

**Penny Jessep**

**Started volunteering at Lyveden in 2012**

It is July and the school summer holidays are just beginning. It is a sunny if somewhat breezy day.

A mother arrives early with four children, her own two and a neighbour's two. They had been the weekend before and the children thought the mount looked like Hogwarts. They had dressed up as Harry Potter and spent the morning playing happily on the mount. They had a picnic lunch and, in the afternoon, took the audio tour round the lodge.

A lady came to the visitor's centre and waited for her friend to arrive. Every year they met up for one day out and this year they had chosen Lyveden. They took the audio tour which in between coffee/lunch/tea took most of the day. They had a lot to talk about and were still busy chatting, sitting on a bench near the car park at 5.15pm. But they promised they would leave by 5.30 when the gate would be closed.

Grandparents arrived with their two grandsons. They took the audio tour, had a picnic lunch and because it was a windy day, they bought a kite and spent an enjoyable few hours flying it on the field opposite the visitor's centre.

The mindfulness group who came to walk the labyrinth to free their minds.

The mother who came to tell us how much she and her children had enjoyed their day and the children recounted some of the stories they had made up as they wandered around the lodge.

The businessperson who explained that when he had to visit Oundle always came to Lyveden for his lunch as it was so peaceful. As he explained it was so refreshing that he could not see the 21<sup>st</sup> century from the lodge.

The elderly couple who came from nearby to have tea in the cottage and then sat happily on a bench to read their books until closing time.

All of these people and many more having a lovely day out making memories, never to be forgotten.

The visit by Monty Don in October 2014. He was here making a film about gardens but was captivated by the whole place. The visitors that day could hardly believe it was him but when told it was, there was only one question most wanted answered. 'Has he got his dog with him?' Sadly not, as Nigel had an ear infection.



