Laureate in 1972. He died in 1984 and is remembered for his contributions to preserving our cultural heritage.

John Betjeman was always concerned about the preservation of our heritage. Through his work, he has left a lasting legacy in the fields of poetry and architecture.

**John Betjeman - The Biography**

**Where to Find Out More About John Betjeman & Lincolnshire**

**Lincolnshire Society**

Membership of the Lincolnshire Branch is open to all. The Betjeman Society exists to advance the appreciation of John Betjeman, broadcaster and conservationist. We seek to inform and educate. The Society sponsors a number of events and publications, including the biannual journal *Lincolnshire Connections and Poems*.

**Lincolnshire Connections and Poems**

Betjeman's second Lincolnshire poem, A Lincolnshire Church, is based on one specific church, St Margaret's, Harlton. The poem reflects on the state of the church and the community around it. It is a reflection of Betjeman's concern for the preservation of our heritage.

**Lincolnshire Church**

Greatly tremendous the thunder
Hung over the width of the wild
But here the green marsh was bright
In a huge cloud of cotton's gold
And there was a gentle reed
Topping some ash trees, a tower

**Lincolnshire Tale**

Kiddy with muddy-camouflaged spats
Is down a long lane in the county of Lincs.
And often on Wednesdays, well-harnessed spares,
I would drive into Wiss over Winderby Sluice.

**A Journey Through Lincolnshire**

Laurence Lee, after Cornwall, was John Betjeman’s favourite maritime county. He was drawn to the county by friends, by his love of Tennyson, and by the fact that his mother’s side of the family hailed from the Spalding area. He also loved Lincolnshire’s churches and places names, interests that came together in the first of his Lincolnshire poems, A Lincolnshire Church.

**A Lincolnshire Church (poem)**

And over the plaster, so textured with time,
I grated it open on scents I knew well,
But here the green marsh was alight
With stone for building His churches
Who calls in the evening bell,
And doubly forbidding in darkness and cold.
And stumps of old oak-trees attempting to sprout,
And the wide green marsh as well
And the Presence of God Incarnate
Our Creator is with us yet,
And the wide green marsh as well
And the Presence of God Incarnate
Our Creator is with us yet,
And the wide green marsh as well
And the Presence of God Incarnate
Our Creator is with us yet,
Lincoln, with its cathedral, castle, Roman heritage and rich history is a major tourist destination. In his Collins Guide to English Parish Churches, first published in 1958, he recognized that despite some well-known coastal resorts, most of the country’s 90 miles of coast consist of dunes, sandy beaches and the great estuaries of the Humber and the Wash. “The county runs from north to south down the whole length of the county in various bands.” He described the limestone cliffs, Ermine Street, the Lincolnshire Levels, the Fens, and the “shabby hills known as the wolds, which are an unexplored variant of the Sussex Downs.”

LOUTH

Louth is one of several market towns which lie at the foot of the Lincolnshire Wolds and is regarded as the capital of the Wolds. It has a market place and an intricate network of streets and fine Georgian and Victorian buildings. John Betjeman came here several times, often staying with his friend Jack Yates in Worton. He describes one visit: “My paraded bedroom with thick 1680-ish panes of glass, panelled rooms throughout, little garden opposite, reached garden behind. My room looked down the curve of Worton, and I could see in that sharp winter morning sunlight the different brown’s and red and pale hues of the brick which is such a feature of Lincs; not as dark red for the 17th century and rather pale biscuit of the brick which is such a feature of Westgate, and I could see in that long, uneven, steep and rugged. John described the city as old, confused, industrial by any means. Others have charm, and not all the lower levels are known, but most attractive towns that we possess. “is one of the less known, but most attractive towns that we possess. which was sharp in the winter sunlight, superbly gathered round the magnificent golden-grey spire of its parish church.”

KIRKBY-ON-BAIN

John Betjeman stayed with his friend Noel Blakiston at The Rectory in Kirkby-on-Bain. The village and its surrounding areas were the inspiration for his poem A Lincolnshire Tale (see overleaf).

HUTTOFT

Situated in the Lincolnshire Marsh not far from the coast, Huttoft is a small village with an impressive church. John Betjeman came here in the 1940s when he visited the church and was inspired to write A Lincolnshire Church (see overleaf), a poem not only about the church itself but its setting, the local people and the Indian priest he met there.

LINCOLNSHIRE LANDSCAPE

John Betjeman had a keen appreciation of Lincolnshire and of east Lincolnshire in particular. Three of his poems are set in Lincolnshire, and he wrote extensively about the landscape and churches of the county. He introduced a 1959 BBC broadcast from Gunby Hall by saying: “Lincolnshire is like a separate country. It is off most main roads, a wide rolling landscape of silvery church towers, villages of old red brick with gardens of brick and asp and lime outlined against luminous blue skies”. He thought that this, the second largest English county, was the least appreciated. In his introduction to his Collins Guide to English Parish Churches, first published in 1958, he recognized that despite some well-known coastal resorts, most of the country’s 90 miles of coast consist of dunes, sandy beaches and the great estuaries of the Humber and the Wash. “The county runs from north to south down the whole length of the county in various bands.” He described the limestone cliffs, Ermine Street, the Lincolnshire Levels, the Fens, and the “shabby hills known as the wolds, which are an unexplored variant of the Sussex Downs.”

HISTORY MATTERS

ON THE TRAIL OF

SIR JOHN BETJEMAN

Woodhall is a gem set in the heart of the Lincolnshire countryside. With its tree-lined heather and rhododendron “something unexpected, that half-timbered Bournemoutth-like settlement, among silver birches, Bournemouth-like settlement, among silver birches, tree-lined hillside. “With its tree-lined streets, the unique Kinmont in the Woods, and the headquarters of England Golf, Woodhall is a gem set in the heart of the Lincolnshire countryside.

WOODHALL SPA

In John Betjeman’s poem House of Rest (see overleaf) the church at Woodhall Spa is mentioned, and elsewhere he describes the town as “…something unexpected, that half-timbered Bournemoutth-like settlement, among silver birches, beech and rhododendrons.” With its tree-lined streets, the unique Kinmont in the Woods, and the headquarters of England Golf, Woodhall is a gem set in the heart of the Lincolnshire countryside.

SPALDING

John Betjeman’s mother’s family hailed from Spalding, and he spent some time there researching family history.