

STAFFORDSHIRE - UNUSUAL & QUIRKY

Andrew Beardmore

Staffordshire probably conjures up images of heavy industry courtesy of the Black Country and the Potteries, albeit with a rich and fascinating history underpinning these two former powerhouse areas. The county is also home to stunning countryside, though, from the Staffordshire Moorlands part of the Peak District in the north-east, to the valleys and rolling hills of central Staffordshire, to the rocky outcrops of the south-west; a beautifully diverse county.

However, lurking not far beneath the surface, there is also a host of oddities and peculiarities that turn the apparently staid and conventional into something much more intriguing. Therefore even the *Conventional Staffordshire* section sees its *County History* interspersed with the book's idiosyncratic "Quirk Alerts"; like an anecdote about Hobbits popping up in prehistoric times and how a certain Roaring Meg interceded between a divided family during the English Civil War!

Naturally, though, it is the *Quirky Staffordshire* section where things turn very strange, and where a seemingly random almanac of 94 Staffordshire places have their quirkiest facts laid bare: like which town has a noisy peace memorial, which village is home to Britain's unluckiest church, which one was home to the vicious Sleep Rouser and which one had a man who danced for a dozen days. Then there's the Staffordshire constituency that returned the oldest-ever MP (aged 93), the village that suffered the largest non-nuclear explosion on British soil, and the town which saw its brand-spanking new canal lock destroyed by the very cannon that was supposed to be heralding its grand opening!

Alternatively, find out which ancient customs involve one thousand year-old reindeer horns, teapots, brass statues and a goose! If you think you know Staffordshire, read this fascinating and profusely illustrated book and think again...

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

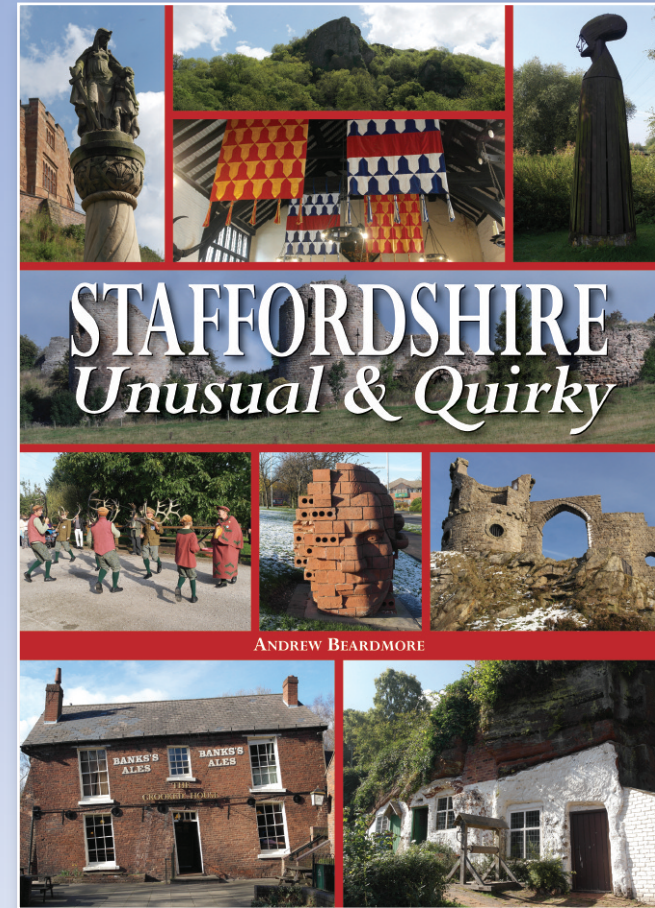


Derby-born Andrew Beardmore spent his formative years nurturing his love of sport, history and geography in his home county of Derbyshire. Nevertheless, it was Computer Science in which he graduated, with a First Class honours degree, before embarking on a 28-year career in I.T. Now married with two children, Andrew still works as a full-time I.T. Capacity Manager, and writes in his spare time. *Staffordshire: Unusual & Quirky* is his fourth book that reunites those three childhood loves of sport, history and geography, following on from previous *Unusual & Quirky* releases focusing on Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire and Rutland.

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Imprints: Halsgrove, Ryelands, Halstar, PiXZ Books & Halswood Journals. Halsgrove® is a registered trademark. Copyright© 2015

HALSGROVE TITLE INFORMATION



Format: *Hardback, 160 pages, 297x210mm, profusely illustrated in colour throughout*

Price: *£19.99*

ISBN: *978 0 85704 295 8*

Imprint: *Halsgrove*

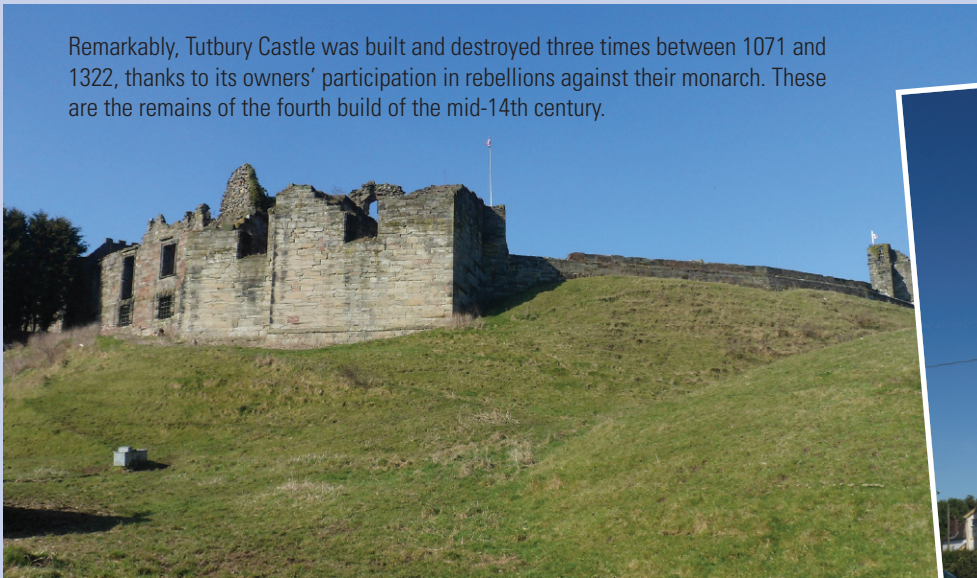
Published: *October 2016*



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Wellington, Somerset TA21 9PZ Tel: 01823 653777 Fax: 01823 216796
www.halsgrove.com e-mail: sales@halsgrove.com

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Remarkably, Tutbury Castle was built and destroyed three times between 1071 and 1322, thanks to its owners' participation in rebellions against their monarch. These are the remains of the fourth build of the mid-14th century.



Example of a double-page spread.



Above: The Shropshire Union Canal at Little Onn.



Right: Brick statue of Josiah Wedgwood outside Etruria Hall, and who appears to have been completely assimilated!



Above: The partly-restored windmill which sits in the Windmill Inn car-park, Meir. Dating back to before 1775, the windmill actually ceased milling in 1896.



Right: The horn dancers are led here up Goose Lane by their accordion players...

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St James's church at Cotes Heath. Cotes Lane, the only road through the tiny hamlet of Cotes.

and a handful of buildings, whereas Cotes Heath has its own church, St James's. Cotes appears three times in Staffordshire. Two of them are tiny hamlets in the Stafford district; one on the border with East Staffordshire on the B527, around 7 miles south-west of Uttoxeter, and the other over on the other side of both district and county, just west of Cannull and 3 miles from the Shropshire border. The more easterly of the two has its handful of houses



The village of Cotes, around 7 miles south-west of Uttoxeter. Also at the more easterly-based Stafford Cotes is this former pub, The Wheatsheaf, and which is clearly in a very sorry state today.



The Fox, at the Cotes that is located on the north-western outskirts of Tamworth is in a much healthier state! The junction between Cotes Lane East and the A518 at the Cotes that is located immediately west of Cannull.

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NAME (STATUS):	COVEN (Village)
POPULATION:	7,329 (Parish of Brewood and Coven)
DISTRICT:	South Staffordshire
EARLIEST RECORD:	C.1086 (Exonday Book)
MEANING:	Place at the huts or shelters
DERIVATION:	From the Old English <i>hæcra</i> (plural <i>hafra</i>), meaning "chamber, cove, cove or hut".



The Fox and Anchor, at Coven. The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal at Coven.

Coven Pub: The Fox and Anchor
The Fox and Anchor can be found on the south-eastern outskirts of Coven alongside the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. This quaintly-restored English pub dates back to the late eighteenth century when it was known simply as the Anchor Inn. However, the original was destroyed by fire and the current pub was built in the early 1960s.



St Paul's church, Coven.