

# Reimagining Lincolnshire Information Pack | Suggested Stories, Archives, and Heritage Resources

This pack shares examples of Lincoln's hidden heritage, uncovered by the Reimagining Lincolnshire research team. Each story is linked to a site in the city, and shows how overlooked voices and communities have shaped Lincoln across time.

Artists can use these examples as inspiration, adapt or expand on them, or bring in new stories that connect with the project's themes. You'll also find archives and resources at the end to support your research.

Remember: these are starting points. We're looking for imaginative interpretations that make heritage accessible, participatory, and alive in the city.

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## Key Themes:

- Diversity and mobility
  - LGBTQIA+ visibility and gender representation
  - Working-class women's activism
  - Wellbeing and mental health
  - Volunteer service personnel from Britain's colonies
  - Modern life, sports, music, and nightlife
  - Traveller communities in Lincolnshire
  - Other stories linking Lincoln to national and global heritage
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## Example stories by Theme:

### Diversity and Mobility | *Journeys and New Beginnings:*

The stories of communities who have travelled to and made their homes in Lincoln.

#### **Ralph Toofany – NHS Worker and First Black Mayor (St John's Hospital & Guildhall)**

Ralph Toofany came from Mauritius to work in Lincoln's NHS at St John's psychiatric hospital, where many staff from African and the Caribbean supported the new NHS and local healthcare. He became Lincoln's first Black councillor, then mayor in 1992, and later Sheriff, based at the Guildhall on the Stonebow. His legacy also includes helping to build Lincoln's Central Mosque in Boutham.

#### **Septimius Severus – African-born Emperor of Rome (Roman Walls & Steep Hill)**

Lincoln's Roman walls and gates were built on the orders of Septimius Severus, Rome's first African-born Emperor. Archaeology around the city (for example for the new eastern bypass) has also revealed evidence of people of African heritage living in Roman Lincoln nearly 2,000 years ago.

#### **Francis Barber – From Enslavement to Lincoln (The Close & St Mary Magdalene Church)**

In the 1750s, Francis Barber was brought from Jamaica to live in The Close near the Cathedral. It is likely that he was baptised at St Mary Magdalene Church. He later became a servant to Samuel Johnson, linking Lincoln directly to the global histories of slavery, abolition, and freedom.

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### LGBTQIA+ Visibility and Gender Representation | *Queer Lives and Hidden Expressions:*

**Love in Roman Times** – Lincolnshire has a long history of queer stories. In 2010, near Market Rasen, archaeologists uncovered a 2nd-century bust of Antinous, the young male lover of Roman Emperor Hadrian. This remarkable find highlights the presence and visibility of queer love in the region thousands of years ago.

**Queer Carvings and Art in Lincoln Cathedral** – Lincoln Cathedral preserves subtle evidence of queer lives. On the west front frieze, one scene shows a beardless young man with an older bearded man, potentially a hidden queer reference. Additionally, Duncan Grant, of the Bloomsbury Group, painted murals in the Russell Chantry Chapel that carry queer artistic legacies, reflecting 20th-century creative expression and visibility.

**The Fashanu Brothers (Sincil Bank)** – Siblings John and Justin Fashanu made significant contributions to inclusion in football. John played for Lincoln City FC, while Justin became the first professional footballer to come out as gay in 1990. Despite facing prejudice, his legacy lives on through the Justin Fashanu Foundation, promoting anti-racism, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and mental health awareness in sport.

**Safe Spaces & Nightlife** – Queer communities historically relied on social spaces for safety and expression. Venues such as where The Scene is now, offered private rooms and social areas where gender non-conforming people could gather discreetly, fostering community, culture, and resilience.

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## **Working-Class and radical women's activism | *Everyday Activism***

**Caroline Martyn** - Born in Lincoln in 1867, she became a Christian socialist. She was active in the women's suffrage campaign, lecturing widely. She also joined the National Council of the Independent Labour Party; Keir Hardie thought her one of the most influential socialists of her day. She encouraged women to join unions. On a trip to Dundee to support women workers, she contracted pneumonia and died in 1896.

**Sugar Boycott & Abolition** – In the 18th and 19th centuries, working-class women in Lincoln took direct action to raise awareness about slavery. They organised sugar boycotts and hosted visiting speakers who were formerly enslaved, sharing first-hand accounts of the horrors of plantation life. These “kitchen sink activism” efforts helped build public support for abolition and reflected the political agency of women in their homes and communities. Local marketplaces and community spaces in Lincoln, such as Bailgate and High Street homes, where women gathered for discussion and fundraising.

**Nuclear Disarmament & Peace Activism** (Green spaces in Lincoln) - During the 20th century, nationally, women's peace movements used open spaces as sites of protest and civic action. Lincoln had an active local CND group that organised vigils, public meetings and letter-writing campaigns; local green spaces may also hold untold stories of grassroots peace activity and are suggested starting points for further research. Women were prominent in these campaigns, making local peace activism a rich strand to investigate for creative projects.

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## **Wellbeing and Mental Health | *Healing and Care***

**The Lawns & Pioneering Person-Centred Care** – The Lawns in Lincoln was at the forefront of person-centred approaches to mental health in the 20th century. Under the guidance of practitioners like Charlesworth, patients were offered wellness and talking therapies, moving beyond purely institutional care and promoting dignity and autonomy.

**St John's Hospital, Bracebridge** – St John's Hospital played a central role in psychiatric care in Lincolnshire. Alongside progressive treatment practices, it was part of a broader history of challenging harmful interventions, including the later critical reflection on the use of conversion therapies. Taking the full history into account allows the site to tell a complex story about evolving approaches to mental health and patient care.

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## **Volunteer service personnel from Britain's colonies | *Service and Sacrifice***

### **Peter Bishop – Soldier and Drummer**

Born in Barbados in 1792, Peter Bishop enlisted in the 2nd Battalion of the 69th (South Lincolnshire) Regiment of Foot in 1806. He came to Lincoln with his regiment and married Ann Bishop at St Mary le Wigford in 1810 (the churchyard is now lost under urban development). Serving as a drummer, a role often assigned to Black soldiers in regiments, he communicated orders on the battlefield. Bishop fought at the Battle of Waterloo, earning the Waterloo Medal. After military service, he lived intermittently in Lincoln's workhouse and was buried on its grounds. He was one of a number of black soldiers serving in Lincolnshire regiments, whose stories highlight the early Black presence in Lincoln through military service.

### **Billy Strachan – RAF Officer and Anti-Racist Campaigner**

During WWII, RAF officers stationed nearby frequented the Saracen's Head in Lincoln. Among them was Billy Strachan, born in Jamaica to enslaved ancestors. Arriving in the UK in 1940, he trained as a wireless operator and later as a pilot, completing 30 operations over enemy territory from RAF Fiskerton. After the war, Strachan became a lawyer and co-founded the Movement for Colonial Freedom, campaigning against racism and for social justice. A plaque near the entrance to the Waterside Shopping Centre (former Saracen's Head site) commemorates his legacy.

### **Saracen's Head (Lincoln High Street, just south of the Stonebow)**

During WWII, the Saracen's Head was a social hub for RAF officers from nearby bases. In later decades, the Saracen's Head hosted ska and reggae nights, linking Lincoln's Caribbean community with wider audiences. From wartime service to postwar music, the site tells a story of resilience, cultural exchange, and the central role of Black people in shaping Lincoln's life.

### **Sidney McFarlane MBE – RAF officer and campaigner for equality**

One of the Windrush generation, Sidney and his wife Gwen answered the call to help rebuild Britain after WWII. He served his career in the RAF, rising to the rank of Squadron Leader, and contributed to the RAF's early policies around ethnicity and inclusivity. He was awarded an MBE for his services and is a longtime resident of Lincoln.

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## **Modern Life, Sports, Music, and Nightlife | *Modern Identities and Pop Culture:***

### **Pioneers of Football Diversity (Sincil Bank)**

Lincoln City FC has been home to several trailblazing Black players. Johnnie Walker joined in 1899, becoming the first Black footballer in the UK to command a transfer fee. Guyanese forward Willie Clarke played here from 1909–1912, after being the first Black player to score

in the English league. In the 1990s, Keith Alexander became LCFC's manager, the only the second Black manager in English league history, and later the first qualified Black referee.

### **John and Justin Fashanu (Sincil Bank & National Legacy)**

John Fashanu made 36 appearances for Lincoln City in 1983–84 before playing for England and becoming a TV presenter. His brother Justin, also a professional footballer, was the first player to come out as gay in 1990. Sadly, he took his own life in 1998, aged 37. Justin's legacy lives on through the Justin Fashanu Foundation, founded by John and his daughter Amal, which campaigns against racism, homophobia, and for mental health awareness in football.

### **Music and Nightlife**

In the 1960s, Lincoln's ABC Cinema (now the Waterside Shopping Centre) was a major venue for rock and pop. Chuck Berry, the "father of rock and roll," played here in 1965, breaking barriers as a Black artist performing for largely white audiences. Two years later, Jimi Hendrix performed on the same stage. Though adored worldwide, Hendrix faced racism that shaped both his career and how he was perceived, reminding us that even Lincoln's music history is tied to wider struggles for racial equality.

### **Boston Gliderdrome (Lincolnshire)**

Though not in Lincoln itself, the Gliderdrome was one of the region's most important live music venues. It hosted Black American stars like Otis Redding, Ben E. King, and Stevie Wonder, giving local audiences the chance to experience music that was reshaping global culture. For many, the Gliderdrome was their first encounter with Black performers live on stage, an experience that left a lasting impact on Lincolnshire's cultural memory.

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## **Romanies in Lincolnshire | *A base in town***

George Hall, a Lincolnshire vicar, became 'pastor to the gypsies'. In his memoir (see [The Gypsy's Parson, by George Hall](#)), he recounts an early childhood memory of Lincoln, in the shadow of the Cathedral: "Not far from my father's doorstep, as you looked towards the common, lay a narrow court lined with poor tenements, and terminating in a bare yard bounded by a squat wall ... somewhere in the fifties of the last century [ie in the 1850s] several families of dark-featured "travellers" had pitched upon the court for their Gypsyr, a proceeding at which our quiet lane first shrugged its shoulders, then focussed an interested gaze upon the intruders and their ways, and finally lapsed into an indulgent toleration of them. Thus from day to day throughout my early years, there might have been seen emerging from the recesses of Gypsy Court swarthy men in twos and threes accompanied by the poacher's useful lurcher"

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### **Other stories linking Lincoln to national heritage**

Alongside these examples, many other overlooked stories could be uncovered and reimagined. For example, passengers on the Windrush who returned to Lincoln after serving during the war, how some migrant communities navigated lending laws to financially support themselves, and how games were introduced as cultural gifts by settling communities.

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## Archives and Heritage Resources

We encourage artists to draw inspiration from both **local heritage collections** and **national/thematic archives**. These resources are a starting point to explore Lincolnshire's hidden stories and connect them to wider national narratives.

Artists are encouraged to explore local and digital archives, oral histories, and community resources to develop their projects. These resources will provide inspiration, context, and historical depth while leaving space for **interpretation, creativity, and co-creation**.

### Local Resources:

- [Reimagining Lincolnshire](#) - Research, blogs, and resources on hidden and marginalised stories in the county.
- [Lincolnshire Archives](#) Online Catalogue - Art and archaeology collections, including local stories and exhibitions.
- [Lincoln Museum and Usher Resource Page](#) - Art and archaeology collections, including local stories and exhibitions.
- [Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology](#) – resources, talks, and publications exploring county-wide heritage.
- [IBCC](#): The IBCC Digital Archive consists of more than 40,000 documents about those who were caught up in the bombing war in Europe 1939-1945.

### Thematic / National Resources:

- [Black Cultural Archive](#) - UK's leading digital archive for Black history and culture.
- [Bishopsgate Institute](#) LGBTQIA+ Archives Online
- [Working Class Movement Library](#): Collections on political movements, activism, and working-class heritage.
- [Wellcome Collection – Mental Health Histories](#): Medical and cultural perspectives on mental health and wellbeing.
- [Imperial War Museum Collections](#): Extensive archive on armed forces and wartime contributions, including migrant communities.
- [Mixed Museum](#): An archive with the mission to widen knowledge about the multiracial history of Britain

