

Monday 2nd July: Washingborough

You know the poem (Stevie Smith?) with the line 'not just waving but drowning' – well, something like that? On Saturday night at about nine o'clock or so, we sighed as a 'noisy rabble' arrived on the mooring pontoon. From that time onwards there were screams and squeals as whoever it was (noisy b....ers) wibbled and wobbled around on a makeshift craft. At one point Nick put his head out and asked if all was ok. The squealing went on and on and the outboard on the said boat started for a short while. I checked once or twice and sometimes the boat was down river and the last time I thought I saw an 'idiot' in the water. At about 10.45 there was a knock on the boat and there stood a woman and child begging assistance. It seems husband and three kids had boarded the boat he had bought from a 'bloke in the pub' and had come down to inspect the acquisition. When he finally got the thing started it gave up the ghost and then he managed to snap the rip cord. It seems the figure in the water was the son desperately attempting to power the boat back across the cut (quite wide here!) It was good that mum, with the youngest, stayed ashore! So, Sir Nicholas (Galahad) sprung into action and the said boat was towed back to its mooring.

Yesterday I caught one of the few Sunday buses into the city to go to Meeting for Worship in Lincoln. The Meeting House is tucked away and is quite a historic building. Worship was held in part of the premises which date from 1610. About 30 of us met, and I was welcomed warmly. I believe there were more men than women – that's quite unusual. The ministry was varied and around the theme of maintaining harmony. As I sat quietly in the simple surroundings, just a tad moving towards the tired, even drab, I thought about the glory and beauty and wonder of the cathedral up above us on the hill, of the sacred music which I love and of the hierarchy of clergy with their rich vestments; and I knew without a doubt that I was so glad I was *here*. Friends have such a very different history ... and it's so much more democratic, down to earth and real.

Back on the boat we had a quiet day, Just a walk in the evening, amid ox-eye daisies (scentless mayweed or even *matricaria perforata*), elderflower, rose-bay willow herb and red valerian. Does Lincolnshire claim the most enormous blackberry flowers or is it just the wet June and are they over-sized countrywide? Right by the boat, in a watery environment are rich golden and purple pansies – so unusual.

The weather is really, really disappointing. We were considering going down to Boston this week but the forecast is just not hopeful so we intend to go back into the city. Rick had used technology to predict a sunny week ahead – only trouble is he was checking out Lincoln, New England. We've disenchanted him!

. . . . and some musings from Lincoln

It's been so good to be in Lincoln with two (well, four for a while) folk who hail from here. I'm quite envious of their enormous love of the city and pride in the wonderful cathedral. We passed the Victorian stone building on the Fossdyke and Witham Navigation, *Clayton and Shuttleworth* where Rick started his working career – his stylish boat, *Just Do It* would not exist without that history, those skills learned. The Lincoln Symbols – the cathedral and the Imp on his boat testify to that. Wendy recalls using the cathedral for games of hide-and-seek when the weather was bad. It *was* a sacred building so there was no running – it was a sedate, respectful version of the game and apparently the powers that were chose to ignore it! Now, tourists queue to pay the £6 entry fee and we are ushered and minded as we enjoy the splendours.

Another Rick story: proudly clutching well earned pennies, a young Rick proudly walks up to the very smart hotel right by the cathedral and sits himself in the restaurant. 'Yes, Sir, what can I get you?' says the Maitre-d. 'Plum-pudding and chips, please' and that is exactly what he got!! We don't think he's dared go back since.

We're in military aviation land here with its big skies; it's noticeable *any* day – military hardware thunders overhead. AWACS patrols the skies continuously and this weekend saw an air show nearby so there was lots more activity, including a Red Arrows- like display.

I'm impressed, but also disapproving of military expense and that we as a nation still earn big money selling arms.