

LINCOLNSHIRE UNUSUAL & QUIRKY

Andrew Beardmore

Lincolnshire conjures up images of fenland, windmills, and vast seas of crops and flowers, along with rolling wolds, pretty towns and villages, and the gloriously medieval city of Lincoln.

However, lurking not far beneath the surface is a host of oddities and peculiarities that turn the apparently staid and conventional into something much more intriguing. Therefore even the *Conventional Lincolnshire* section in this book is interspersed with idiosyncratic "Quirk Alerts"; like anecdotes about which Lincolnshire town was the capital of England in the early 11th century, and which village has been home to the King's Champion since 1066. Alternatively, you'll need a strong stomach to read of the *Hideous Happening in Holbeach*, while you'll be amazed at the Lincolnshire horse that walked 120 miles to Aintree, promptly won the Grand National and then walked home again!

Naturally, though, it is the *Quirky Lincolnshire* section where things turn very strange, and where a seemingly random almanac of 58 Lincolnshire places have their quirkiest facts laid bare: like which villages are home to a bizarre one-way system, the largest single-handed clock in the world, and the first ever carving of an ursine musician! Then there's the village where T.E. Lawrence wrote *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, the village that appears as a character in *Bridget Jones's Diary*...or what about which three villages are home to the mystery White Lady, the ghostly Black Lady, and a deaf and grumpy mole-catcher?

Alternatively, find out who are nicknamed Meggies, and what the Lincolnshire words kek and yaffle mean. Finally, why not learn about some ancient and bizarre Lincolnshire town and village customs – such as the one involving a virgin in mourning garb, another which involves setting fire to a Fool, and yet another which involves the local vicar, a whip and 30 pieces of silver! If you think you know Lincolnshire, 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 30-year career in I.T.

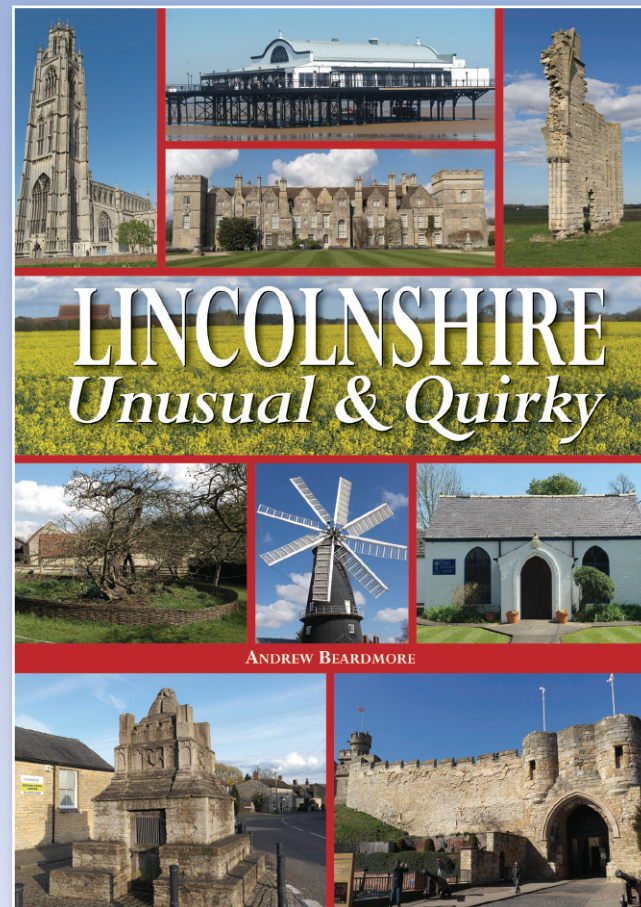
Now married with two grown-up children, Andrew still works as a full-time I.T. Capacity Manager, and writes in his spare time. *Lincolnshire: Unusual &*

Quirky is his fifth book that reunites those three childhood loves of sport, history and geography, following on from previous *Unusual & Quirky* releases focusing on Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire/Rutland and Staffordshire.

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HALSGROVE TITLE INFORMATION



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

Price: *£19.99*

ISBN: *978 0 85704 303 0*

Imprint: *Halsgrove*

Published: *June 2017*



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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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Left: The warehouse at Austen Fen, built in the early 19th century on the Louth Navigation.



Below: The golden sands of Cleethorpes along with the pier which was built in 1873.



Above: The Star of the East, Mablethorpe, a promotional beacon that stands 46ft (14m) high.



Right: View of the west frontage of Lincoln Cathedral, including the three central Norman arches and the Norman doorways beneath, all of which date from the 1141 build.

Below: The clock tower at Skegness was built in 1898 to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of the previous year.



Example of a double-page spread.

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Hall Lane, Brandon.

The chapel of St John the Evangelist, Brandon.

Bradley Quirk Alert:
The Black Lady and Jan!

Bradley Woods is allegedly the haunt of the Black Lady who died in the woods after her husband had left her to go to war. Their cottage was subsequently ransacked and her child taken and it is said that the Black Lady can be seen at night in the woods, wearing a black cloak and searching for her child. Meanwhile, the north window of the church is in memory of the Ticker family who lived at Bradley Manor and owned an international jam and preserve-making company that once employed 2,000 people across the Commonwealth. The window contains Latin text with the letter 'I' in the word 'tui' being changed to a 'J' to make it look like Jan!

Brandon Old Hall was built in the 16th century with striking stripes of redstone and which are retained throughout the garden wall (outside).

Finally, Brandon is located close to the Nottinghamshire border, around 6 miles south-east of Newark-on-Trent. Although the village is only small with a population of around one hundred, it does have a chapel of ease which is dedicated to St John the Evangelist, and which is linked to the parish church of All Saints at nearby Hough-on-the-Hill. The chapel was built in the Early English style which dates it to the late 12th and early 13th century, but also includes fragments of Saxon stonework along with a Norman door. The chapel was restored in 1872. The village is also home to Brandon Old Hall, a 16th-century residence on Hall Road that was constructed with striking bands of golden ironstone, with the garden walked in the same style.

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NAME (STATE): BICKER (Village); BICKER BAR; BICKER GAUNTLET
POPULATION: 943
DISTRICT: Boston
EARLIEST RECORD: Bicker, 1086 (Domesday Book)
MEANING: Settlement by the marsh
DISTINCTION: From the Old Scandinavian words by (farmstead, village or settlement) and kjer (marsh overgrown with brushwood)

Bicker Geographic Trivia: An Ancient Port
Located around 7 miles south-west of Boston, the village of Bicker sits at the southern-most point of a one-mile equilateral triangle formed with Bicker Gauntlet and Bicker Bar. The trio of places are joined by a fourth Bicker, Bicker Fen, which lies just west of Bicker Gauntlet and which is home to Bicker Fen wind-farm, complete with 13 turbines producing 28MW (2MW each), enough power for 14,000 homes.

The place-name means "settlement by the marsh". This is because in Anglo-Saxon times, Bicker was a small port sat at the head of a tidal estuary on an inlet from the Wash, and which was thus named Bicker Haven. However, whereas Bicker Haven had originally formed the outlet of the River Witham which had flowed through Bicker from the north, the river was diverted to Boston after a flood in 1014. Then in the mid-16th century, the locals began to reclaim the marsh around Bicker for pasture and without the tide to flush it out, Bicker Haven thus silted up. As a result, Bicker changed from a port to a farming village and, today, Bicker now lies around 8 miles (13 km) from the coast. Meanwhile, a mile or so to the east of Bicker is Bank House, located at the junction between the A17 and the B1181, and named after part of the former sea bank of Bicker Haven. As for Bicker Bar, the place is effectively comprised of just Bar Fen Farm plus what has been termed the Bicker Bar Roundabout which marks the junction of the A52 and the A17.

As for the former course of the river, it is claimed that the roads of Bicker still describe it and which is thought to be a unique feature in the Lincolnshire fens.

The Old Eau at Bicker, remnant of the former river that once flowed into Bicker Haven to the south of Bicker.

Some of the wind turbines of Bicker Fen, with a typical fen dyke in the foreground.

Little more than a stream/drain today, the remnant of the former river is known as the Old Eau. Meanwhile, Bicker Fen to the north-west of the village is also the proposed landing site for a 1,400 MW power cable from Denmark called Viking Link.

Bicker Pub: Ye Olde Red Lion
Ye Olde Red Lion is a typical English pub with low beams, open fires and real ale. It also dates back to at least 1665 when it was known as "John Drury" – although it is thought that this was actually the date when an even older pub was restored. Given it is also rumoured that the inn was once called the Mariner's Rest and/or the Sailor's Rest, the older inn may therefore have dated back to pre-1014 which was the year when Bicker ceased to be an inland port.

Bicker Church: St Swithin's
The date of the earliest church in Bicker is not known, but there was certainly one here in 1086 as one is recorded in Domesday Book, while fragments of 10th-century Anglo-Scandinavian style carved stone can be found in the porch and the north and south aisles. The church today is part-Norman, part-medieval, with alterations effected in the 16th century, while further restoration was carried out in the 19th century. The original Norman church was built in the shape of a cross with a central tower, but the latter and the chancel were rebuilt in the 13th century, while the top stage of the tower was added in the 15th century. The nave is still Norman, though, with impressive arcades crowned with scalloped capitals shaped like crosses, and