

The Lincoln Imp

In the city of Lincoln, an ugly little troll-like creature with a mischievous grin has become a town mascot, being celebrated by the local football team and appearing as Hamlet on the logo for the Lincoln Shakespeare Company. He is the Lincoln Imp, and he is a tourist attraction especially at Lincoln's magnificent cathedral, where he is hiding somewhere near the Angel Choir. He is also famous in Oxford, gracing the entrance of the main hall in Lincoln College at Oxford University. The undergraduate paper is even called *The Lincoln Imp*. What is it about this hideous little thing that is so captivating?

Well, there is a legend...

You will find the Lincoln Imp high on a pillar in the Angel Choir in Lincoln Cathedral.

He stands 12 inches high.

In the 14th century, Satan sent two imps out to play, and they blew into Lincoln Cathedral during a bad storm, where they decided to do some damage. They had some fun there, smashing tables and chairs, tripping the bishop, harassing the choir, and knocking over the dean. Finally, they began destroying the Angel Choir. An angel emerged from a book of hymns and commanded them to stop. One of the imps hid under the broken tables and chairs, but the other imp began to throw rocks at the angel. As punishment, the angel froze the imp to the spot where it stood (or rather, where it was sitting, with one leg across its knee), and that's where you can find it today inside the cathedral.

Many people believe that the Lincoln Imp is bad luck because he is associated with the Devil. That though is untrue, and is proved by the Imp's royal connections, as in 1928 the then Prince Of Wales, later King Edward VIII was presented with a Lincoln Imp tie pin. The following year his gelding won The Grand National and his colt won The Epsom Derby!

