



it involved a wholesale shift to sheep farming and may have contributed to the shrinkage and loss of Medieval villages as seen in parts of the Midlands. Field patterns dating from early enclosure are often still identifiable despite subsequent changes, being typically more piecemeal and less regular than those of the Parliamentary enclosures.

Except in parts of the Isle of Axholme, Parliamentary enclosure finally swept away the remaining open field landscape in a tidal wave between 1760 and 1840. Whole parishes were re-ordered, with the village arable and pasture being allocated between the larger landowners in the form of private fields, and all but the least fertile commons and heaths also reclaimed and enclosed for agriculture. Completing this drastic transformation of the countryside were new farmsteads built away from the villages and straight new roads that were sufficiently wide for verges. Parliamentary enclosure



TOP LEFT & LEFT: **Lincoln Heath**. The limestone plateau of the Lincoln Heath was reclaimed for agriculture in the second half of the 18th century during the Parliamentary enclosures and became an exemplar of the new 'corn and sheep' farming. By the mid 19th century, large flocks of Lincoln Longwools were being folded in fields of turnips and other fodder crops to enrich soil fertility as part of new crop rotations that typically also included barley, clover and wheat courses. Many features of the Heath landscape date to the enclosure period, including drystone walls, hedgerows, farmsteads, plantation woods and roads.

FACING PAGE: **Lincoln Longwools near Risby**. After centuries of longwool production in Lincolnshire, the Lincoln Longwool sheep is today maintained largely by rare breed enthusiasts.

