



HECKINGTON WINDMILL



ABBEY PARKS FARM SHOP



HECKINGTON RAILWAY STATION



ST ANDREW'S CHURCH



LINDSEY JAMES

# Community Spirit

*Josie Thurston visits Heckington and East Heckington, near Sleaford*

Words: Josie Thurston Photographs: Tim Pritchard

Heckington is unusual for many things, as I discovered on a recent visit. Not only is it host to the largest village show in the country, quite a claim - but is also home to the only surviving eight-sailed windmill in the country. The windmill is open to the public and you can see it working. The attraction is particularly popular with school children and adults alike and you can buy the flour that is milled on site in the gift shop.

The village itself has a close-knit population of around 4,000. The village magazine is testament to the many clubs and societies that help to provide a community feel. With over twenty-nine located in the village alone, there is bound to be something that appeals, whether you wish to learn Spanish or are more sports oriented.

Speaking of being sporty, Heckington is the proud owner of some rather spectacular grassed tennis courts, at the heart of the village. This asset is a popular addition and is bound to be in demand this summer, with the weather promising lots of sunshine.

Other attractions in the village include the Heckington Station Railway Museum. This centre, situated at the railway station, is celebrating its 150th anniversary and is home to an array of artifacts and memorabilia. Volunteers are at the heart of these facilities and keep the village running like clockwork.

Talking to Jan Palmer, owner of long-standing high quality ladies fashion store Lindsey James, situated in The Barns, Whitehouse Farm it is clear that the villagers all have a strong sense of community spirit, with many of the events taking place raising funds for the community. Having three churches and a refurbished village hall there

is certainly no shortage of meeting places!

Lindsey James is just a couple of miles from the village and is well worth a visit. Housing the largest collection of hats around and beautiful weekend and occasion wear, take your time perusing and stop off for a coffee in the tea room next door.

Jan (Vice-chairman of the Parish Council) reveals that the wheels are in motion for 'The Mill Project' that will see regeneration of an area of the village, although with several councils and committees involved this may take a while to come to fruition - but is exciting none-the-less.

Recently, fund raising activities have centred around the LIVES First Responder voluntary emergency service. From a combination of individual fund-raising, donations and grants the community raised over £4,000, which was put to fantastic use in training new volunteers. Within ten minutes of going on call for the first time the responder was able to save someone's life. Group members will have a stand at the Village Show should you wish to find out more information, or indeed donate to the cause.

Abbey Parks Farm Shop sells mainly home grown and locally sourced fresh vegetables and fruit, some of which are grown organically. With a delicatessen and a coffee shop serving home cooked bread, cakes and scones, hot and cold lunches, Abbey Park Farm Shop is a delight to visit. Situated in East Heckington you are sure to find everything you need.

Heckington village also boasts several shops on the High Street, including a newsagent, antique and gift shops, plus plenty of accommodation should you wish to stay a while.