

Friday 13th: Saxilby

The Mystery Play needs much deserved comment. Originally, these plays would last two whole days back in Medieval times and would be performed annually. Many Old Testament stories would be enacted. In its present format there is just an evening performance and a production just once every four years. We had chosen a perfect night in that it was not raining – though we still hadn't donned enough layers, and by the end of the evening were both more than a little chilled. The performance started with the audience sitting around a central acting area in the garden of the Bishops Palace, where, after some lusty and lovely singing of *Adam Lay Y Bounden* we witnessed an enactment of the creation and the story of Adam and Eve, with God, a convincing authoritarian and benign personage. (The fact that God

was so entirely convincing as a woman I find significant when one considers the controversy in the CofE regarding women bishops!) Within a half hour we were seeing the Annunciation, the Birth of Christ and then the temptation. Lucifer was an

amazingly seductive and theatrically scary woman; she and her two cohorts had perfected the ultimate evil laugh! In the interval, as we

walked to the cloisters for the next part, we had to withstand the powers of darkness along with fire-eaters and fire performers - very impressive as, at the height of their performance, the flames created a heart stopping explosion! In the second half we were seated in the central area of the cloisters with sun in the late evening sky, shining golden on the main tower above. Then the story of the Passion was played out, quite terrifying. The play finished with the glorious resurrection and the final Day of Judgement when the baddies 'got their come-downance'.

All told, there were brilliant performances by Jesus, Lucifer, God, the older Mary, and Mary Magdalene, and not a single weak link in the entire performance which finished with lusty, appropriately celebratory singing. A performance to reinforce the Christian faith! So many local folk with so much talent!

A very special experience in a sacred place.

And back down to earth. We have been told that boats are being let out onto the river, though yesterday it took the boats going up river, with the tide, but with a huge head of water coming down river, six hours to reach Cromwell Lock. After much consultation it has been decided that we will leave it another day. There will be no tide to ease our journey so it will be a long hard slog up to Cromwell: we would expect to be there about 4pm, helmsmen tired and probably wet.





And my final thoughts as we leave Lincoln:

Just six/seven months ago we were in Australia and New Zealand , where we saw each small community taking a serious interest in its oh-so-recent history. Previously in Cambodia we had seen crumbling temples from about the time of Lincoln Castle being built.

We also saw ornate homes and temples in Penang built by Chinese entrepreneurs with ancient Chinese-style, elaborate

architecture, some with inspirational touches, inspired by Victorian craftsmen. Enjoying Lincoln's heritage, with its Roman, Viking, and medieval history, really is equally amazing! No wonder folk from the other side of the world come here to enjoy our history and to wonder! And how privileged we've been to see so much of our varied and increasingly inter-connected world and its wonders.

And on Thursday evening we witnessed a sunset to equal the one we saw in the South Pacific. It was so dramatic it was unreal/surreal/whatever!



Sunday 15th July: Torksey

This morning was a brilliant start to the day – bright, blue, and sparkling. We went for a short walk, though it was necessary to wrap up warm as there is a chilly breeze. Hardly balmy July! As I write this at 11.00am cloud is bubbling up. Please, please don't let it be a rainy, St Swithun.

We are hanging about, waiting.

Our get-away yesterday was delayed.



So, there we were, loosely moored, on a private landing, waiting to follow *Moondah* down onto the Trent.

Early morning, well, 0830, we set off from Saxilby prepared for passage up river to Cromwell Lock and on into Newark. The lock keeper was having a lazy morning, and there were a number of boats awaiting passage. The four of us sat on a wall in the sun (yes there was some!) taking in this pleasant location, in an expanse of watery flatness with imposing cooling towers. Rick was suddenly sick and feeling poorly,

unable to move without a violent reaction; after a while we helped him onto his boat but things were no better. Nick roped the two boats together and edged them across the basin to a mooring with far better access. After troublesome contact with NHS Direct (because mobile signals here are poor and variable) an ambulance was on its way and Rick was being helped off the boat and wheeled away down the towpath, accompanied by a tearful, wobbly Wendy. All this was grim, but if we had been on the Trent when he was so suddenly taken ill, it would have been so much worse. It is also fortuitous that Rick and Wen are from these parts as she was able to stay overnight with her son in Lincoln, only five minutes from the hospital.

Today, we have heard from Wendy that he is feeling a lot better and consequently, she sounds cheerier. Apparently the hospital want to do MRI and CT scans, I guess to rule out anything sinister, so we don't expect our friends back on board 'til Monday at the earliest, and then late on. All the local people here who saw the drama unfold have been asking after him with kindly concern, reinforcing my view that 95% of people are warm-hearted and kindly.