

Northamptonshire

Miniature lighthouse

The former Express Lifts Tower was known locally at 'The Northampton Lighthouse'. It was built as a lift testing tower in 1980-82. The Express Lift Company was taken over by Otis in 1997 and the factory closed in 1999. The concept of the Northampton Lighthouse was given great publicity by Terry Wogan on BBC Radio 2.

Lent by Martin.

Garden gnome

Lamport Hall was the home of the Isham family from 1560 until 1976. In 1847 Sir Charles Isham, whilst holidaying in Germany, saw local miners take small china figures down the mines as a talisman. He acquired a small army of these, brought them back to his Northamptonshire home as the perfect inhabitants for his rockery and wrote Notes on Gnomes, in which he detailed any reported sightings of gnomes by others. The Lamport rockery attracted widespread attention and began the practice of garden gnomes.

Lent by David.

Fox

The landscape of Northamptonshire has largely been formed by hunting, from the early days when the great forests of Rockingham in the north and Whittlewood and Salcey in the south provided deer for the royal packs of hounds. The central belt of Northamptonshire is characterised by rolling fields with small coverts planted far enough apart for a fox to run between. The landscape is punctuated by the spires, for which the county is famous, making it an obvious choice for some of the earliest steeplechases.

Lent by Martin.

***Murder in the Cathedral* by T.S. Eliot**

Thomas Becket's opposition to Henry II's plans to reduce the powers and privileges of the Church led to a confrontation at Northampton Castle in October 1164 when Thomas was found guilty of bring in contempt of Court and thrown into the castle's gaol. He was able to escape but his continued confrontation with the King culminated in his assassination. Following the canonisation as St Thomas of Canterbury, the spring in Northampton where he stopped to refresh himself became a place of pilgrimage. In later years a Well was built over the spring and it became known as Becket's Well. In 1343 a stone structure was constructed around Becket's Well to mark its place.

Lent by Martin.