



### **The Lincoln Gap: geology meets townscape**

The Lincoln Gap is the most notable topographic feature on the course of the River Witham and provides Lincoln with its unique and dramatic setting. The Gap is at its highest and widest near its mouth, where the ridge of the Oolites reaches maximum elevation along the Lincoln Edge escarpment. Here the steep sides rise about 180 ft (55m) from the valley floor and are roughly a mile apart. Moving eastwards, they gradually decline in height and the Gap narrows towards Greetwell and Washingborough beyond the City boundary as the Oolites dip beneath younger rocks.

The origin of the Gap will probably never be known with certainty. However, it is likely that successive glacial and river events reinforced an initial breach in the limestone ridge that emerged possibly as early as the Tertiary period. Occupation of the Gap by the mighty Lincoln Trent for a period of nearly a quarter of a million years almost certainly helped to carve out the feature we see today, which was inherited by the River Witham only after the final glaciation of the Ice Age. The Gap is integral to the form and character of Lincoln, not least in providing the landmark setting for the City's historic core and the iconic pedestrian approach via Steep Hill. The built-up northern hillside with its medley of periods and styles rises



FACING PAGE: **Lincoln seen across the Gap from Canwick Hill**

TOP RIGHT: **Lincoln Cathedral at sunset**

RIGHT: **Cathedral and Hillside from City Hall**