



## A Voyage of Discovery

With the aim of inspiring you to find out more about Louth's unique architectural and cultural heritage, the Louth Civic Trust would like to take you on a short journey, highlighting a sample of the places and spaces that make up its dramatic skyline and just a few of the many details that help its history come to life.

From the west, we leave behind the undulating Lincolnshire Wolds and take the finest approach into Louth. Weaving our way through the town centre, which is in large part a Conservation Area, with approximately 250 buildings listed as being of historical and architectural interest. We aim to show how it's Medieval street patterns, Georgian splendour, Victorian industrial heritage and 20th century developments are interspersed with an array of imposing civic and religious buildings, monuments and open spaces to form the patterns and shapes that make up its unique character. We leave the town towards the east following the river to the flat open countryside and the Lincolnshire coast beyond.



We have shown you just a glimpse of the complex network of buildings and spaces of Louth. Every street is a record of its history, has its own landmarks, roofscape and unique views. By showing you just a few we hope to inspire you to discover more.

But retaining historic features is not easy and it is not always possible for everyone to take an overall view of the town scene, making the role of the Civic Trust so vital.

Louth Civic Trust is a local charity encouraging community pride and passion, for the history and identity of its buildings, streets and public places. It aims to protect and manage change in the town's landscape and architectural heritage through **campaigning, education and action.**

**For more information on the work of the Trust and how you can get involved visit our website at [www.louthcivictrust.org](http://www.louthcivictrust.org)**

Thank you to the Louth Photographic Society for the supplying of images for use in this brochure.



## Discover the places and spaces below Louth's skyline

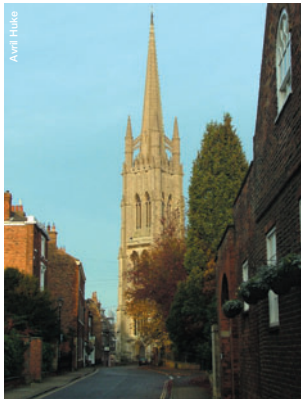
Louth Civic Trust would like to take you on a journey to show how Louth is generated not only by its people but by its very fabric.



## 18th and 19th Century Splendour

Entering Louth from the west, you pass on your right, Thorpe Hall, one of Lincolnshire's finest small country houses, dating back to the 16th century and reputedly haunted by an apparition known as the 'Green Lady'. Set back on the left is Deighton Close School (now a private residence) with its Arts and Crafts turrets and over the bridge are the beautiful gardens of the Cedars, built in 1830 and the birthplace of Miss Charlotte Pye who became famous during the Victorian era as 'Claribel' a composer of popular ballads. Opposite is the town's main open space, Westgate Fields with its footpath disappearing towards Hubbards Hills an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty gifted to the town in 1907.

You travel down Westgate, under the imposing view of St James Church, with its outstanding perpendicular steeple it is the tallest parish church in the country. The church has its origins in the 11th century but the spire was not completed until 1515. The style and materials of the buildings in the Westgate area bear witness to the period of wealth experienced by Louth in the late 18th and 19th centuries. The buildings are predominantly Georgian but still based on the Medieval street pattern with long garden plots backing on to the river. There are, however, a few exceptions such as the elevated William and Mary façade of "The Mansion" which you pass on your right and the Wheatsheaf public house which also dates from the 17th century, giving a glimpse of the form of the town before the 18th century expansion.



Off Westgate there are two places associated with Alfred Lord Tennyson: Schoolhouse Lane, where he attended the Grammer School and Westgate Place where he lodged whilst at school in Louth. If you look down the narrow alley of Westgate Place you will see that it retains much of its original York stone and cobble street surface.

The open spaces around the Church provide a place for contemplation and the site for one of the more recent artworks, part of the Louth Art Trail celebrating the town's position on the Meridian Line.

Crossing over Upgate, the main north/south road, you reach the commercial centre of the town, which despite being designed around the horse and cart, copes fairly well with modern-day traffic. As you enter Mercer Row, on your right you will see the Gothic style King's Head Hotel a former coaching house and terminus of the London to Louth, Royal Mail coach that departed London in the early morning, arriving at the King's Head around midnight.

## The Commercial Heart

Two breaks in the buildings, Butcher Lane and Little Butcher Lane lead into the Cornmarket, the historic centre which contains a large concentration of the town's listed buildings and where markets are still held three times a week. These lanes derive their names from the past practice of slaughtering animals there and when the entrails were not promptly cleared away the ladies used to carry posies of rosemary under their noses, giving rise to the name Rosemary Lane, a passageway leading off the market place to the North. Originally the area between Mercer Row and the Cornmarket was a large open market square, however the establishment of a livestock market off Newmarket resulted in the central area being built over.



Leaving the Cornmarket, on the left you will pass the Market Hall with its clock tower, another dominant feature of the town's skyline. Built by Rogers & Marsden in 1866, the design of the Market Hall was based on a grand example of Victorian architecture, Kings Cross railway station in London, and the impressive glass and ironwork structure is best appreciated from its rear elevation on Little Eastgate. Look up at the front elevation and you will see the gargoyles looking down on the town centre, the work of T. W. Wallace, Louth's pre-eminent woodcarver. Samples of Wallace's intricate carvings are held in the Louth museum.



The essence of this market town is its many independent and varied retailers. Many of the shops and passageways follow the lines of the old burgage plots as laid out by the Norman Bishop, Remigius, in the 11th century. Louth has largely escaped the comprehensive retailing development of the past fifty years. The shop fronts have their own appeal but through time shop trades have changed and alterations have taken place and despite some instances when national corporate identities have overridden a greater sensitivity for the built environment, Louth's Georgian and Victorian character still dominates.

Facing the old Market Hall is the Spar shop, of particular interest since it was originally designed by the eminent architect James Fowler of Louth. It was intended to be a shop with accommodation above and original illustrations show the shop fascia with its delicate, fine features, in keeping with the floors above and elaborate roof tiling.



## Distinctive Suburbs and a Trade Route to the Coast

From the market place you travel down Eastgate passing Church Street and a sample of modern architectural style, Louth's bus station built in 2003. You then pass the War Memorial standing in view of the distinctive Victorian Almshouses again designed by James Fowler, this had previously been the site of the Old House of Correction.



The development of the eastern end of town was largely a result of the completion of the Louth Navigation Canal in 1770 and includes some substantial 19th century residences alongside more modest terraces and cottages.

The opening of the canal, a major engineering feat, was a catalyst for much of Louth's prosperity during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The predominant trades being the export of crops and the import of fertilizers and coal. The arrival of the railway in 1848 saw the start of the slow decline of the canal and its eventual close in 1924.