

Barbara Ding

Started Volunteering at Lyveden in June 2009

I started volunteering at Lyveden in the summer of 2009, just after I retired. I'd worked with another volunteer (Robert Wootton) who told me Lyveden needed volunteers and suggested I try it. In those days there wasn't much by way of induction or training; we learnt on the job, shadowing the then Manager, Mark Bradshaw, and other experienced volunteers 'meeting and greeting' the visitors. Mark "engaged" (dreadful word!) with visitors in such a natural and personal way, telling the Lyveden story with a passion that was infectious.

My induction was with Gerald Fisher, who knew the history of the time, and the Tresham story by heart. He walked me enthusiastically round the site and talked all the way round!

Mark, Angela, Tom and Olivia (Bradshaw) living in the cottage on site with Cirrus. Mark's Auntie Jane, with her husband Derek, full of wonderful ideas for children's activities. Our sense of loss when Mark and the family moved out, when Mark was promoted.

Knocking myself senseless one time coming out of the Bield; I soon learnt to duck.

One marvellous summer's day with hardly any visitors when the weather was fickle, with gorgeous sunshine over Lyveden, and sudden sharp showers long the valley. The Garden Volunteers had worked their usual wonders and the site looked so well cared for. I stood outside the Visitor Centre (aka shed) facing North and marvelled at an enormous rainbow over Oundle, then turned round to see a second rainbow, just as beautiful, over Sudborough.

The development of the Family Den (another shed!) and the publication of Fifty Things To Do Before You're 11 ¾.

The Easter we had marvellous weather and were overwhelmed with visitors. We ran out of Cadbury Easter Eggs; but extra supplies were found from somewhere (Ed. Sainsbury's in Kettering) for the next day.

The summer of 2015 when the "Seasonals" - Ana (Geyer), Susan (Lees), Gerald (Fisher), Geoff (Fairhurst) and I - worked every weekend between us covering as Duty Managers. I think Mark was seconded elsewhere at the time.

The weekend tours we did for visitors, helped by notes and laminated pictures to show visitors at pre-planned stopping points.

Apple pressing in the Autumn; wasps galore! Dreading the 'Mystery Shopper' reports!



The big rusty key that Zoe (Wilson) found in the mud in 2014 dated by X-ray to Tresham's time.

The wonderful photograph that Geoff (Fairhurst) took early one morning, as the sun rose and lit up the niche in the north wing of the Bield. Magical.

Raising funds for Lyveden by giving presentations to outside Groups.

The day the farmer came to mow the field and a swarm of Red Kites suddenly descended from nowhere, looking for dinner!

The wonderful oxeye daisies in the meadow and so many other wild flowers that I couldn't name.

The application for a Wind Farm on land immediately to the rear of the Bield and the ensuing six-year battle to fight it until the developers withdrew their Appeal.