



prepared for the City of Lincoln by local surveyor and drainage engineer James Sandby Padley. Padley authored a book on the fens and floods of Mid Lincolnshire shortly before his death (*Padley, 1881). This provides a fascinating account of the Witham, albeit that his interpretation of the river's evolution has largely been superseded by modern research.

With Padley's drainage, wetland on the Middle Witham and Brant became restricted to a few riverside fields and corners of land that were difficult to cultivate. In recent decades, however, a large area of the floodplain has been designated as the Witham and Brant Washlands to store excess flood water which might otherwise threaten Lincoln and places downriver. Happily, this scheme has involved re-wilding several riverside areas to benefit nature. Historically, the floodplain wetlands of the Witham also extended right

through Lincoln, merging with those of the River Till to form an expanse of fenland west of the city, as explored in the next chapter.

After meeting the River Brant, the Witham begins its final approach into Lincoln, initially between the suburbs of North Hykeham and Waddington Low Fields. The river here is much closer again to the Lincoln Edge which thus forms part of its setting. The next chapter explores the river in Lincoln.

FACING PAGE: **River Witham, South Hykeham / Waddington**

ABOVE: **Lincoln Edge at Coleby from Coleby Low Fields**