The Witham Act 1762 created the Witham Drainage General Commissioners, who exercised jurisdiction over the drainage by the River Witham, its tributaries and main drains within the six districts of the Witham. The six districts included the First District:- described as ‘the Fens and Lowlands in Lincoln, Lincoln Common, Canwick, Washingborough, Heighington, Branston, Potterhanworth, Nocton, Dunston, Metheringham, Blankney, Linwood, Martin, Timberland, Timberland Thorpe (now known as Thorpe Tilney), Walcott, Billinghay Dales and Dogdyke’; and the Fifth District ‘low lands in the parishes of Anwick, North kyme, Ruskington, Dorrington and Digby’.

Each parish was entitled to elect one Commissioner to their respective District. The First District electing eighteen Commissioners, the Fifth District five. Each District elected representatives to become General Commissioners, seven from the First District and two from the Fifth District were elected together with representatives from the other four Witham Districts to form the General Commission of thirty one representatives.

A series of Acts and Awards were brought before Parliament to improve the standard of drainage in these districts:

**Witham First District**

Washingborugh & Heighington Fens

1827 & 1829 – Acts for dividing, enclosing and exonerating from tithes, the open and common fields etc., in the parish of Washingborough and township of Heighington. Awards dates 1830 and 1831 describing bridges, drains, banks and sluices in the area made or erected by the Commissioners.

Nocton, Potterhanworth and Branston Fens

1789 & 1832 – Acts for embanking and draining certain fens and low lands in the parishes of Nocton, Potterhanworth and Branston (5,860 acres). Award dated 1793 describes drains, bridges, engines, stanches, sluices, dams in the area made or erected by the Commissioners.

Dunston & Metheringham Fens

1789- Act for dividing and enclosing the open common fen and ings in the parish of Dunston and for draining and improving certain parts thereof. Also certain enclosed low lands in Dunston and Metheringham parishes. Award dates 1793 relating to drains, banks and bridges made or erected by the Commissioners.

1826 – Act for embanking, draining and otherwise improving lands in the parishes of Metheringham and Dunston.

Martin, Blankney & Linwood Fens

1787 – Act for enclosing the low lands and common fens in the Hamlet of Martin, in the parish of Blankney and for draining these lands. Award dated 1804 describing ditches, drains, dikes, tunnels, engines, stanches made or erected by the Commissioners.

1797 – Act to embank and drain the open and unembanked lands and grounds lying between the Dlaes Head Dyke and the River Witham, in the several townships or hamlets and parishes of Walcott, Timberland Thorpe, Timberland, Martin, Linwood and Blankney. Award dates 1804 describing banks, drains, bridges, engines, sluices made or erected by the Commissioner.

1832 – Act for the more effective drainage of the lands within Blankney Fen, Blankney Dales, Linwood Fen, Linwood Dales, Martin Fen and Martin Dales.

Timberland and Thorpe Fens

1785 – Act for drainage and preserving certain low lands within the parish of Timberland. Award dated 1789 describing banks, drains, bridges made or erected by the Commissioner.

1839 – Act for the more effectual drainage of certain lands called the fen and dales of Timberland, Timberland Thorpe in the parish of Timberland.

**The Fifth District**

1840 – Act for the more effectual drainage of certain lands called Billinghay Fen, Billinghay Dales, Walcott Fen, Walcott Dales, North Kyme East Fen and Ings in the parishes or places of Billinghay and Walcott, Dogdyke, Harts Ground, Coningsby, Swineshead, North Kyme and South Kyme.

Billinghay Award dated 1779 relating to and describing banks, drains, bridges, sluices, tunnels and engines made or erected by the Commissioners.

Anwick Award dated 1794.

Ruskington, Dorrington and North Kyme dates 1839 describing sewers, watercourses, engine, tunnels made or erected by the Commissioners.

Leasingham Moor Award dates 1822 describing tunnels, drains and bridges made or erected by the Commissioners.

Ruskington Fields Award dated 1780 describing a drain.

1792 – Act for making and maintaining a navigation from Sleaford Castle Causeway through the town of Sleaford, along the course of Sleaford Mill Stream and Kyme Eau to the River Witham at or near Chapel Hill and for making necessary cuts for better effecting the said navigation.

The 1930 Land Drainage Act provided for the re-organisation of the various districts into elective Internal Drainage Boards and the Witham and Steeping catchment Board submitted a scheme (S.O. 31 – 1934) which established Witham First District Internal Drainage Board. The scheme was confirmed on 8th January 1934.

On 1st June 1953, Witham Fifth District Internal Drainage Board was abolished (S.O. 900 – 1953) and the vast majority of the district, its assets and liabilities were incorporated into the First District. The electoral districts were revised, adding six members to represent the area formerly administered by the Fifth District.

In 1968 (S.I. 646 – 1968) Witham First District Internal Drainage Board’s area was further extended by taking in additional land in the parishes of Heighington, Branston & Mere, Blankney, Martin, Scopwick, Timberland, Digby, Ashby-de-la-Launde and Broxholme, Dorrington, Roxholme, Leasingham, South Rauceby, Silk Willoughby and Wilsford and the urban district of Sleaford.

The Land Drainage Act 1976 had no effect upon the Board but the Land Drainage Act 1991 resulted in a reconstitution of the Board to accommodate the appointment of Members from Councils within the Board’s drainage district. The board was reconstituted on 7th July 1993 (S.I. 1640 – 1993) in its present form as Witham First District Internal Drainage Board.