

# Gainsborough Library 1905-2025 Architectural trail

Discover the architectural features of Gainsborough Library in this guide.

## Opening Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday: 9am - 5pm

Thursday: 9am - 6pm

Saturday: 9am - 1pm

   @LincsLibraries



**BETTER**

Lincolnshire  
COUNTY COUNCIL  
*Working for a better future*

**BETTER**

Lincolnshire  
COUNTY COUNCIL  
*Working for a better future*

## Outside the Library

Around the library's perimeter walls are stone carved shields that commemorate people of significance either to the founding and construction of the library, or to the town. These were added to celebrate the library's golden jubilee in 1956.



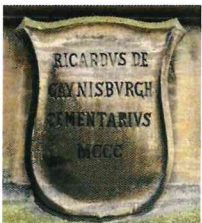
### King Sweyn A.D. 1014, King Knut.

King Sweyn of Denmark, then recognised as King of England, wintered at Gainsborough 1013-1014 with the Danish army and his son Cnut (also known as Canute). He died there on 2nd February 1014. A vivid description of the scene at Sweyn's death is given by ancient chronicles. King Cnut stayed at Gainsborough in command of the army until Easter 1014. The Danish fleet was anchored in the Trent at Morton. The very interesting Danish encampment in the wooded hills above Morton is still to be seen today.



### Aymer de Valence Earl of Pembroke died A.D. 1324.

Born about the middle of the 13th century – eldest son of William de Valence, half-brother of Henry III. He was Lord of the Manor of Gainsborough. He obtained a grant of quayage to bailiffs and good men of Gainsborough for three years to build a quay against the inundations of the Trent. After taking a prominent part on the affairs of his country both in peace and war he was murdered in June 1324 while on a special mission in France. He was buried in Westminster Abbey near the High Altar.



### Ricardus de Gainsborough Cementarius 1800.

A master mason at Lincoln Cathedral; probably engaging in the angel choir, buried in the Cathedral. His tombstone is in the South cloister walk.



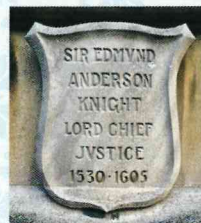
### Thomas Lord Burgh of Gainsborough K.G 1407 – 1496.

A Knight of the Garter who entertained Richard III at Gainsborough in October 1484. Buried in the Parish Church. He played a prominent part as a Yorkist in the Wars of the Rose, personally assisting Edward IV.



### Richard III, 1484. Henry VIII. Queen Catherine 1541.

Richard III visited Gainsborough in October 1484 and stayed with Lord Burgh. Henry VIII and his Queen, Catherine Howard, stayed a week at Gainsborough in August 1541 when on their famous journey through Lincolnshire. They held Privy Councils here, and there was much high revelry. Misconduct alleged against Catherine while staying at Gainsborough contributed to her undoing and later to her being brought to the scaffold.



### Sir Edmund Anderson, Knight, Lord Chief Justice, 1530 – 1605.

Lord of the Manor of Lea. Presided at the trial of Mary Queen of Scots.



### Sir Richard Williamson, Knight, Master of Requests 1619.

A Statesman who lived in Gainsborough. Son of John Williamson and Jane, daughter of Christopher Dobson, of Gainsborough. Entered at Gray's Inn, 8th February, 1581-82. He assisted with interrogations after the Gunpowder Plot was discovered, was a supporter of Sir Francis Bacon and was later appointed Master of Requests in 1614 under James I and a Steward of Retford. He married Mary, daughter of Thomas Anderson of Castlethorpe, and by her had issue Thomas Williamson of Scotter among other children. It is said that descendants of Sir Richard Williamson are still living at Morton.



### Sir Willoughby Hickman, Bart., 1604 – 1650.

Was Lord of the Manor of Gainsborough. He was created a Baronet by Charles II in 1643.

## Hidden Shields

Around the library's perimeter walls are four further shields that are no longer visible to the public.



### John Robinson 1575 – 1625, John Wesley 1703 – 1791.

Puritan Minister Wesley, whose father was rector of Epworth, is said to have preached many times in the Old Hall.



### Twice Besieged in 1643. Oliver Cromwell, Col. Charles Cavendish.

Gainsborough held out strongly for the Royalists and was besieged and captured twice in 1643, once in July and again in December. The town was of considerable strategic importance, as it barred the passage over the Trent into Nottinghamshire and further into Yorkshire. It was at the July attack that Oliver Cromwell came prominently forward and at a skirmish at Lea, Charles Cavendish, who was in command of the Royalist troops, was killed by the soldiers of Cromwell. Cavendish was a remarkably handsome man and was much loved. He was buried in Newark Church. The part Gainsborough played in the famous struggle was very important and the effect far reaching. Carlyle gives a good account of the sieges and so does Gardiner in his "History of the Great Civil War".



### Andrew Carnegie, Benefactor, 1905.

The Scottish businessman and philanthropist, who donated £4,000 towards the building of the library.



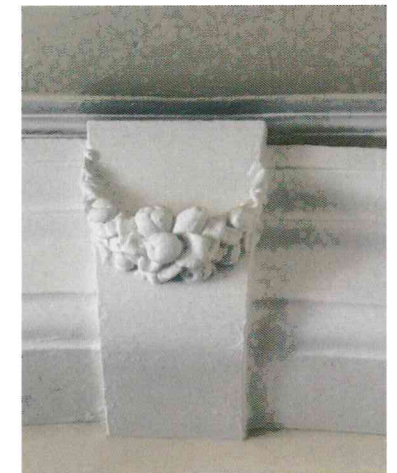
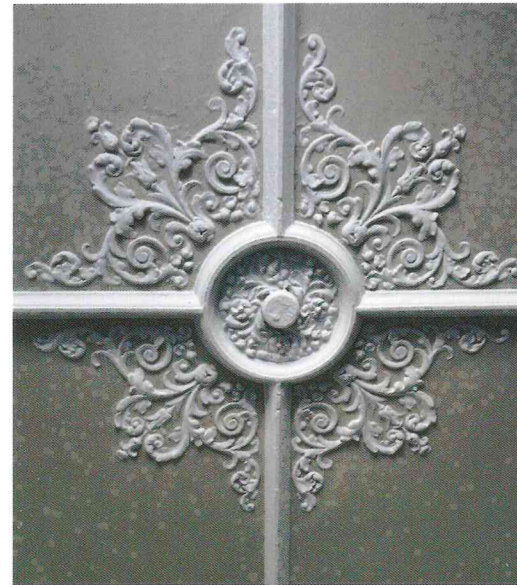
### Simon Patrick 1626 – 1707. Bishop of Chichester 1689. Bishop of Ely 1691.

Born in Gainsborough, 8th September 1626. Baptised in the Parish Church on the 18th September and attended the Grammar School. A learned and prolific writer, he was the author of many theological treatises and tracts. Is buried in the South choir aisle of Ely Cathedral.

## Inside the Library



At the entrance of the library, in the porch above the inner front door, you can see a plaque dedicated to Andrew Carnegie. It says 'The library was erected in the year 1905 by the munificence of Andrew Carnegie.'



The library was designed by Scorer and Gamble who were in partnership in Lincoln from 1901 to 1913.

It is a good example of an Edwardian public library.

'Architectural interest: it harmonises with the 15th century Old Hall opposite, presenting a handsome and well composed building in the late Tudor style. The well crafted interior, embellished with delicate plasterwork and classical motifs, is characterised by a lofty elegance reminiscent of the 18th century.'

*From Historic England 2015*

## Plaster Frieze



The famous quote:

*"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever" is often attributed to Mahatma Gandhi, but it is actually an adaptation of a quote by Isidore of Seville. The quote encourages embracing life fully while continuously seeking knowledge and growth.*

Here are some variations of the quote and related ideas:

### **Mahatma Gandhi's Version:**

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever".

### **Isidore of Seville's Original:**

"Study as if you were to live forever. Live as if you were to die tomorrow".

### **A Variation from the Hadith:**

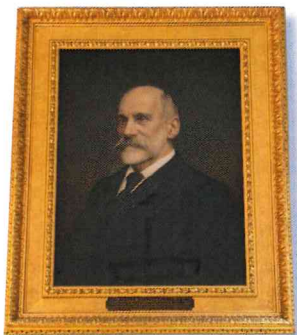
"Live for your afterlife as if you will die tomorrow, and live for this life as if you will live forever".

### **Saint Augustine's Version:**

"Take care of your body as if you were going to live forever, and take care of your soul as if you were going to die tomorrow".

## Portrait of Joseph Bennett

Viewable from the mezzanine



Joseph Bennett (1829 – 1 January 1908) was an English merchant and Liberal politician. Bennett was born at Grimsby, the son of William Bennett and his wife Ann. He was educated at Wesley College, Sheffield and became a merchant at Louth. He was a Justice of the Peace for Lindsey Division of Lincolnshire, and for the Boroughs of Louth and Grimsby. In the 1885 general election, Bennett was elected Member of Parliament for Gainsborough but lost the seat in the 1886 general election. He regained the seat in the 1892 general election but stood down from the House of Commons at the 1895 general election. Bennett lived at Louth and died at the age of 78.

## The Newspaper Room

The library's newspaper room holds the archive of the Gainsborough Standard (formerly the Gainsborough News) from 1867 to the present day. The archive was gifted to the library by the publication in the 1990s.

Due to the age and delicate condition of the papers they are not available for public use, however their contents are available to view on microfilm, and selected years have been digitised by the British Newspaper Archive.

