

Janet & Chris Batson

Started volunteering at Lyveden in March 2012

Our fondest memory is of the warm welcome we received from the fabulous Seasonals, Susan (Lees), Barbara (Ding), Geoff (Fairhurst) and Gerald (Fisher), when we joined as Volunteers in time for Easter 2012.

We had visited Lyveden for the first time a couple of weeks earlier and it was love at first sight – an amazing space and atmosphere. We had taken the opportunity to talk with the very knowledgeable, welcoming and patient (we had a lot of questions!) Gerald Fisher about volunteering opportunities and signed up on the spot.

Good Friday 2012 arrived and we turned up for our first shift – bright eyed, bushy tailed and a little naïve! The sun was shining, Cadbury's chocolate eggs abounded and the whole of Northamptonshire decided to visit Lyveden that day. Thankfully we were brilliantly mentored by Susan and introduced to her "busy day box" – full of useful and practical things to ensure that Visitors could enter the site quickly and efficiently. The day passed in a flash and we went home grinning from ear to ear (& with somewhat tired legs!). It was a great way to spend the day. We came back for more on Easter Sunday - sun still shining, visitors galore & Lyveden's gardens looking their best - and were welcomed by the equally brilliant Barbara and Geoff. It was another busy day but we worked well as a team to ensure the Visitors had the best experience we could provide. We're sure we made loads of mistakes that first Easter but we always felt supported to do the right thing for the Visitor.

Over the years, we have volunteered with lots of lovely, knowledgeable people, many of whom have contributed to this document. They made our experience as a Volunteer a rich one – more importantly, they made Lyveden a great place for Visitors young and old (& their dogs).