

It is almost twenty years ago that I started volunteering at Lyveden, though my activities are severely limited now. However when asked to record "Happy Memories" it does give one a great number to sift through. There are some less happy memories, fortunately outnumbered by some very happy memories.

Perhaps the outstanding memory of those in the "Happy" box is one involving a young visitor to Lyveden. About eleven years old he came with his father, obviously on a Dad and Lad trip. On arrival this youngster started by asking some very bright questions about Lyveden and the period in which it was built. This started a discussion about the late 16th and early 17th centuries. I answered to the best of my own limited knowledge: I think I kept pace with him. Apparently satisfied, he and his father set off to explore Lyveden.

A couple of hours later, they returned to the Visitors Centre. They said how much they had enjoyed themselves, and then this eleven year old produced this "Happy Memory" which I still treasure. He put out his hand to shake mine saying "Thank you for answering all my questions". And with that father and son turned and left.

Was such politeness nurture or nature? Whatever, it was sufficient to bring a tear to this Volunteer's eye.

Fairhurst's Fleeting Memories:

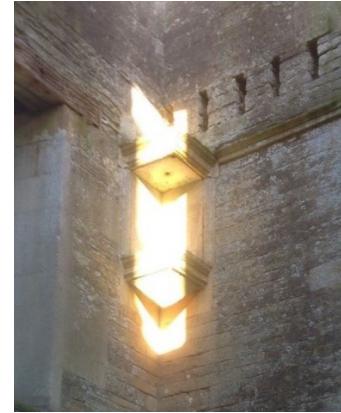
. . . And then there was the time when Visitors came into the Visitors Centre to say that there was an owl running loose in the New Bield. Investigation revealed a fledgling Little Owl on the floor of the Bield's kitchen. Lots of photographs were taken, ending with this one taken on the circular iron staircase.

. . . Another occasion revealed dozens of fresh-water oyster shells on the track between the old Visitors Centre and the orchard. How did they get there? Despite there being a resident in the Cottage no-one had seen an animal fishing them out of the moat. Various theories arose. An otter maybe? The RSPB suggested crows. We never found out. Yet the mollusc shells still appear – occasionally.



One of the delights at Lyveden during the summer months was finding wild orchids – especially the Bee orchids. Even more pleasurable was pointing them out to visitors. As the orchids were so small, visitors rarely noticed them. For many it was a unique sight.

Another unexpected pleasure happened on a January morning. Going into the Bield on a bright sunny morning, I was standing under the niche where we believe a statue of the Virgin Mary had once stood. With the bright sun streaming through one of the upper Eastern windows, it exactly illuminated the niche. I was on duty again exactly twelve months later and the same thing happened. Was this targetting of light by accident or by design? The Bield is not on an exact North/South axis so I tend to think it was an architectural feat. Not bad for the end of the 16th Century!



Geoffrey Fairhurst

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