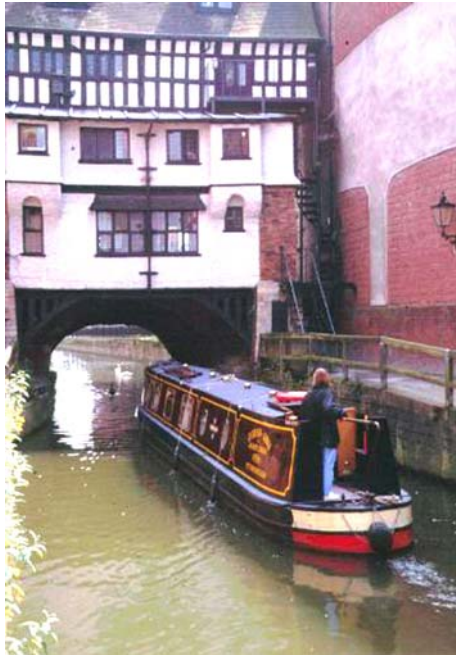




Read out about one of the oldest canals in England which dates back to Roman times.

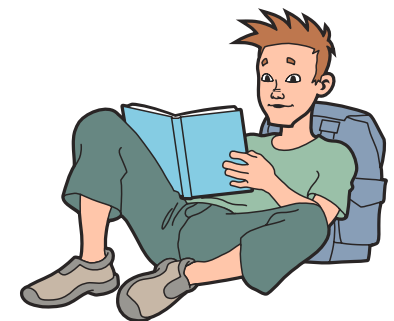


Boating on the River Witham
under the Glory Hole in Lincoln

How did Lincoln become an inland port?

Lincoln was founded by the Romans shortly after the Roman invasion in 43AD. It was an important site with a high hill overlooking flat land which was good for growing crops. Most Roman settlements were built beside navigable rivers (i.e. rivers which are wide enough and deep enough for boats). However Lincoln only had a small river, the River Witham. The Romans made this river navigable by straightening and deepening it from Lincoln all the way to the sea. Lincoln therefore became a very important inland port.

Did you know that during Roman times Lincoln was known as 'Lindum'?





The gates at Torkey Lock

The Fosdyke Canal

The Fosdyke is a man-made canal which joins Lincoln to the navigable [River Trent](#). Many historians believe that the Romans built it because they needed to reach important settlements to the west of Lincoln more easily. Other historians believe that the Fosdyke Canal was built for draining farm land.

The Fosdyke Canal is probably the oldest canal in the country and it flows for nearly 18 km (11 miles).

In 120 AD a Roman settlement grew up at Torksey, where the River Trent meets the Fosdyke Canal. A settlement there would have kept both the canal and river secure for the Romans as well as being a safe place to store grain. In Roman times Torksey would have been known as Tiovulfingastor!

What happened after the Romans left?

After the Romans left, the Fossdyke Canal was used very little and became neglected and overgrown.

In 1121 Henry I ordered the canal to be cleaned out and restored.

Over the next 500 years the canal was used to transport goods, but it was badly looked after.

In 1671 the Fossdyke was cleaned once more, but 60 years later it had nearly become impassable again!

In 1741, the canal was properly restored. It took 3 years. After that it was used to transport farm produce from Lincolnshire to other parts of the country.

In 1817, steam powered packet boats started to be used on the Fossdyke. These boats carried people and became a popular form of transport. However the canal was still neglected and would often flood.

After railways arrived in the area in the 1840s, the Fossdyke Canal was used less and less for transportation.

Today, people use the canal mainly for pleasure, enjoying the freedom of the waterways and the local wildlife.

Mallards and Coots are two types of water birds that can be seen on the Fossdyke Canal.

