciousness.

FACING PAGE: **chalk hills, South Ormsby, Lincolnshire Wolds**

RIGHT: **willows in the Glen Washes, Baston Fen**

Lincolnshire encompasses a wide variety of landscapes and topographies reflecting its large size and diverse geology. Natural habitats range from lowland peat bogs to chalk hills and from sandy heathland to coastal marshes and dunes. This variety is mirrored in the farmed countryside too, which combines with the natural framework to define a number of distinct landscape character areas as described and explored later in this book. Nevertheless, there are generic qualities throughout, including a sweeping topography of open vistas and unbounded skies and a highly intensive approach to agriculture that reflects Lincolnshire's pre-eminence nationally as a producer of food since the mid 19th century. To some

