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Acknowledgements

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Louth Town Council and Louth Museum

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HISTORY MATTERS

LOUTH CENTRAL HERITAGE TRAIL

THE TOWN AND ITS SETTING

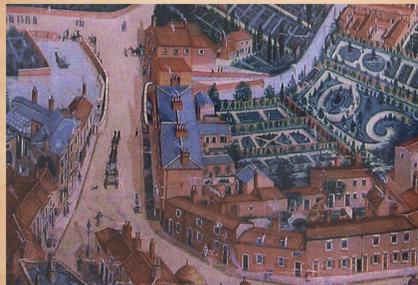
Louth originated in Saxon times, set in a fold of the Lincolnshire Wolds where the ancient trackway called Barton Street crossed the River Lud as it flows from the chalk Wolds onto the lower Middle Marsh, an expanse of boulder clay left by ice-sheets during the later periods of glaciation. The town's name derives from Hlud or Loud, referring to the fast-flowing river. The Anglo-Saxon cemetery



houses brewed their own beer. The railways arrived, Louth being a major station on the East Lincolnshire line (1848), with later links to Bardney (1876) and Mablethorpe (1877), but carriers' carts continued to serve the surrounding villages on market days into the 1930s. Public opinion was galvanised by painter William Brown through his newspaper articles to bring about the provision of a new town cemetery in 1855. Through the generosity of local benefactors, especially the Allenby family, a purpose-built 10-bed cottage hospital with adjoining dispensary was opened in Crowtree Lane in 1873. This continued to give medical care until 1984.

ARTISTIC TALENT

When the spire of St James' church was struck by lightning in 1844, scaffolding enabled William Brown to attain the birds' eye view for his sketches of the town and the countryside all around, from the Wolds to the sea and some miles of the Yorkshire coast. These he used to paint the unique panorama of the town and villages encircling it. The original two paintings, a unique source of information for local historians, now hang in the Sessions House,



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on the Wold edge a mile outside the town at Achorpe contained over 400 cremation urns some of which can be seen in Louth Museum. With Christianity came a church north of the river, St Mary's, in the area now called the Old Cem; and a monastery south of the river whose Abbot Aethelheard became Archbishop of Canterbury in 792. That abbey building was destroyed by the Danes. The existence of an early market seems proved with the recent discovery of the Saxon head of the market cross. Names of the early streets - Cisterngate, Eastgate, Westgate, Northgate and Upgate - include the Danish 'gata' meaning a way, reflecting the later settlement of the area by those we commonly call Vikings.



After the Conquest the Norman Bishop of Lincoln, Remigius, as Lord of the Manor of Louth, created a planned town with a large open space for a market, now divided by buildings between Mercer Row and Cornmarket. Water was supplied by the springs of Ashwell and St Helen. By 1086 Domesday records a market, one of only seven in Lincolnshire, 13 mills along the river and a population of about 600.

LOUTH PARK ABBEY

In 1139 Cistercian monks founded Louth Park Abbey a mile east of the town. Their large cruciform church, completed a century later by Abbot Robert Dunham, was constructed using chalk quarried from the area of the present cattle market, and the site supplied with spring water via a dug channel called the Monks' Dyke. The abbey became prosperous through wool, with flocks of some 6,000 sheep. Their property included Lambcroft Grange on the Wolds, and summer grazing lands on the coastal marshlands and salterns (the

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William Brown, a Louth painter, lived in February 1859, aged 70.

Louth Town Council's premises, and back-lit replicas with copies of the sketches are exhibited in Louth Museum.

At around the same time as Brown was working on his masterpiece another great craftsman arrived in Louth. Thomas Wilkinson Wallis had been born in Hull to parents whose impoverished state meant he had only three years elementary education before he was required to work. After a 7-year apprenticeship with carver and gilder Thomas Ward, Wallis's superior talent was remarked upon by his employer. Wallis heard of a similar business in Louth needing help and soon took the practice over. He carved pieces in limewood for display in his shop window and gained a patron in George Tomline MP. His medal-winning piece for the Great Exhibition of 1851 marked the start of a 20-year carving career until his love of astronomy injured his sight.



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He then taught himself surveying and became the town's Borough Surveyor. In retirement he painted in oils and water-colour, collected insects and edited his journals into an autobiography. Examples of his extraordinary talents can be seen in the Victoria & Albert Museum, Lincoln's Usher Collection and at Louth Museum who have the biggest collection of his work.

INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Louth suffered from the effects of the agricultural depression in the later nineteenth century and the population level did not recover until after World War II. In 1907 the town was given the fine riverine park of Hubbards Hills by the trustees of A A Pahud, a Swiss who taught at the Grammar School. The Louth Naturalists' Antiquarian & Literary Society opened their purpose-built museum in 1910. That same year moving pictures were first seen in Louth and the first cinema, the Electric Picture Palace, was opened in July 1914; that building is now Heron. The disastrous Louth Flood on 29 May 1920 claimed 23 lives, demolished buildings along the course of the river and spelt the final end of the Navigation. With flood water in the upstairs bedroom, Dr Higgins safely delivered his patient, Mrs Kirman, of a daughter: she was always known as 'the flood baby'. Marker stones in Bridge Street and James Street show the height reached by the flood waters. Mains electricity was brought from Grimsby in 1929, and a second cinema soon opened, and this survives today. Some people remained in the dreaded workhouse into the 1930s but improved provision was made for orphaned children in Horncastle until the Welfare State provided better support for all. In 1929 the future of all workhouses was considered. Inevitably some workhouse inhabitants had become ill so there had been provision in them for the sick. At the end of



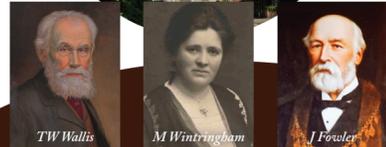
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1935 work began remodelling and extending facilities at Louth workhouse. A new block of wards with 120 beds, a maternity wing and X-ray facilities was built and the new Louth County Hospital opened in July 1938. The service was incorporated into the NHS and has survived various initiatives over the years. It continues to play a valued part in the life of local people.

In the 1960s the town commissioned seven carved oak ornamental town signs, placed to welcome visitors on the incoming roads.

AND INTO TODAY

Sadly the rail services of fond memory ceased fifty years ago although the handsome railway station was saved, and the long-awaited Louth bypass west of the town opened in 1991, saving the town centre from the summer strangulation of coastal traffic and permitting further expansion of the industrial estate at the Grimsby end of town. The Greenwich Meridian of zero degrees longitude passes through the town and has been marked at several points. It is one of a number of inspirations for an Art Trail which opened in 2002. Louth Museum was extended and refurbished in 2006 to become an award-winning facility and the independent charity which operates it also arranges lectures and outings open to everyone throughout the year. The Louth Civic Trust have marked several buildings with Blue Plaques to explain their significance and information boards also feature at a number of locations. The heart of Louth remains a popular shopping and visitor destination with an impressive range of independent shops, particularly for food. Many lovely buildings and features await discovery as you follow our heritage trail. Welcome to Louth!



WALKING THROUGH HISTORY

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

There was a school in 1276, but the Free Grammar School of King Edward VI was established by charter in 1551. The charter also created a Corporation (town government) of a Warden and Six Assistants. They were granted the properties of the lordship of the manor in 1564, and governed the town until the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835. Famous old boys of the grammar school include founder of Virginia, Captain John Smith, whose life was saved by Pocahontas; the explorer Sir John Franklin who perished trying to discover the North West Passage around Canada; and Alfred Tennyson, who became Poet Laureate during Queen Victoria's reign.



THE GREEN LADY

On the outskirts of Louth is Thorpe Hall where lived Sir John Bolle, knighted for his valour at the Battle of Cadiz in 1596. He is best remembered for the ballad of 'The Spanish Lady's Love'. This tells the story of his gallantry towards a woman taken prisoner during the conflict and her unrequited love for him. One of her gifts to him, a sequined silk bedcover, is displayed in Louth Museum. Her ghost dressed in green is said still to haunt the hall grounds. Although Sir John's son, Charles, was fined for supporting King Charles I, the family were able to retain the property and a later Charles rebuilt the present hall in 1680.

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GEORGIAN LOUTH

The second half of the 18th century saw the establishment of a network of turnpike roads: to Spilsby and Boston; to Horncastle and Sleaford; to Gainsborough and Bawtry; to Grimsby; and to Saltfleet. In 1770 the Navigation canal opened from Tetney on the coast to the eastern area of the town, the Riverhead, where an industrial, commercial and residential suburb developed, requiring another church, Holy Trinity, first built in 1834. During the last four decades of the century the increase in trade was an impetus to building more substantial properties and many of the fine houses along Westgate testify to this. They served the town's professional classes or were the town-houses of the country landowners. A theatre and assembly rooms provided entertainment. The need for banking facilities became evident and lawyer Charles Wigelsworth opened Louth's first bank in his home, Westgate House, in the last quarter of the 18th century.

However not everyone enjoyed the high life and a parish workhouse in Northgate gave shelter to the sick, old and unemployed, while the House of Correction (prison) in Eastgate housed those who had fallen foul of the law or were vagrants.



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NINETEENTH CENTURY CONFIDENCE

The first half of the nineteenth century was a period of rapid growth, the population doubling to over 10,500, making Louth the third largest town in the county after Lincoln and Boston. The mediaeval fields were enclosed, new housing appeared in courts and yards, along with a gas works (1826) and the union workhouse (1837), which still stands as part of the hospital. More banking companies opened in the town; Louth Savings Bank in 1817, the Lincoln & Lindsey Banking Co in 1833 and the Stamford, Spalding & Boston Bank at the end of the century. All these would eventually be amalgamated into today's national banking companies.

Lincolnshire is the county of John Wesley's birth so several Methodist chapels were built and enlarged, along with provision for the Baptists (from 1800), the Congregationalists in 1821 and the new Roman Catholic church in 1834. New elementary schools were established with the National School in 1812 followed by the British School in 1841. Public buildings included the Corn Exchange (1853), a new Town Hall (1854) and the Market Hall (1867). Ten brickworks were opened to meet demand, there were seven corn-grinding mills, a carpet factory, and some of the fifty inns and beer



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LOUTH CENTRAL HERITAGE TRAIL

This leaflet will guide you around the centre of Louth on a heritage trail. Remember always to look above ground floor level to admire the architecture. Louth has an extensive Conservation Area and over 250 listed buildings, too many to describe in this leaflet.

1 Start the walk in the MARKET PLACE at the raised lamp standard - Look towards the clock tower of the old Market Hall (northwards). This hall and the matching shops either side were built on a site cleared of older buildings in 1866. Note the decorative brickwork, steep slate roofs and metal roof finials. The Italianate tower houses a four-faced clock which cost 100 guineas (£105) paid for by public subscription.

To the right is a family business founded by Adam Eve in 1781 and still operating today. Turning further round clockwise, on the eastern side of the space, is a three-storey building with a high roof parapet which once carried the words 'PRINTING OFFICE'. This was Jackson's, who printed Alfred Tennyson's first poems in 1827. A small plaque between the windows explains this. Turning to the south, note the grocery store also with ornate brickwork. To the right the next shop was first a Georgian pub called The Golden Fleece. Further to the right an array of pilasters (flat pillars) oversails three shops in a block built in the 1840s.

On the west of the Market Place the bank dates from early C20th but fits well with other buildings.

Move up along the right hand side of the bank to the top of the Cornmarket.

2 CORNMARKEt - The bank at the far end was constructed as a branch of the Lincoln & Lindsey Bank whose logo of a sheep and sheaf is under the first floor bay window. They brought cash to Louth under armed guard and their pistols are in Louth Museum.

The Halifax Building Society occupies a new building on a site that has been the Georgian Theatre and the Victorian Corn Exchange. Prior to that this area was called the Butcher Market.

The Masons' Arms building may date back to C17th and was formerly The Bricklayers' Arms.

Opposite it is a block built as shops below and a reading room above which served as a private club. Move to Little Butcher Lane along the left hand end of this block.

3 LITTLE BUTCHER LANE - Read the Blue Plaque on the corner to your right.

Beyond on the left is a cafe in the old warehouse of a grocery store; note the doors above. Until 2003 delivery lorries parked in this lane to unload!

Walk on to Mercer Row ahead.

4 MERCER ROW - Across Mercer Row you will see a narrow passage between the buildings. This is Pawnshop Passage which now leads to a range of shops, but no longer a pawnshop. Immediately to the right of this is a Regency bow window, probably the oldest shop window in the town. Further right the electrical store occupies part of Kelsey House, an important Georgian property. The Kings Head is an old coaching inn, its early Victorian Gothic frontage added when church architect George Ravis Willoughby took over as publican from his father.

Cross Mercer Row and proceed to the junction with Upgate.

5 UPGATE - Pause and look around you. Immediately to your right is a C16th white timber-framed building, each floor projecting out further over the street. Now a restaurant, it is known as Cromwell House because Oliver Cromwell is said to have slept here in October 1643 before the Civil War Battle of Winceby near Horncastle.

JMW Turner visited Louth in 1797 and painted a scene looking towards the church as the setting for a horse fair.

Halfway down towards the church on the left can be seen the former Assembly Rooms. These were built c1750 for the local gentry to socialise. A century later the Mechanics Institute took them over to run a library, reading room and classes for working people. The beautiful interior with minstrel's gallery is worth visiting if open.

Cross at the level crossing, turn left, then right into

6 GOSPELGATE, formerly called Goosepool Lane - The first building to your left is The Greyhound. Turn into the yard at the rear and look up to the right at

HISTORY MATTERS

LOUTH CENTRAL HERITAGE TRAIL



JAMES FOWLER FRIBA
1828 - 1892
Architect &
Diocesan Surveyor
Mayor of Louth
5 times
lived here
1869 - 1892

NATIONAL SCHOOL
MDCCCXXI

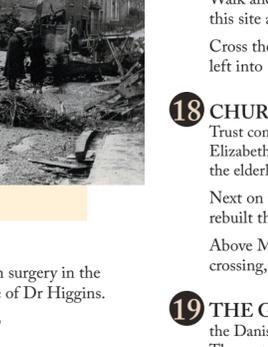
Tennis Courts

King Edward VI School

THE LINCOLNSHIRE RISING
began in this church
1st October 1536.
For his part in it, the
Vicar was hanged,
drawn and quartered
at Tyburn
25th March 1537

THOMAS WILKINSON WALLIS
1821 - 1903
Woodcarver & Surveyor
lived here
1851 - 1903

NINE INCH DROP



top of the neighbouring house. A stone reads 'NINE INCH DROP' to record the house eavesdrop, the space owned beyond the wall for the overhang of the roof.

Explore 'Church Close' off Gospelgate to the right, a delightful space of old and new buildings where once was a soapworks, and enjoy a view of the church spire.

Proceed along Gospelgate to no 22 where a Blue Plaque marks the home of celebrated woodcarver TW Wallis. Opposite is a handsome Georgian house - notice the green roofing slates, the courses graded from deep at gutter edge to narrow at the ridge. Within living memory this was a private school but is now a private house.

Next on your right a terrace of houses runs behind the pavement-edge buildings where the first house was a shop. Look up George Street where it opens on the left to see the handsome villas built mainly between 1844 and 1856, as evidenced by William Brown's panorama sketches and completed painting.

At the junction on your right the ornate block of dwellings is the bedehouses of 1869 - see the date cast in the rainwater hoppers. The stone plaque explains their 1551 origin.

Turn into

7 SCHOOLHOUSE LANE - The bedehouses link into the Grammar School Studio, all designed by James Fowler. The original school stood in the space now tarmacked. It was two storeys high with bedehouses below and schoolroom above, so the unhappy Alfred Tennyson looked down to the wall marked with a Blue Plaque.

Look back to see the statue of King Edward VI in its niche.

Return to Gospelgate, continue to the end, cross into Crowtree Lane.

8 CROWTREE LANE - The main Grammar School complex lies on your left. The first building, Orme Lodge, was built as the headmaster's house in 1796. Then, close to the road, the gabled science building perhaps stands on the site of the goosepool.

On the left the Lodge, and behind it, the yellow brick structure of the Victorian Cottage Hospital, closed to patients in 1984 and now part of the school.

Further on, on the left, is Elmhurst, formerly the nurses' home.

Turn right down Irish Hill to reach

9 WESTGATE - Here almost every building is architecturally significant, those mentioned especially so. Far left note the white paling fence of Westgate Fields leading on to Hubbards Hills park.

Immediately opposite is Riversmead an ornate Victorian house, left of it a lower Georgian terrace.

Turn right, keeping on the RHS pavement.

The yellow brick National (Church of England) School dated 1811 is on the LHS of the road just before The Mansion, on your right above a high retaining wall to aid its privacy but allow residents the view across into their garden, now the site of two modern houses.

Within the fork with Breakneck Lane stands Thornton House, another handsome C18th property.

Bear left to see James Fowler's house Blue Plaque on LHS, then Westgate House opposite with its horseshoe-shaped steps.

Facing Schoolhouse Lane is Suffolk House with its early cast iron railings.

More handsome houses each side, then the Wheatsheaf Inn of c1625 on LHS, Arnold House, No 45, on RHS. To the left a private lane, Westgate Place, leads to the former home of Mrs Fytche, Tennyson's maternal grandmother. On RHS Church Precincts retains original privacy blinds within the lower window panes. You have arrived at

10 ST JAMES'S CHURCH - This magnificent church, boasting the highest parish church spire in Britain, largely dates from C15th and its Victorian restoration by James Fowler includes work by TW Wallis. A guide is usually on duty to help you enjoy the building. Note the Blue Plaque opposite the main door.

Return to Westgate, and turn left at the traffic lights into

11 BRIDGE STREET - The metal sculpture on the green, 'Searching', is one of three that interpret the Greenwich Meridian Line.

Walk on, noting the high terrace on the right, built 1825 for rental by four families. On your left the Georgian house

12 THE OLD CEMETERY - This was the site of St Mary's church, ruinous by 1500s, but the crowded graveyard was used into the late C19th. The headstones have been moved to the boundaries making a pleasant open space. Look back for a fine view of St James's. Return to Bridge Street and cross with care to the old watermill, built 1755 to look at

13 THE FLOOD MARKER - Compare the water level today with the level reached by the flood of 1920. Turn left, then right into Cisterngate. Here note on No 27 the mirrored trade sign, then the modern house with curved roof. Turn right into Gray's Road, cross the footbridge to

14 SPOUT YARD CAR PARK - To your right is a small park area which offers refreshments and occasional exhibitions. Turn left into Enginegate Walk to see re-erected stone sign for the Engine House. The fire engine building was not replaced here after destruction in the 1920 flood. Continue into Broadbank and turn right. On the LHS you will see the Museum which you may wish to visit. Proceed to the crossroads and go straight across into

15 CANNON STREET - Walk to the rear of the small car park and look back at the stylish 1935 facade of the Cinema. At the very top a gable behind shows the original frontage of the Congregational chapel. Move back to the pavement to see the glazed rear of the 1866 Market Hall, and note the side elevation of the 1854 Town Hall with another Blue Plaque. Return to the crossroads, turn right along Northgate. Cross

was for many decades a doctor's home with surgery in the service buildings. In 1920 it was the home of Dr Higgins. Turn left to walk through the car park into

Vickers Lane, then turn right alongside the Library, passing through the old Packhorse yard, under the carriage arch and left into

16 EASTGATE - Right beside you is a Victorian postbox.

Proceed eastwards, cross the junction with Northgate and note the marker on your left for the Greenwich Meridian Line. Take a photograph of your feet either side of the metal bar in the pavement, standing in the eastern and western hemispheres! Walk on.

As you leave the line of closely packed buildings to your left, behind its garden, is The Manor House, now Georgian but with much older cellars beneath.

Cross Ramsgate to the foot of the

17 WAR MEMORIAL - The space was given by the Trustees of the almshouses and the memorial was erected in 1921 at a cost of £1,106. The sculptor, RW Ray, used local serviceman RSM George F Jones in Lincolnshire Regiment service dress as his model for the figure at the top.

The almshouses were founded by Revd Frederick Orme in 1885 in gratitude for his happy boyhood in Louth. They have been modernised and still serve as homes for 10 local men over 55 years of age.

Walk ahead along the railings to a plaque which tells of this site as a prison.

Cross the road and turn back towards the town, then left into

18 CHURCH STREET - The bus station won a Civic Trust commendation when built in 2001. Opposite, Elizabeth Court is modern residential accommodation for the elderly.

Next on the left is the Salvation Army church and hall, rebuilt through an unexpected legacy.

Above Monks Dyke Road cross Church Street on the crossing, turn right, then left into

19 THE GATHERUMS - This unusual name is from the Danish 'gatrur' meaning the lane between the fields. The route connects with a network of footways through this part of town and many information boards explain its history. Take the first path to your left up

East Alley named after William East who operated the nearby brewery. This takes you into

Kidgate where you will see another of the Meridian Line sculptures at the school. This figure has found the 'Solution'. Turn right back into the Gatherums via Paradise Smoot named Paradise after the orchard formerly on the school site; and Smoot, Lincolnshire dialect for a narrow footway.

Turn left and continue to a manhole cover where you may be able to hear the rushing water of St Helen's spring, once channelled via the Monks' Dyke to a Cistercian abbey just east of the town.

Walking on you will arrive in an open space where once was the open pool of Ashwell spring.

Make your way up

The Horse Steps which are the only known example of their kind in Lincolnshire, fashioned so a horse could walk up the central steps while the cart wheels ran up the cobbled channels.

You have arrived in Aswell Street Turn right, then left to return to the Market Place.

