

Kyme Tower

This slender fourteenth century tower is all that remains of the castle which was built between 1310 and 1381, it was surrounded by a moat, which still survives as an earthwork. It was built in coursed limestone ashlar. for Sir Gilbert de Umfraville, who was descended from a relative of William the Conquerer, What remains today is a 4-storey, square tower 77 ft high, with square projecting stair tower at the south-east corner which rises slightly higher than the main tower. It has a deeply chamfered plinth and two chamfered upper floor bands, topped with chamfered battlements. The south, entrance front, bears scars on the ground and first floors of the later attached house which has since been removed. The floor of the first floor room is reputedly patterned; hence its name 'The Chequered Chamber' though this is not at present visible. No floors, ceilings or roofs survive higher up, though evidence for them does survive. The circular stone spiral staircase survives intact, with at the top a central newel post which rises as a colonnette to support the panelled vault above. The lower contains no fireplaces or guard robes, and it was presumably intended purely for defence, it stands within a large moated site. The attached house was demolished between 1720 and 1725, when chimney-pieces were bought by Mr Chaplin for Blankney Hall. This tower is the earliest of a series of fortified towers built in this part of Lincolnshire, it is the only one built of stone, the later ones like Tattershall Castle, The Tower on the Moor at Woodhall Spa, the Hussey Tower at Boston and Rochford Tower at Skirbeck are all built of brick.

Subsequent owners of the South Kyme estates were:

- 1380 - 1530 *Tailboys* - Later members of the family had strong links with the Court of Henry VIII. Gilbert Tailboys was married to Elizabeth Blount the mother of Henry VIII's illegitimate son.
- 1530 - 1730 *The Dymokes* - Also had strong links with the Tudors and the Stuarts.
- 1730 - 1748 *Duke of Newcastle, Thomas Pelham-Holles, Whig Secretary of State and later, Prime Minister.*
- 1748 - 1810 *The Humes of Hertfordshire, mainly absentee landlords.*
- 1810 - 1975 *The Custs better known as the Lords Brownlow of Belton House.*

