



and former islands have yielded evidence of human presence from the Mesolithic period onwards. The sandy 'ridge' of Wigford may have been the site of the very first Roman fort at Lincoln but in any case developed as an early suburb where Ermine Street and the Fosse Way converged on the southern approach to the Roman river crossing and walled city. Medieval and later expansion of downhill Lincoln occurred south, east and west of the Roman walls, avoiding areas that were subject to flooding, which remained as meadowland, pasture and wet fen. Over the centuries land reclamation occurred by dumping and the construction of drains and flood defences, incrementally reducing the risk of inundation and allowing building in areas taken from the river and its floodplain.

Before the railways arrived, the Witham was Lincoln's principal route for trade, commencing in the Roman period with docks focused east of the walled city. At some point the river was augmented by the Fosdyke Canal connecting Lincoln to the Trent, long ascribed to the Romans but now regarded by some as more likely to be Anglo-Danish in origin. Later, railways and industries that relied on rail also stuck to the valley bottom, triggering massive expansion here of mainly terraced housing from the 1840s and transforming downhill into the city's commercial and industrial heart.

The last hundred years have somewhat blurred Lincoln's traditional duality through new suburban growth, including the large municipal housing estates

FACING PAGE: **Lincoln Cathedral**

RIGHT: **moored narrow boats, Brayford Pool**

