



have been identified on the Cliff, including Dragonby, and these were augmented in Romano-British times by towns and villas, as well as the Roman military centre at Lindum (Lincoln) which later became a civilian city. Some time after the Roman departure, most of the plateau seems to have become the uninhabited heath of grassland and warrens that lasted until Parliamentary enclosure.

Limestone is the main construction material for almost all types of traditional building on and adjoining the plateau, including churches, villages and farmsteads. Additionally, ironstone is found adjoining the limestone beds in places along the Lincoln Edge, where it too has been quarried historically as a building stone and for iron ore. The Greetwell area adjoining Lincoln has a complex history of ironstone mining and limestone quarrying during the last two centuries and may also have been exploited earlier by the Romans.

LEFT: **Temple Bruer.** The interior of the Lincoln Heath was virtually uninhabited between the Roman period and the Parliamentary enclosures but Temple Bruer was a significant exception. Here the Knights Templar developed a large farmed estate from the 12th century, focused on a preceptory church and village. A single tower from the preceptory is the most obvious survival today but other landscape features remain in the area including a network of green lanes which may have been established by the Templar estate for transporting wool and other produce.



ABOVE: **The Lincoln Gap.** Mist fills the Gap in this view from Lincoln's South Common on a December evening. The ridge of Jurassic limestone that forms the Heath and Cliff is breached here by the River Witham as it turns east towards the Fens. On the north side of the Gap, Lincoln Cathedral occupies a prominent hilltop location marking the start of the Cliff plateau and forming a landmark that is visible across large parts of Lincolnshire. The Lincoln Gap is thought to have originated approximately 2 million years ago with an eastward flowing river cutting through the limestone on a course from the Nottinghamshire hills to the North Sea. Later, the Gap was taken over by the

Witham as this 'Lincoln River' was captured by the Trent to flow into the Humber. Geological evidence indicates that the Gap was further enlarged by Trent waters on at least two subsequent occasions during the Pleistocene (Ice Age), when the course of the lower Trent became blocked by ice sheets. The most recent such episode was in the final or Devensian glaciation some 50,000 years ago.