

**Neil Underwood**

**Started volunteering at Lyveden in February 2018**

I initially joined as a member of the Photographic Group and over the years have enjoyed the seasons at Lyveden..... always something new.....there has been some snow, lots of sunshine and plenty of fruit! I've enjoyed photographing the natural side of Lyveden but, of course, Lyveden is also very much about people, be it the Treshams or those of today. Visiting theatre companies have been a regular feature and I well remember one where a lovely sunny evening transformed itself into a very black sky with thunder clouds and a rainbow over the Bield. Suffice to say picnics were quickly consumed and waterproofs donned!

Another facet has always been involvement of children, be it the trails, Children's Den or special events. I was privileged to record the "Singing in Secret" workshops that involved children from several primary schools working with experts in the music of the Tresham era. Much fun and learning was had by all, including me!

Latterly, involvement with the Archive Group has entailed scanning documents that the team had put into named folders, ensuring a digital folder has the same title and to cross referencing of digital to source. It has been entertaining scanning A2 maps on an A4 scanner... folding to A4, scanning each segment, importing to Publisher and stitching the scans together to achieve a near match. I'm sure in time and with resources a direct copy could be made. Hundreds if not thousands of items have already been scanned with yet more to come.

I also joined members of the Thrapston and District u3a in a Shared Learning Project investigating and recording the life of Meriel, Lady Tresham..... a fascinating insight into the life of a very strong woman especially in the age in which she lived. Visits to Rushton Church, Coughton Court, Weston Underwood, Northampton Records Office and the Shoe Museum in Northampton to name but few. All prompted picture taking to illustrate the sources and artefacts of the research.

Quietness and tranquillity of the site, cowslips in the meadows, Carols in the Kitchen, Fund Raising swimming in the Moat, the Tea Room, the wasps, wood burners, good food and the Cottage Garden - all hold memories of happy days.