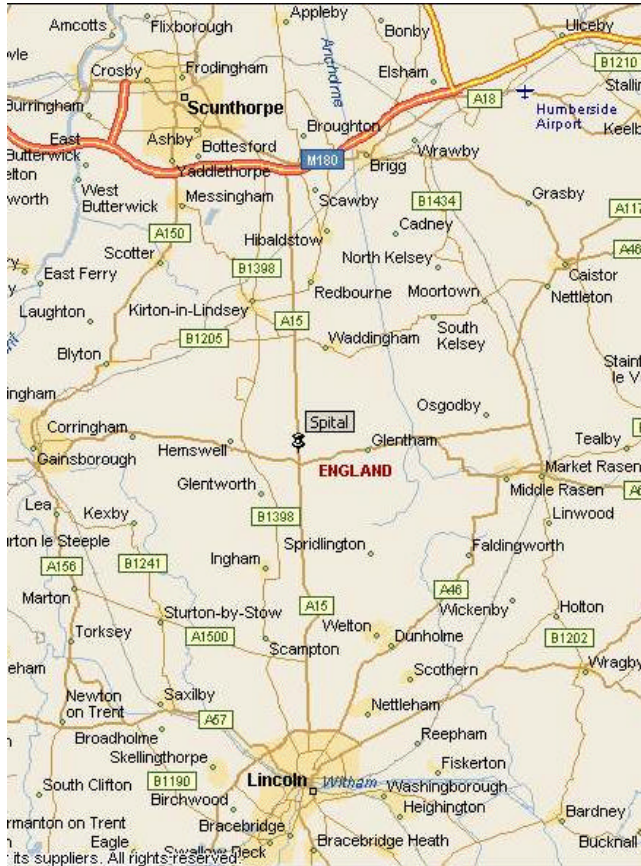


A Brief History Of The Spital Charity

In 1323 a remote Hermitage and Chapel on the Ermine Street, supposedly founded in the tenth century, was placed under the authority of Lincoln Cathedral in a document witnessed and made at

Tealby. It was ideally remote from the distractions of Lincoln and provided a welcome “Hospital on the Street” to the weary traveller.



In 1396 Thomas de Aston was given permission by the King in his Charter to invest money in the site and build a house for a Chaplain and seven poor persons. This followed the medieval idea that such Charity would earn the thanks and prayers of the poor for Thomas after his death.

The Charity survived the Reformation in the 1530's but was confiscated by Queen Elizabeth and sold on by her to private Masters of the Charity.

The buildings fell into disrepair until 1660 when Dr. Mapletoft was made Master. He rebuilt the Chapel and set about regaining the land and revenues which had been scattered amongst the families and friends of previous Masters.

By 1665 the income was £17.15 a year, and by 1668 Mapletoft had managed to restore payments to seven poor folk at £6.50 a year each.

Not all Masters were as conscientious as Mapletoft.

In the 1850's a Court case was brought by the Charity Commissioners against the Master, Mr John Pretymann, who had been pocketing some £800 profit a year for some 20 years after paying expenses - a profit margin a little too much even for the Victorians - and as a result the Charity was restructured with a School built at Market Rasen, payments continued to pensioners, funds to Lincoln Grammar School and the Vicar of Skellingthorpe for running a Parish School in the village.

Since then there have been many changes to the nature of the School and Charity in revised schemes and rules, but at the heart of De Aston School lies an organisation and identity that can trace it's origins back some 500 years.

As Thomas lies in his grave in Lincoln Cathedral could he ever have realised that his Charity and name would have been so long remembered ?



Illuminated initial letter "U" from Thomas De Aston's Charter of 1397.

This is a good example of medieval illumination - and the original rests in the Lincoln County Archives Office.

It is possible to pick out the words "Ricardus" for King Richard 2nd, "Thome" for Thomas de Aston and "Capella" for Chapel



Drawing of the buildings at Spital made in the Eighteenth Century.

On the left is the Sessions House built in 1594, then various Almshouse buildings built around 1620 and then on the right the Chapel built in 1661.

Notice the belfry at the west end and doorway on the north side of the Chapel.



Engraving of the Chapel and Almshouse at Spital on the Street. Late Eighteenth Century.

The Chapel building shown here was built in 1661. It is still the chapel shown in the previous picture with belfry at the west end and door on the north side.

The Almshouse building was built about 1620.



Engraving of the buildings at Spital made in the Nineteenth Century.

Visible are the supposed “Coaching Inn” buildings at left, the Sessions House built 1594 in the centre, and the Chapel of 1661 at the right.

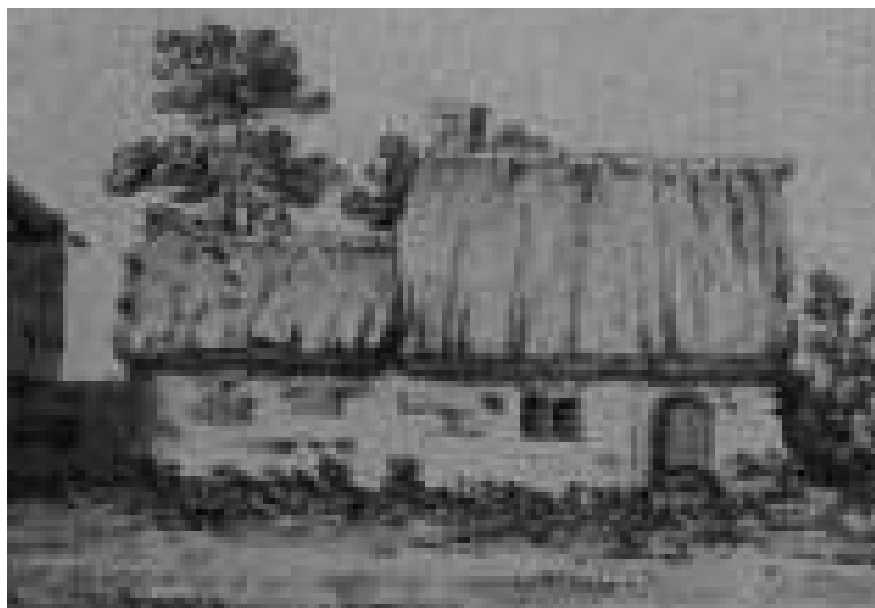
The large east widow visible in previous Chapel pictures has been replaced by a door, and a chimney has appeared at the east end of the roof.

The Chapel was remodelled drastically in 1890 at a cost of £ 130 and this picture may be a “good old days” fantasy made after this date.



Photograph of the Almshouse Cottage, built in 1620. At some point it has had the roof pantiled and is being sold by the Charity.

See below an extract from a previously shown Eighteenth Century engraving.





The picture below is from a previously shown engraving and shows how windows, belfry and doorways have been changed around.

This restored building was sold recently by the Spital Charity and is now owned by a Trust which intends to use it for educational, historical and religious purposes.



[End](#)