

priory news

Deeping St James Parish Church Magazine

75p

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August 2026



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From the Vicar



I wonder how many of you go into a room – perhaps a bedroom, or kitchen – then stop dead, wondering what you came there for.

It is not entirely uncommon for me, but I am usually able to talk to the dog, and that often helps me to remember (sad isn't it?!).



Occasionally, I might wander into church, and pause for a minute, wondering what I was going into this vestry or that cupboard for. But I would be rather more concerned – as I am sure you would be – if I wandered into church, stopped dead, and thought “what on earth am I doing here?”. It is rather to be assumed that the vicar does know the answer to that question. But I wonder how often we actually ask ourselves.

What are we coming to church for? What do we expect to get from it? Important questions, which might ask questions of our habitual attendance – not that there is anything wrong with habitual attendance, I hasten to add! Perhaps a more significant, and difficult, question is what do we expect to contribute or give to church at this time when I am attending.

And this might lead on to other questions, this time for us as a community. What, on earth, are we as a church doing here? What is our purpose... our calling... our vocation? Or, to put it another way, what is our mission? How do we reach out to the people of this parish? Why? And how do we grow as a church?

Big questions! These are questions we will be pondering as a PCC in the coming months. We plan to have an awayday at Edenham, provisionally planned for 19th September – but watch this space! This is not just for the PCC – it is for anyone interested in the direction we should be moving in as the body of Christ in this place. Do come and join us if you are able. This is the mission of the whole church.

Mark

Registers for June / July 2026

Baptism: ***We welcome into the Lord's family:***

June 28th	Alice Hewitt, daughter of Andy & Nicola
July 5th	Max Kruger, son of Peter & Evie

Parish Directory

Vicar	The Revd Mark Williams The Vicarage, 16 Church Street, DSJ	vicar@dsj.org.uk	217366
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Church Ladies' Fellowship	Margaret Flegg, Locks Close, DSJ		347197
Church Flowers	Pauline Brooksbank, 134 Eastgate, DSJ Christine Masters, 1 DSJ Rd, Deeping Gate		343829 07785 785155
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Junior Church	Helen Williams		217366
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In This Month's Priory News



Dear Readers,

In general August tends to be a quieter month for Priory News but it does provide a chance to catch up on things we couldn't include in July's issue -

namely, the Hog Roast and Rose & Sweet Pea Show.

We've received so many pictures taken during these events that we've decided to print a pull-out 'souvenir' booklet to show you some of them. (*Online version at end.*) We are grateful to all the photographers: Jan Fisk, Judy Stevens, Kate Drewett, Caroline Herron and Chris Halley. Our thanks too to all the other contributors to this month's magazine.

(*Now for my annual plea!*) During these last "Lazy-Hazy-Crazy Days of Summer" please jot down a few notes about places you have visited during the summer (and include some photos too), send them in and that will give us a good start to our first autumn issue. Please let us have your items for September's issue by **Monday, August 24th** at the latest.

John

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Margaret has another mouth-watering recipe for us on page 14: Coconut Meringue Slices, no less. Thank you Margaret.

Our thanks to Jan Fisk for the cover photograph taken at the crowning of the Rose Queen, Annabelle George, with her attendant, Robin Plumridge, and the outgoing Queen, Anneka Jones

Safeguarding of Children

To comply with Safeguarding Policy, submitted pictures of recognisable children must be accompanied by written consent to publish from their parents or guardians. In addition, we will not publish names of any pictured children unless specifically requested by their parents or guardians. Editor: John Worthington, Cranmore Farmhouse, PE6 8RN. Tel: 01778 343860; email: priorynews@dsj.org.uk

Prayer for the month

Yesterday, as I write this (23rd July), we hosted the Archdeacon's Visitation service. We were delighted to welcome the Archdeacon 'of the North' (Stow & Lindsey), the Ven Eleanor Robertshaw.

The service included the following prayer of working together as one body for the mission of God. We start by our commitment to God, which leads immediately to our commitment to one another. To do all together – live, work, and play together.

The next two lines are very pointed, and very strong. It is not that we should work together when all else fails. Rather working together should be our default position. Ultimately, the reason of us working together is not that we should be a success, but *that the world may believe that Jesus Christ is Lord*. I wonder if the corollary is also true – that if we do not work together, then the world will be prevented, or at least hindered, from belief in Jesus Christ as Lord!



"Praying Hands"
Pen & Ink drawing (1508) - by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528)

*God our Father,
in the name of Christ, and in the power of the Spirit,
we commit ourselves to you and one another,
to live, work, and pray as one body in Christ;
to do apart nothing that we can do together,
and to do together what we cannot do apart.
Give us vision, give us courage, and give us joy,
that the world may believe that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to your eternal glory.*

Rev Mark



House Group
7:30pm Wednesdays
at 45 Crowson Way, DSJ.
All welcome!

Reports & Forthcoming Events

Church Ladies' Fellowship

On July 2nd Margaret thanked all who helped at the Rose and Sweet Pea Show on June 27th and Lynne Clarke who took the rest of the books to the Library and Tesco's. I received flowers from Dot Turner and a card made by Carole Mills for my birthday. Thankyou to all who gave me cards. Margaret welcomed Sonia who gave an excellent talk with slides of the History of the Priory Church. Rosemary Fisher won the raffle and Margaret Flegg won the competition. Hostesses were Hilary Gentle and Jean Fowler.

The last meeting was on 16th of July when the Rev'd Mark took the closing service in the Church. Jan gave us a thankyou card which Margaret read out for all we had done to help at the Rose and Sweet Pea Show. Jan was given her birthday flowers and card for her birthday in August. Then we all shared a lovely faith supper. Margaret wished all a peaceful and relaxing August and looked forward to seeing all on September 3rd when our new programme starts. All member present were given the new programme.

Margaret Flegg Chairlady.

The Hog Roast - Mission Matters

There haven't been many years when we have been confident about the weather for the hog roast, but July 18th saw Steve Fisk, Geoff Armstrong, Brian Herron and Daz Richards erecting gazebos in the hall garden, confident that they wouldn't blow away overnight or be too wet to use.

These were in addition to those already in place, thanks to the efforts of the Fisk family. Mission Matters are very grateful to those we can call upon when a bit of 'muscle' is required. We are also grateful to everyone who provided delicious salads and puds. The hog roast isn't a fundraising event but we did manage to cover costs and make a small profit.



Finally Mission Matters would like to thank everyone who attended the Patronal Festival festivities.

Victoria

Fairtrade News

As part of being a Fairtrade Church I receive regular emails from the Fairtrade Foundation. The following communication caught my attention due to its topical content amidst this hot dry summer. Food for thought.



It's been pretty hot for the past month – we've just had the UK's hottest June ever and July is bringing more of the same. But this isn't new for farmers across the world, who have been dealing with the worst effects of the climate crisis for years. They're being pushed to breaking point, dealing with extreme temperatures which destroy harvests and reduce their income. In an unfair trade system, they're the ones who suffer most.



"Climate changes makes me anxious", Naftaly says frankly. "These days you can't predict it"

For coffee farmers, conditions matter. Every decision is made based on weather – and when weather is unpredictable it makes their work impossible. Farmers like Naftaly are watching the climate crisis ravage their businesses. While farmers continue to face these challenges, there are practical ways we can show our support. One of the simplest ways you can support farmers is by choosing Fairtrade products. With summer picnic season in full swing, we've put together a list of great Fairtrade products to help you enjoy the sunshine while supporting farmers facing the worst impacts of the climate crisis.

Coffee isn't the only crop that's being hit by the climate crisis. Extended heat and drought cause low oxygen levels in the environment, leading to bananas not developing properly. Ever, an Environmental Monitor at a cooperative in Colombia, says things are getting much more urgent.



"Over the last ten years it has changed quite a lot. It's getting much hotter so we have to take more breaks because the temperature is really intense."

People. Planet. Pay - Do it Fair

Further information available on the Fairtrade Foundation website. The Fairtrade stall will be in church after the main service on 20th September. Your continued support of Fairtrade products is much appreciated by the people that are at the heart of global trade.

Thank you.

Kate

Rose & Sweet Pea Show 2026

A Big Thank you to all those people who contributed to the success of this year's Rose and Sweet Pea Show: to the many people who entered the competitions in the Church, the judges, who along with the competition organizers had a difficult job to do.



Thank you to those who entertained and brought their family and friends to support the event: Deeping St James County Primary School, Dream Dance, Deeping Dance Academy and Francesca. Unfortunately, it was too hot for the Karate so they had to cancel. Thank you to Annabelle, the Rose Queen and Robin and Alice her attendants.

This year saw the return of tours up the tower. Thank you to the Bell Ringers for organizing this which, along with the pony and carriage rides, was a popular extra attraction. The Children's games are always busy so a big thank you to those volunteers, especially the one who every year brings her own game and stays with it. You know who you are!!

As always, many thanks must also go to all those who organized and manned stalls, served refreshments and washed up!

A special thank you to Stuart from Grasmere who not only gave his time and produce but also his profits to the church.

We must thank the other many businesses who generously gave prizes for the raffle. I would like to apologise to all those I annoyed by trying to sell raffle tickets, and thank those who sold tickets for me, The raffle made £1,342. It's not a job I enjoy and if anyone else would like to take it on please let me know.

This year the Rose and Sweet Pea Show made £745 more than last year, so well done everyone for all your hard work especially on such a hot day. The grand total made was £3,524.35.

Jan

Rose and Sweet Pea Competition Winners 2026

Flower Cup	Diane Rose
Best Rose in Show	Rachel and Chris Brown
Best Sweet Pea	Rachel and Chris Brown
Fruit and Vegetable Shield	Rachel and Chris Brown
Wine Trophy	Diane Rose
Jam and Chutney Tankard	Diane Rose
Gordon Crowson Trophy	Iris Mason
Baking Award	Diane Rose
Art Trophy	Christopher Roger
Craft Bowl	Kay Townsend

Childrens' Competitions

Nancy Titman Award	Halle, Verity Belle, Erin
Minecraft	Niamh Reidy
Book Character in Veg	Sophie Goode
Drawing related to school	Sophie Goode
Painting of Wildlife	Niamh Reidy
Decorated Biscuits	Pippa Laughton
Weedus Majesticus	Noah Laughton

Rose and Sweet Pea Raffle 2026

Prize	Donated by	Winner
£100 cash	Priory Church Hall	Pat Farrell
£50 cash	The Waterton Arms	Angela Logue
Admission for 5 Burghley House and Garden		Danny Knight
Luxury Drinks Hamper	Church Ladies Fellowship	Melissa
Luxury Drinks Hamper	Church Ladies Fellowship	Adeline Graham
£50 Voucher	Maharanis	Debbie Short
Garden Hose	Branch Bros	Alice Baxter
£50 Voucher	Black Cab Studio	Wendy Cunningham
Tea for Two	Lillies Tea Room	Chloe Laughton
£20 Voucher	Boundary Fish and chips	Toby Marves

Prize	Donated by	Winner
£20 Voucher	Spice Merchant	Kerrie
Jams and Biscuits	Grasmere Deli	Jason Johnson
Dahlia	Swines Meadow	Jeremy
Sparkling Wine	Sams	Sue
All Butter Shortbread	Vine House	Paul Boswall
£10 Voucher	Linfords	Suzie Reidy
Red Wine	Co-Op	Linda Glossop
White Wine	Tesco	Jill Thomas
3 Box Sweets	AnnMarie	Sylvia Grover
Red wine	Tesco	Tim Drake
Quality Street	Tesco	Kim Neilson

Jan

Eco Church News

Many thanks to those that braved the heat to help tidy up the churchyard last month. We cleared the weeds from the porch around the west end to the church tower door which was thankfully in shade.

Strimming along the church hall has made it a lot tidier. Ivy on the east end of the church has been cleaned as well as around the oak tree in the car park. What we couldn't finish on the Thursday session (cut short due to the heat) Mark and I finished off on the Saturday, agreeing on a plan for planting up the bed behind the Bug Hotel. The Working Party will be back in October - date to be confirmed. Everyone is welcome.

Kate.

Visit to Thorney Abbey

Many of us who were assembled at The Green at Thorney, on a (fortunately) not so hot Sunday, had long wanted to visit Thorney Abbey. Now was the opportunity. Wow! what a window. Replicated on the Thomas a Becket Miracle window at Canterbury, it was installed in the 19th Century. Originally one of the Fen Five, a famous collective of powerful medieval monastic foundations (Peterborough, Ely, Ramsay, Crowland and Thorney) the Abbey has had a chequered past - founded by Saxulf, in 662; sacked by the Danes in 870; abandoned until it was reformed as a Benedictine Abbey in 972. when it enjoyed royal patronage from King Cnut. It was pulled down and a larger Norman structure erected in 1128 when it entered its glory days before being badly affected by the Black Death and ultimately dissolved as part of Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries.

(Continued on page 13)

CHURCH CALENDAR FOR AUGUST 2026

2nd	SUNDAY	TRINITY 9	
		9.00 am	Holy Communion (said)
		10.15 am	First Sunday Praise
5th	Wednesday	Oswald, King of Northumbria, Martyr, 642	
		1.00 pm	House Group
6th	Thursday	The transfiguration of Our Lord	
		9.30 am	Holy Communion (said)
7th	Friday	11.00 am	Welcome Space at the Bell Tavern
		7.30 pm	Ringers' practice
8th	Saturday	Dominic, Priest, Founder of the Order of Preachers, 1221	
9th	SUNDAY	TRINITY 10	
		10.00 am	Holy Communion
10th	Monday	Laurence, Deacon at Rome, Martyr, 258	
11th	Tuesday	Clare of Assisi, Founder of the Minoresses (Poor Clares), 1253	
12th	Wednesday	1.00 pm	House Group
13th	Thursday	Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down & Connor, Teacher of the Faith, 1667	
		9.30 am	Holy Communion (said)
14th	Friday	11.00 am	Welcome Space at the Bell Tavern
		7:30 pm	Ringers' practice
15th	Saturday	Assumption of The Blessed Virgin Mary	
		1.30 pm	Thanksgiving for the birth of a child
16th	SUNDAY	TRINITY 11	
		9.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		10.00 am	Holy Communion (Order 1)
		12.00 noon	Baptism
19th	Wednesday	1.00 pm	House Group
20th	Thursday	Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, Teacher of the Faith, 1153	
		9.30 am	Holy Communion (said)

21st	Friday	11.00 am 7:30 pm	Welcome Space at the Bell Tavern Ringers' practice
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23rd	SUNDAY	TRINITY 12
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10.00 am	Holy Communion & Ministry of Healing
12.00 noon	Baptism

24th	Monday	Bartholomew the Apostle
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26th	Wednesday	1.00 pm	House Group
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27th	Thursday	Monica, mother of Augustine of Hippo, 387 9.30 am	Holy Communion (said)
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28th	Friday	Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Teacher of the Faith, 430 11.00 am 7.30 pm	Welcome Space at The Bell Tavern Ringers' Practice
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29th	Saturday	The Beheading of John the Baptist 10.00 am	Coffee and Cake
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30th	SUNDAY	TRINITY 13
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10.00 am	Holy Communion
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31st	Monday	Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, Missionary, 651
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September 2026

2nd	Wednesday	1.00 pm	House Group
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3rd	Thursday	9.30 am 7.30 pm	Holy Communion (said) Church Ladies' Fellowship: Opening Service & Supper
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4th	Friday	11.00 am 2.00 pm 6.45 pm 7.30 pm	Welcome Space at the Bell Tavern Crafternoon (for venue 'phone 343860) Choir Practice Ringers' practice
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6th	SUNDAY	TRINITY 14
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9.00 am	Holy Communion (said)
10.15 am	Pet Service
6.00 pm	Choral Evensong

Readers and Readings (August 2026)

	Reading 1	Reading 2	Reader	Psalm	Gospel	
TRINITY 9						
2nd	9.00	Isa 55: 1-5	Rom 9: 1-5	Caroline Herron	Ps 145: 8-9, 15-end	Mt 14: 13-21
	10.15	John Worthington				
TRINITY 10						
9th	10.00	1 Kings 19: 9-18	Rom 10: 5-15	John Worthington	Ps 85: 8-13	Mt 14: 22-33
TRINITY 11						
16th	10.00	Isa 56: 1, 6-8	Rom 11: 1-2a, 29-32	Joy Cunningham	Ps 67	Mt 15: 10-28
TRINITY 12						
23rd	10.00	Isa 51: 1-6	Rom 12: 1-8	Geoff Armstrong	Ps 138	Mt 16: 13-20
TRINITY 13						
30th	10.00	Jer 15: 15-21	Rom 12: 9-21	Martin Fisher	Ps 26	Mt 16: 21-28
TRINITY 14						
Sept 6th	9.00	Exek: 33: 7-11	Rom 13: 8-end	Trevor Harwood	Ps 119: 33-40	Mt 18: 15-20
	10.15	James Forrester				



Deeping St Nicholas Church
Would like to invite you to
A Faith and Learning Service
Saturday, 15th August 2026
At 3pm

The service is to celebrate the many gifts and talents of those who serve their community.
Lay, Ordained or part of a Christian Community or none.
The Revd Canon Dr Hugh Jones (Warden of the College of St Hugh – Lincoln)
will be preaching at this service.
Refreshments will be served after the service.

RSVP by Monday, 3rd August 2026

(Continued from page 9)

With the draining of the fens, a deal was struck between the Bishop of Ely and the Earl of Bedford to allow the old ruins to be repaired and used by the Dutch who had come to the area for the purpose. The date 1638 we could see carved into the entrance and it marks the rebuilding of the Church. The Earls of Bedford funded improvements in the Church well into the nineteenth century as well as building a model



village for their estate workers to live in; we walked past some of the cottages on the way to the Bedford Hall for tea. This was originally part of the seventh Duke of Bedford's modern water supply and sewerage scheme which was housed in this neo-Jacobean Tankyard building, including a 96ft high water tower, erected in 1855. A visit to the Thorney Heritage Museum proved thoroughly captivating - not least as it carried an exhibit on Fen Skating featuring the success of Turkey Smart - great great grandfather of Steve Fisk who was part of the group! The Museum is open from 2.00 - 5.00 pm on Sundays until the end of September and a visit is highly recommended! In passing: The Rose & Crown has had a refit and looks inviting!

Judy Stevens

Rotas for August

Flowers

2nd	Eileen Day
9th	Christine Masters
16th	Carol Harrison
23rd	Carole Mills
30th	Joy Cusak
Sept 6th	Jan Fisk

Coffee

2nd	James & Elizabeth
9th	Carol & Abi
16th	Jan & Victoria
23rd	Rob & Kerri
30th	Rosemary & Josie
Sept 6th	Chris & Liz

Sidespersons

2nd	Adrian & Kim
9th	Roger & Liz
16th	Carol & Jan
23rd	Tony & Christine
30th	Trevor & Ann
Sept 6th	Rosemary & Liz

Intercessions

2nd	Rev Mark
9th	Sandra
16th	Bet
23rd	Nick & Kate
30th	Niccy
Sept 6th	Revd Mark

Cooking with Margaret

Coconut Meringue Slices



Ingredients:

3 oz butter
4 oz sugar
2 egg yolks
2 tbs milk
6 oz self-raising flour

For the Topping:

2 stiffly beaten egg whites
2 oz desiccated coconut
4 oz caster sugar
1 oz chopped nuts
1 oz chopped glacé cherries

Method:

grease a flat tin
set oven to 350°F /175°C /Gas 4
cream butter and sugar then add rest of ingredients
mix well together
press into tin, level & smooth over
next mix all ingredients for the topping and place on top of the mixture in tin
bake for 20 mins until pale golden brown
cut into slices when cold

Enjoy. Margaret.

Priory Beer Festival 2026



"(xxx), would you be a steward in church at the Beer Festival? . . .*

. . . . "Of course", I said with all the confidence of a veteran of many occasions where one sat quietly at the back of church and welcomed visitors. I was not prepared for the electronic sound and the Hi Vis vest that met me as I entered a packed building!

It was wonderful to see so many people of all ages in our church. Ranging from babes in arms to very senior citizens, everyone was enjoying the occasion and happy to be meeting up with friends and family. I saw no disrespectful behaviour. In fact one young man requested a beer mat because he did not want to put his damp glass on the pew shelf.

Several visitors were amazed by the beauty of our building and made donations. Perhaps they will return for one of our quieter events...

** the author wishes to remain anonymous.*

Some thoughts on Rote Learning & Language (my title)

Whilst on holiday in Norfolk recently the parish magazine for the local church dropped through the door of the cottage where we were staying. I found one article quite thought-provoking, so much so that I contacted the author (the acting Vicar) to seek permission to quote from it in our own magazine. Here's what he wrote:

“Did you ever have to learn something by rote at school; maybe times tables, Shakespeare's sonnets, poems or perhaps Latin declensions? Educational methods have changed over the decades since my school days, and learning by heart passages of poetry or prose seems frowned upon these days, which to me is a great shame. Not only does the memory of such things enrich our adult lives, the practice also opens up parts of the developing brain. The phrase "learning by heart" originated in Ancient Greece when it was believed that our intellect and memory were located in the heart, an idea retained until the advent of modern neuroscience. However, I believe that the expression is still meaningful because we can make what we learned a part of ourselves. The words are no longer outside but within us; they are now within our hearts.

“This is particularly true of prayer, and I am often saddened when I realise at a wedding or funeral service it is only those of an older generation who are familiar with the traditional words of the Lord's Prayer. These first appeared in the 1549 prayer book, but the words used by Archbishop Cranmer appear to be descended from the Middle English of John Wycliffe's bible of 1382.

“It was the memory of the biblical words of the Book of Common Prayer and well-known hymns that sustained spiritually, and gave hope to, many prisoners of war in the Second World War, in particular those of the Japanese who were denied any sort of book.

“I find the Book of Common Prayer easier to read out aloud compared to the profusion of services produced today by the Church of England, because in his genius Cranmer wrote in rhythmic, symmetrical sentences. When I am leading services in modern English, I often have to consciously stop the old language creeping in as it is so memorable. Meter forces the brain to pause momentarily and so have a chance to store the words.

“Setting words to music also enhances their memory, something recognised by the great eighteenth century Methodist hymn writer Charles Wesley. His hymns are a wonderful example of how they can convey deep spiritual reflection, even to the unlettered of his day.”

I particularly concur with the words of the final paragraph and have to admit that often passages from the King James version of the Bible cause me to hear in my head music from Handel's "Messiah" and elsewhere. I suspect I am not alone in this.

John

Wildlife across Lincolnshire (8)

Reserve: Red Hill Nature Reserve

Location: Asterby Lane, North-east of Goulceby, off the Bluestone Heath Road, Louth, LN11 9UE.



If there was a prize for the best view in Lincolnshire, the bench in the Red Hill Reserve would certainly be a contender. It sits on the brow of a very un-Lincolnshire feeling hill looking out across the Wolds with views all the way to Lincoln Cathedral, if the weather accommodates. During the Summer, this Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (“LWT”) reserve showcases a wealth of wildflowers and butterflies. It makes for a great destination for a day out in the Lincolnshire Wolds.

Red Hill Reserve has its origins in quarrying: a manmade landscape, dug out by hand, over 150 years ago. It was one of many chalk quarries in this area of the Wolds with the old cart tracks still visible on the site, though in every other way the area is totally transformed. The reserve area comprises around 4 acres (1.6 hectares) of steep chalk escarpment grassland with some scrub and 4 acres of old plateau grassland, as well as the disused quarry with its famous exposure of Red Chalk. The unusual redness is down to the fact that the chalk deposits on the site, laid down 140 million years ago, have a high iron content which, having oxidised, has turned a distinctive reddish, brown colour, making Red Hill visible from miles around.



The reserve is an SSSI – a Site of Special Scientific Interest – which means that it enjoys a formal designation as an area specially protected due to its valuable wildlife, rare plants and

other geological features. There are over 4,000 SSSIs in England – covering more than 1 million hectares, around 8% of England’s land area. Red Hill is just a tiny crumb of this – but a very important and equally beautiful one.



The grassland and quarry area have a rich assemblage of chalk plants, including localised species such as Autumn gentian (felwort), yellow-wort, basil thyme, kidney vetch and pyramidal and bee orchids. In the Summer months you are likely to see the more common grassland butterflies and moths, including an abundance of six-spotted burnet moths. The meadow

pipit, a localised breeding species inland in Lincolnshire, nests in the reserve and from June onwards, throughout the Summer, you might see and spot quail on the site.

Over the winter months, you are likely to see cattle and rare breed sheep on the site doing the job modern machinery is unequal to, grazing the very steep banks of the quarry which are too steep to mow. It is only the very top of the site which is mowed – once a year, around September, - to take a traditional hay crop which is used to feed LWT livestock.

The importance of Red Hill as a haven for wildlife is heightened by the fact that it is in the middle of an area of intensive arable farming, the practices of which are not always kind to the needs and natural cycles of wildlife. That said, this picture is starting to change slightly with farmers increasingly taking an interest in wildlife alongside their efforts to cultivate land. A number of neighbours to Red Hill have joined the LWT’s efforts to preserve our natural landscapes by rewilding areas of their land, using seed and green hay collected from the site. When we visited Red Hill earlier this Summer the many poppy fields around the reserve were as striking as the red chalk and cowslips in the reserve itself.



The Red Hill site breaks down into two unevenly sized parts. So far, I have talked about the older, but much smaller part of the site – the 10 acres of old quarry. The larger part of the site is around 60 acres of meadow which, on 5 June 2013, was named as one of the 60 Coronation Meadows across the UK to mark the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation. The initiative came from the then Prince of Wales after reading Plantlife’s report

on the scale of the local loss of wildflower meadows. The UK has lost 97% of its wildflower meadows since the 1930s. The scale of the loss has left the remaining wildflower meadows fragmented and wildlife isolated and even more vulnerable. Even common hay meadow plants, like yellow rattle, eyebrights and greater knapweed are in decline.



These wildflowers, along with many others, can all be found at Red Hill. This is thanks in great part to the work of the LWT and in particular one gentleman – called Harry Turner – who spent around 25 years turning what were barley fields into a nationally recognised traditional hay meadow by planting tens of thousands of individual plants, including cowslips, orchids and yellow rattle. Harry, then in his 80s, was interviewed in 2019 by

BBC Gardeners' World for his efforts. The effect of the successive waves of different wildflowers means that at different times the Coronation Meadow turns every colour from yellow to white, to purple, to mauve and more as the weeks progress from Spring to late Summer.

As well as being important for nature in its own right, seeds from the site are harvested and spread around the county. This harvesting requires a careful balance between maintaining the stock of existing plants versus the aspiration to spread those plants further afield. Most of this activity is undertaken by hand with groups of volunteers – including school and community groups – carefully collecting the seeds and taking them away to create their own meadows in gardens and community spaces.

But how do you create a meadow? The wildflowers are, of course, important and for these, nectar-rich plants to thrive it's important to drive the nutrients in the soil down. It can seem counter-intuitive, but wildflowers don't do well in good quality soil. If the soil is too rich, coarser grasses out-compete, and eventually kill off, the wildflowers. Instead, a meadow is better suited to nutrient poor soil. This is one of the reasons that our garden lawns often make a great location for wildflowers. Grass is rarely fertilised and the cuttings are taken away, meaning that the soil is relatively nutrient deprived. This can mean that if you leave your lawn uncut wildflowers will quickly find



their way back. This year we extended “no mow May” into July (at the time of writing) and have loved seeing the Ox Eye daisies, poppies and hollyhocks very much in control of things and being thoroughly enjoyed by the bees and small birds. Maybe we’ll take our lead from Red Hill and do our very own hay cutting in September, though I don’t think we’ll stretch to grazing sheep quite yet.

Rachel

Sources: Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Wild Lincolnshire: Discovering Lincolnshire wildlife and wild places (2022); and www.lincstrust.org.uk; and plantlife.org.uk (accessed various dates).

Geoff's Journeys: Ripon Yarns (part one)



I think I watch too many movies. I could probably find my way around San Francisco from the number of them filmed there (Bullitt, Hitchcock’s Vertigo, the complete Dirty Harry box set) but plonk me down in, say, Leeds or Manchester and I wouldn’t have a clue. So with this same sense of general ignorance I booked a trip, ostensibly to see Ripon Cathedral, not knowing if I was going to a grimy steel, glass and concrete jungle or, as turned out to be the case, a charming historic little town (city?) probably comparable in size to Ely, although I realise that doesn’t help if you don’t know Ely, but by the wonders of today’s technology you can get a small child to google it for you on the interweb.

I’d been told there were some nice museums in Ripon, namely an old Police Station/Prison, old Courtroom and old Workhouse. With so much to see in just a few hours only the briefest tour of any Cathedral is possible. At the heart of this one is the underground crypt which, dating from 672 is not only the only surviving part of founder St Wilfrid’s original church but also the oldest built remaining in use fabric of any English Cathedral. In a niche which once probably housed one of Wilfrid’s collections of holy relics there now resides a rediscovered 14th century alabaster carving, probably hidden during the reformation, of the risen Christ emerging from a chest tomb. Unfortunately, to more modern eyes it looks as if He’s stepping out of the bath, and I’m sorry but I just can’t help seeing it otherwise! Anyway, it afforded me another opportunity to say “I’s crept into the crypt and crept out again”.

A wood carving in the quire stalls of a rabbit being chased down a hole by a griffon is thought to have inspired Lewis Carroll, whose father was a canon there, to write Alice in Wonderland.



Another curiosity is the mechanical hand dating from 1695 which originally could be used by the organist who was hidden from the choir (I wish they'd make up their minds about the spelling) to keep them

in time. Of course, in our own church we have something similar but real, if not quite as old. It's called John Worthington. Unlikely I know, but I like to think it may have been the inspiration for 'Thing' from the Addams Family (the disembodied hand, not John Worthington).

So much to do, so little time to do it. The three mentioned Museums are signposted only short walks from the Cathedral. Having worked in a prison (I stress worked, I wasn't an inmate) for 2½ years that one was my number one destination. Ah, what memories: a rack to be tied to while being birched, the treadmill, cramped filthy damp and dingy conditions and that's just the café (I jest). In retrospect I lingered too long comparing their collection of antique whips and handcuffs to my own (I assure you there is a perfectly innocent explanation as to why I have my own set of police handcuffs.)

Time was moving on and I ran into someone from our coach trip who I knew from Stamford. She told me she'd managed to visit the Cathedral, all three museums AND found time to eat! So I had a rushed ramble around the market square, in the centre of which stands a 90 foot high stone obelisk which, unique to Ripon, at various o'clocks (currently nine) over the years the town horn blower has blown his horn, probably since the 13th century, so it has to be said he's looking remarkably well for someone that old. Also, in the market square stands a 1911 dated shelter for horse drawn cab drivers, which in view of its rarity was fully restored in 1985 by the Ripon Civic Society.



I would like to have found a book with more history of Ripon to take home and study in hope of a future trip, but Shaws' horseless carriage was coming to take me away (ha ha).

A lovely day out, but I hoped they'd re-run it.

Book your travel with me

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Priory Church, Deeping St James

priority news special for summer 2026



We had another successful Hog Roast as part of our 2026 Patronal Festival celebrations and there

wasn't much food left by the time around eighty people had been served! (Dave, of Lincolnshire Smokeries certainly looked pleased!)



The Lazy Oyster Jazz Band entertained us with some lively music and they also seemed to enjoy the food!

You would be right in thinking that a good time was had by all!



Rose & Sweet Pea Show 2026



Thank you Chris for making sure that the garden was spruced up a couple of days before the Show.

The weather was hot and sunny this year and led to a good sale of drinks and other refreshments but there were a few shady spots under the trees.

I don't think I've ever seen more pairs of shorts and straw hats in one place!





The children's activities were well supported and helpers were kept busy throughout the afternoon.

Nancy Titman award for Creative Writing which was presented to Deeping St James Community Primary School by Anthea Wray, daughter of Nancy.

There was a wide array of prizes and awards to be won and prizewinners' names



are on pages 8 & 9 of Priory News.

Now please turn over the page for some more pictures from the Show:

