

EARLY BRICK BUILDINGS IN LINCOLNSHIRE

A GUIDE

By ANDREW WHITE
Lincolnshire County Council
Lincolnshire Museums © 1982

INTRODUCTION

The use of brick and tile was widespread in the Roman Empire, but in Anglo-Saxon times they had practically ceased to be used in Britain, except where robbed from ruins. It was not until the Middle Ages that bricks were again manufactured in England on any scale. It was largely under the influence of the Flemings:- the eastern coastal areas of England were most affected, and 13th and 14th century buildings using brick exist in Suffolk and East Yorkshire, particularly in Hull and Beverley.

The great age of brick, however, came in the 15th century when it became fashionable over wide areas of eastern England. It was not a cheap or everyday material, however. Although simple and not requiring the expert techniques of the stonemason it was only to be found in the buildings of the rich and powerful, whether house, church, palace or school. Ralph, Lord Cromwell and Bishop William Waynflete were two such men under whose influence brick became a standard material.

Lincolnshire can boast many fine examples of 15th and early 16th century brick buildings, including Cromwell's Tattershall Castle, one of the finest structures in the whole of England.

FURTHER READING:

- The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*, by N. Pevsner and J. Harris, 1964.
- The Pattern of English Buildings* by A. Clifton-Taylor, 1972 (especially ch. 9).
- A History of English Brickwork* by N. Lloyd, 1925.
- W. D. Simpson, *The Building Accounts of Tattershall Castle 1434-72*, 1960 (Lincoln Record Society vol. 55).
- T. P. Smith, Hussey Tower, Boston in *Lincolnshire History & Archaeology*, vol. 14, 1979.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the owners and tenants of all the buildings referred to in the text for permission to view and study them, and also Antony Page, Curator of Lincolnshire Museums: Gainsborough Old Hall for information.

Front cover - *English bond*, the bond most commonly used in early buildings in Lincolnshire.

BRICKMAKING

In most cases local clays were used, thus saving transport. Lincolnshire is well supplied with clays from the Jurassic series, such as the Kimmeridge and Estuarine. Kilns in Boston and on Edlington Moor (in Stixwold parish) supplied the building works at Tattershall.

Soft plastic clays which were easy to mould were mixed with sand or gravel to prevent excessive flaking and shrinking. Masses of clay were dug out, sifted to remove the larger stones, and allowed to weather. They were then pressed into wooden moulds, allowed to dry and then fired in kilns or *clamps* with brushwood.

BUILDING METHODS

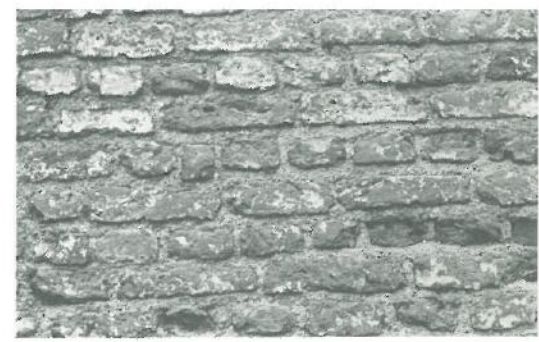
Bricks were laid in *courses* with the best ones on the outside, and the mortared joints were staggered by the use of English or Flemish *bond*, which prevented excessive vertical cracks developing through the joints lining up. *Headers* are bricks laid with their narrow ends showing, *stretchers* are with the longest side outwards.

Decoration was achieved by creating *diaper* patterns with *burnt ends* (overfired bricks darker than the rest). Windows, doors and other details were often worked in stone, but cut and moulded bricks were sometimes used: this was extremely complex work and required a master craftsman.

The special skills connected with building in brick at a time when its use was far from common suggest that the same craftsmen worked on a number of projects, which may help to explain similarities in style. While some of the masters were clearly foreigners much of the work was undoubtedly carried out by local men.



Brickmakers at work



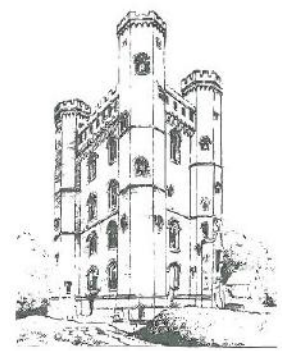
English Bond

TATTERSHALL

Close to the River Bain, from which it drew water for its moat system, and c17 miles from Lincoln, lies Tattershall Castle⁽¹⁾, built for Ralph Lord Cromwell in the mid 15th century. We can follow the years of building work through accounts which still survive; it probably took from 1432 until 1448.

The main feature is the great tower of four storeys and a basement, whose upper floors are reached by a spiral staircase in one corner turret. The brickwork was intended to be seen, not rendered over, and the west front was the 'show front'; the east side, the modern approach, had a hall range close in front of it, which accounts for the three service doors and the beam slots let into the surface. The walls are some 12' thick in the basement and various sizes of brick are used throughout, including elaborate vaulting in shaped bricks in window embrasures and passages of the upper floors.

There are two other brick ranges between the inner and outer moats. That to the north-west of the tower probably represents stabling and servants quarters. On the east side is 'the Guardhouse', a small two-storey structure forming part of an unfinished range. It has a splendid timber king-post roof. In addition there are foundations of other ranges and a large part of the moat is revetted in brick.



Tattershall Castle



Tower on the Moor

The Castle was not Cromwell's only building project. The stone-built church opposite the entrance was collegiate, and the College⁽²⁾ of priests lived in brick-built ranges to the south and east, which were excavated in 1972. A further building⁽³⁾ probably belonging to the College lies to the south of the Market Place and is open to the public. It is a rectangular structure with large doors in the west wall.

Next to the church is a row of Alms-houses⁽⁴⁾, successors to those built as part of Cromwell's scheme. They are a 17th century rebuilding, using brick and stone from their predecessors.

A few miles to the north lies a solitary fragment (the octagonal stair-turret only) of another brick tower known as 'Tower on the Moor'⁽⁵⁾. It was built at about the same time as the Castle, perhaps as a hunting lodge. It was already being dismantled in 1472.

Cromwell's death in 1456 occurred before the building work on the college was complete. His executor, Bishop William Waynflete, oversaw the completion. He himself was to be a great proponent of building in brick.

WAINFLEET SCHOOL

William Patten of Wainfleet was one of the great men of the 15th

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century. He completed Cromwell's work at Tattershall and as Bishop of Winchester was builder of the brick towers at Esher and Farnham, Surrey. He founded Magdalen College at Oxford and built in his home town a school⁽⁶⁾ to provide scholars for the college. The school, begun in 1484, is a fine rectangular brick structure of two storeys 76' x 26' overall, with twin three-storey octagonal towers at the west end. It served as school, chapel, and master's house. The west end has patterning created by the use of overburnt bricks which have a greenish colour. Access to the upper floor is via a spiral stair in the northwest tower which has a handrail similar to that at Ayscoughfee (below).

Since 1968 the school building has served as a Library.



Wainfleet School

SPALDING

Lying close to the River Welland at Spalding is the great town house of Ayscoughfee Hall⁽⁷⁾, a building which has been much altered over the centuries. At its core lies the house of Sir Richard Aldwyn, said to date from 1429. It consists of wings to north and west, with a tower-like structure which was raised to its present height last century. The principal building material is brick and the spiral stair in the tower has a most interesting built-in handrail made of specially cut bricks.

Also in the town, in Priory Road, is a long brick range known as Abbey Buildings⁽⁸⁾. It is now divided up into a series of private houses, but a number of medieval windows survive together with an original door near the west end. Little can now be made of its internal arrangements but it is clearly part of the very wealthy Spalding Priory, and is a useful reminder of how many medieval brick buildings were lost at the Dissolution of the Monasteries.



Abbey Buildings, Spalding

BARDNEY

The Parish Church⁽⁹⁾ in Bardney, originally within the Abbey precinct, was rebuilt on a new site in the village in 1434 because of the poor condition of its predecessor. The main body of the new church is in stone, but the opportunity to obtain bricks from the Edlington Moor kilns led to the use of this material for the chancel. The chancel windows to the south and east are in stone, but on the north side the door and window are in cut and moulded brick, and there is a certain amount of patterning with burnt ends in the lower courses. The door mouldings were originally rendered to make them appear like stone. The decision to use brick for the chancel may have been a sudden one, for there is a very untidy transition between stone and brick on the south side. Large parts of Bardney Abbey, including the precinct wall, were rebuilt in brick in the 15th century, but little is to be seen today.



Bardney Church brick chancel c.1440

ROUGHTON

Here the parish church⁽¹⁰⁾ is almost entirely of greenstone, including the base of the west tower added in the 15th century, but the upper part of the tower is of brick with two-light squareheaded windows in the bell chamber, and battlements. Here again the proximity to Tattershall, only 4 miles lower down the Bain Valley, may have suggested the use of brick. The Tattershall Castle building accounts record the gift of several loads of bricks to various local abbeys and churches, and Roughton may also have benefitted.

GOLTHO

Amid the fields to the west of Wragby lies the small brick church of St. George⁽¹¹⁾. The rest of the village has gone, through gradual desertion in the late Middle Ages and through the processes of modern agriculture. The manor site and part of the village were excavated between 1970 and 1974, giving a very detailed picture of life in a clayland village.

The nave is medieval with cut and moulded brick in the window surrounds and west doorway. No date is known for its buildings but it has echoes of Tattershall Castle and may belong to the later 15th century: it seems to have belonged to the neighbouring Priory of Bullington. The chancel, also of brick, is of 18th century date.



Golpho Church, S.

BOSTON

The Boston area is rich in early brick buildings, having a good local clay available, as well as a cosmopolitan population.

A kiln here served Tattershall Castle and undoubtedly local landlords took advantage of it.

Two tower-houses may be seen; Hussey Tower⁽¹²⁾ at the rear of the Grammar School and Rochford Tower⁽¹³⁾ just to the east in Skirbeck



Boston Guildhall

parish. Both seem to belong to the third quarter of the 15th century and make much use of cut and moulded brick in their windows and other features. Though they differ in some details (Rochford Tower has four storeys rather than three) they both seem to reflect the ideas expressed at Tattershall but perhaps as modified at Tower on the Moor. Both the Boston towers originally had halls attached to them, and belonged to local gentry families.

Other brick buildings of note in Boston are the Guildhall⁽¹⁴⁾ in South Street (late 15th century and now a Museum) the Grammar School⁽¹⁵⁾ (original block dated 1567) and the amazingly-gabled Church House⁽¹⁶⁾ at the corner of Wormgate (17th century).

GAINSBOROUGH

The Old Hall⁽¹⁷⁾ dates mainly from the mid and late 15th century when it belonged to the Burgh family. It consists of three ranges around a courtyard with a kitchen block to the west and a polygonal tower to the east. Southwards from the west end of the hall runs a most interesting range of buildings comprising twelve similar chambers each provided with its own fireplace and garderobe. This range has a western elevation of brick, though the building is based on older timber framing. The chimneys serving these chambers appear to be an afterthought. Additions of c.1600 include bricking-up parts of the timber framing. The kitchen is a first-rate example of its type with huge open fireplaces and groups of ovens. Current restoration work is helping to clear up a number of problems about the Hall, which over the centuries had fallen into neglect; its uses have included those of a factory and a theatre.



Gainsborough Old Hall

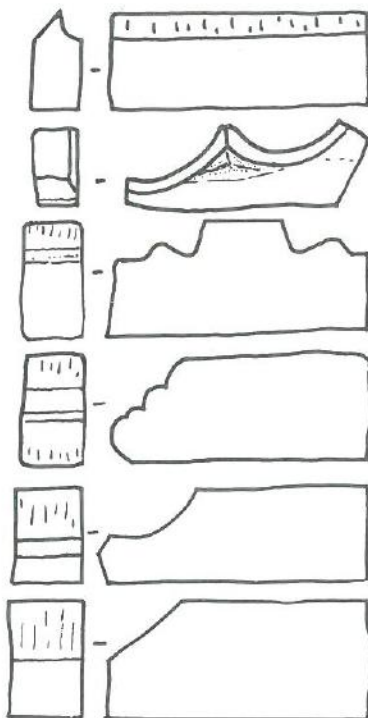
LINCOLN

Because of the availability of good building stone Lincoln has very little early use of brick. The Chancery in Pottergate⁽¹⁸⁾ a large and very complex medieval house, was given a brick facade in the last decades of the 15th century, perhaps because the current Bishop of Lincoln had made use of brick at his palace at Buckden (Hunts.) and was promoting the new material.

West and south-west of Lincoln lie the two important brick-built late Elizabethan halls of Doddington⁽¹⁹⁾ and Aubourn⁽²⁰⁾. Brick was by now a well-established building material. Doddington has a regular facade flanked by towers with cupolas, while Aubourn has a more irregular plan and flat frontage.

BRICK MOULDINGS

Cut and moulded bricks for a variety of uses. Drawn from examples from Belleau Manor now in the City & County Museum. Scale $\frac{1}{8}$.



Tour 1. TATTERSHALL AREA

Tattershall is best approached from Lincoln or Skegness by way of Horncastle and the A153 which follows the valley of the river Bain southwards. Tattershall Castle⁽¹⁾ can be seen from a considerable distance, its great tower dominating the flat landscape around.

There is a large car-park with toilet facilities next to the Castle, and access is via a bridge over the outer moat. Visit the Guardhouse first, a small brick building with a splendid timber roof. Tickets and publications can be bought on the ground floor. A small museum on the first floor displays finds made in 1912 when the moats and walls were cleared, together with a fascinating model of the castle in its heyday. The Castle is administered by the National Trust.

It is best to walk around the area between the two moats and to examine the remains of buildings here, including the brick stables. From this point can be seen the 'show front' of the tower, across the moat. Retrace your steps, crossing the bridge across the inner moat and approach the tower from the other side, noting the marks where the hall has been ripped away from the face of the wall. There is a basement and four floors above it, while the roof has a further open gallery above it with corner turrets.

The College⁽²⁾, attached to the church, has disappeared, though the site was excavated in 1972. The almshouses⁽⁴⁾ on the north side of the churchyard are a later rebuilding using the original bricks of the 15th century.

Turning out of the car-park look out for a rectangular brick building on your right, its end towards the street. There is access into it via a

door in the long wall. Not much detail survives, but it may have served as a school⁽³⁾. It is now in the care of the Department of the Environment.

Tower on the Moor⁽⁵⁾ can be seen from the roadway on the left hand side a little over a mile along the B1191 which can be reached via the B1192 and Woodhall Spa, but there is no public access.

Roughton Church⁽¹⁰⁾ can be reached by following a minor road to the right about a mile further along the B1191.

Tour 2. SPALDING AREA

Visitors to the Lincolnshire Fenland can see a considerable number of early brick buildings on this and the subsequent tour. In Church Gate, on the opposite side of the River Welland from the Market Place is Ayscoughfee Hall⁽⁷⁾, the grandest house in Spalding. It is a complex building with many later alterations, and houses an Information Office, and a Bird Museum. Not much can be seen from inside because of the ornate plastered hall, but glimpses of the older parts can be seen from the front drive and from the gardens at the back.

Returning through the Market Place to Priory Road the brick range known as 'Abbey Buildings'⁽⁸⁾ can be seen. The houses can be viewed from the outside, but are private property and the residents' privacy should be respected.

A round trip taking in three brick churches can also be taken by following the A1073 to Cowbit⁽²¹⁾, the B1357 and B1165 and a minor road to Tydd St. Mary⁽²²⁾, and the A1101 through Long Sutton and via minor roads to Lutton⁽²³⁾, returning via Holbeach and Weston.

Tour 3. BOSTON AREA

Boston's rich heritage of brick buildings is unfortunately not easily seen. The Guildhall⁽¹⁴⁾ (now a Museum) in South Street can be viewed both inside and out during opening hours, but take care of fast traffic on this busy and very narrow road. Church House⁽¹⁶⁾ on the corner of Wormgate is right opposite the north door of the famous Stump; its exterior can be viewed at any time. But the Grammar School old building⁽¹⁵⁾ is not readily accessible as it lies back from the road up a narrow lane just off the new Relief Road at the end of the new Bridge over the Witham. The same is true of Hussey Tower⁽¹²⁾ which lies on the edge of the Grammar School Playing Field in Rowley Road. Dividing the Grammar School from Rowley Road is an old brick wall which may have been the precinct wall of the Greyfriars, whose house stood close by.

Rochford Tower⁽¹³⁾ can be reached by following the Skegness road (A52) to the Ball House Inn (about two miles). The tower lies down a minor road to the right, but it is on private property and can only be viewed from the road.

Following the A52 a further twelve miles will bring you to Wainfleet. The splendid Magdalen College School⁽⁶⁾ lies just off the Market Place; the ground floor is a branch of the County Library and can be seen during opening hours. The exterior is somewhat spoiled by the temporary huts which stand in front of it but the building is a splendid sight for all that.

Tour 4. LINCOLN AREA

The only substantial early brick building in Lincoln is the Chancery⁽¹⁸⁾ in Pottergate, which forms the north-east side of the Minster Yard. It is only a brick facade to a much earlier building and can be viewed from the outside at any time. The use of brick here can only be a response to fashion as Lincoln in the Middle Ages was almost entirely built of local stone and timber. A number of vitrified bricks can be seen in the frontage but they are not arranged in any pattern.

Follow the Skegness road (A158) out of Lincoln and just one mile short of Wragby turn right down a minor road. Goltho church⁽¹¹⁾ stands

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alone in the fields on your left and can be reached by a short walk along a cart track. The church has recently been taken over by the Redundant Churches Fund and will be maintained.

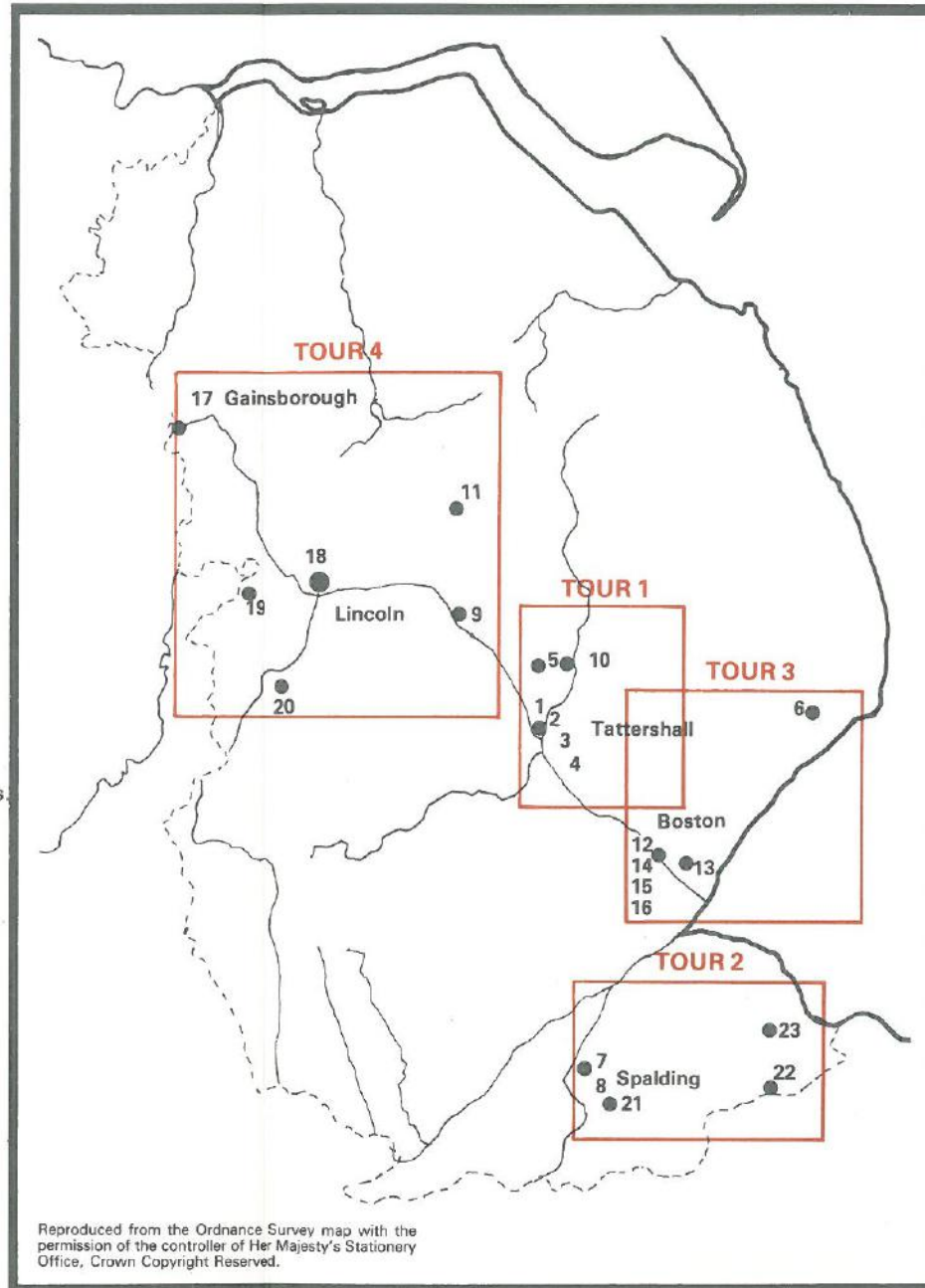
Return to the A158 and turn right down the B1202 in Wragby Market Place, following this road for about 7 miles to Bardney. The church⁽⁹⁾ stands near the centre of the village. Its brick chancel can best be seen from the churchyard. Note the mixed use of brick and stone for the window surrounds. It seems likely that Bardney Abbey, which owned the church, acquired a quantity of bricks from the Edlington Moor Kilns when the church was almost complete. Parts of the Abbey itself were of brick, including the revetment of the moat around it.

Lincoln can be reached again by way of minor roads through Fiskerton and Cherry Willingham.

Gainsborough Old Hall⁽¹⁷⁾ is somewhat isolated from other early brick buildings in Lincolnshire, lying as it does some 18 miles north-west of Lincoln, but it is well worth a visit. The Old Hall lies at the north end of the town near the Parish Church. Most of its interior can be seen, but the fascinating block of lodgings running south from the west end of the Great Hall is not yet open to the public and can be seen only from the outside.

Similarly isolated are Doddington⁽¹⁹⁾ and Aubourn Halls⁽²⁰⁾, seven miles west and south west of Lincoln respectively. They both date from the late 16th century and Doddington has remains of formal gardens.

EARLY BRICK BUILDINGS



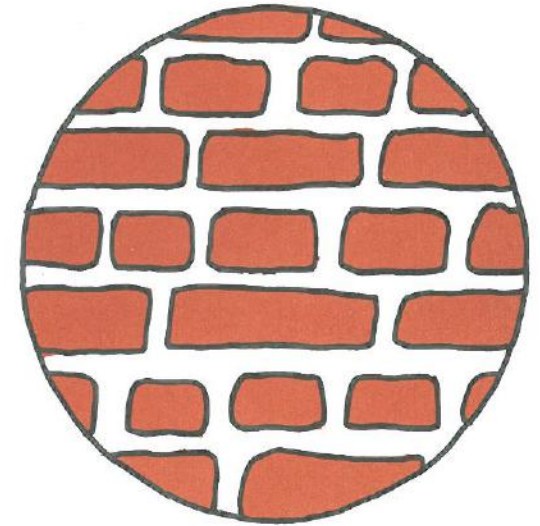
EARLY BRICK BUILDINGS 4 fig. Grid refs.

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|----------------------------|--------|
| 1. Tattershall Castle | TF2056 |
| 2. Tattershall College | TF2056 |
| 3. Tattershall School | TF2056 |
| 4. Tattershall Almshouses | TF2056 |
| 5. Tower on the Moor | TF2064 |
| 6. Wainfleet School | TF4959 |
| 7. Ayscoughfee Hall | TF2422 |
| 8. Abbey Buildings | TF2422 |
| 9. Bardney Church | TF1169 |
| 10. Roughton Church | TF2364 |
| 11. Goltho Church | TF1278 |
| 12. Hussey Tower | TF3244 |
| 13. Rochford Tower | TF3530 |
| 14. Boston Guildhall | TF3244 |
| 15. Boston Grammar School | TF3244 |
| 16. Boston Church House | TF3244 |
| 17. Gainsborough Old Hall | SK8189 |
| 18. Lincoln - The Chancery | SK9771 |
| 19. Doddington Hall | SK8970 |
| 20. Aubourn | SK9262 |
| 21. Cowbit Church | TF2618 |
| 22. Tydd St. Mary Church | TF4418 |
| 23. Lutton Church | TF4325 |

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A VISITORS GUIDE

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A GUIDE

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