



Greetham Retreat

*Self Catering Accommodation & Caravan Club CL site
in the Lincolnshire Wolds near Horncastle*

Our Story 'from pigeons to paying guests'

by Rob and Jeanette Folwell

**Initially Prepared and presented at the 'Nature and Tourism' conference for the
Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) in November 2015**

Revised & Updated October 2016

Greetham Retreat Holidays

What we offer....

- Quality self catering accommodation with 5 Cottages, sleeping 1 to 16 guests.
- Caravan Club Certificated Location with just 5 pitches and full facilities.
- All set in over 4 acres of natural grounds with ponds, woodland and wildflower meadows for guests recreation and enjoyment.



Where are we?

- Situated near Horncastle in the heart of the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB.
- Set in open countryside and close to a network of public footpaths and bridleways.
- Offering a tranquil and natural environment.
- We use nature as one of our main attractions and as a marketing tool.
- Offering guests with hectic lives a relaxing escape to the quiet of the countryside.



Our Vision...

- Retired from Leicestershire Police at 51, felt too young to do nothing.
- Had a dream to run and own a holiday let business with a small caravan site and wanted to work together.
- We were both townies & had no experience or knowledge of wildlife & conservation.
- But we both felt strongly about it and started scouring the country for something suitable that we could afford.
- We found Greetham Lodge in Lincolnshire; then bought it & moved in the summer of 2007.



This is what we bought, can you see our house in the background?



- A redundant barn or crew yard.
- It was full of hundreds of feral pigeons.
- Hence the title of this presentation 'Pigeons to paying guests'



**It was set in
a 4 acre
field of poor
quality
grass with
little bio
diversity**



How we started...

- It took 12 months to get plans & permissions in place.
- Advice & small grants from Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside service to create wildlife pond & purchase seed for wildflower meadow.
- Lincolnshire County Council provided 650 native tree whips, protection tubes and stakes, plus mixed thorn hedgerow plants. We only paid half the cost.
- We funded everything else ourselves & spent the kids inheritance!



**Started by creating our natural grounds
before starting the building conversion...**

**Excavated
the wildlife
pond in a
damp patch
in the field.**



We planted all 650 tree whips...

This allowed them to establish & grow for a year before we opened for paying guests.



And erected over 30 bird & bat boxes in the mature trees.



Barn conversion started in January 2009



- We project managed and helped out ourselves wherever possible.
- The pond is now full with water with the newly planted tree whips in the foreground...



We chose names for each cottage & named them after women in our lives..

- **Katie's Corner - *was named after our daughter 'Katie'.***
- **Maggie's Mews & Rose's Rest - *were named after Jeanette's mum, 'Margaret Rose'.***
- **Wendy's Wing - *was named after Rob's mum whose middle name was 'Wendy'.***
- **Laura's Loft - *was named after Rob's grandmother 'Laura' which is also our daughter Katie's middle name.***



**18 months
later the
conversion is
all finished...**

**We opened
for paying
guests for the
first time in
July 2010.**



Autumn of 2010 we built the caravan site...



- 6 weeks to build.
- Ash trees pollarded.
- 5 hard standing pitches, access road & service point built.
- Opened just after Christmas 2010.



We use Nature as a primary marketing & promotional tool...



Our own grounds & the surrounding countryside



How we embrace Nature venues for marketing & promotion?

- Research & visit venues.
- Listen to guests needs & experiences so we can:-
- Recommendations.
- Personal Welcome.
- Information Leaflets.
- House book.



• The key for us is SIGNPOSTING...

How we Signpost Nature

- Via our Website, Facebook, Twitter, Emails, Correspondence and In Person.
-

- Initial contact shows nature links.
- Promote upcoming events via own Website, Twitter and Facebook pages.
- Encourage guest to share their own pictures etc.



Photographs taken by Guests and shared with us...



Tailor Signposting to what they are looking for!

Our guests are Couples, Families, Walkers, Cyclists, Dog owners, Peace & quiet seekers, Active individuals, Stargazers & photographers etc...

- Most want Nature attractions and venues to visit.
- Recommend and advise what is available, what is offered, when is it open and how to get there. *EXAMPLE: Dog owners to quieter beaches for space and freedom without conflict (e.g. Theddlethorpe).*



Guests with kids...

- After a long journey, cooped up in the car! Kids asking “are we there yet” ?
- Use this to your advantage:-
- Encourage them to explore the grounds.
- Spot the wildlife – Moorhen chicks on the pond, butterflies in the wildflower meadows.
- Pond dipping, bug hotel or nature detective sheets.
- Suggest visits to farm parks, seal sanctuaries, bird watching, nature reserves, donkey sanctuary, The Deep, Coastal Country Park and there are so many more great places to visit too.



How we know that Nature works...

By our Feedback...

- **From Reviews on Trip advisor.**
- **Guests simply telling us.**
- **What they write in our visitor comment books on departure.**
- **From replies to our customer questionnaire when asking why they chose Greetham Retreat and the Lincolnshire Wolds.**



This comment is a good example...

- *"Many thanks for a lovely stay. The cottage, grounds and location are wonderful, with moorhens and 3 chicks on the water! Our first time in the area so the introduction, leaflets & maps were most useful. We especially enjoyed our visits to Lincoln (Cathedral, Castle & Magna Carta), Boston and Gibraltar Point (south of Skegness). Also Snipe Dales, Gunby Hall & gardens, Claythorpe Watermill & Bird Park. A most enjoyable and excellent week."*
- August 2015 – John & Jan – Powys, Wales



4 star Gold was always our target market...

- Slightly higher end of the market.
- People looking for 'Good Value' but with some disposable income.
- Offering modern, clean, stylish, uncluttered quality accommodation.
- Flexibility of arrival days.
- Importance of Pet Friendly accommodation.
- Caravan Site with full facilities & exclusivity...
- Crossover market from Caravans to Cottages.
- Offering something extra - 4 acres of natural grounds.



Awards...



- National Winner in 'CL of the Year' in 2013.
- Regional 'CL of the Year' winners 2012 & 2014.
- TripAdvisor 'Certificate of Excellence' 2013, 2014, 2015 & 2016.
- Lincolnshire Environmental Awards 2015 - Highly Commended.
- Visit England 4 stars & Gold Award for Excellence.
- Walkers, Cyclists, Pets & Families Welcome scheme members.
- World Host & Lincolnshire Ambassadors.



Lincolnshire Ambassador

- We can recommend the Lincolnshire Ambassador FREE online training.
- Customer Care, Lincoln, Greater Lincolnshire and East Lincolnshire.
- Just register and do it at your own pace.
- Certificate when completed.
- Helps you find out what's available throughout the county, nature and other attractions.
- Website @ www.lincolnshireambassador.co.uk



Our Website

www.greethamretreat.co.uk

Videos & rotating images showing our natural grounds.

Trip advisor links.

Map showing where we are.

Navigation buttons to other pages.

Rotating top bar to signpost special offers, events & attractions etc.



*** NOW TAKING BOOKINGS for 2016 in all our Lincolnshire Self Catering Holiday Cottages ***

Greetham Retreat

f t w p g+



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Luxury Self-Catering Holiday Cottages in Lincolnshire

Greetham Retreat offers top quality self-catering holiday cottage accommodation near Homestead in the Lincolnshire Wolds. Specially designed to be smart, undiluted and stylish, our five exclusive holiday lets are within easy reach of the historic city of Lincoln with its magnificent cathedral and castle as well as several other traditional market towns such as Spilsby, Louth, Market Rasen and Boston. Tastefully decorated with quality furnishings, beautiful oak floors, leather sofas, fully equipped modern kitchens, flat screen televisions and Wi-Fi, each cottage is truly a home from home.

[Superb self catering holiday...](#)

Please enjoy this short film of our holiday cottages

We offer two spacious cottages for families or larger parties that sleep 4 and 6 guests, as well as two one-bedroom ground floor cottages with vaulted ceilings, and a more intimate loft apartment, perfect for couples and a romantic getaway. All have en-suite facilities with some having features such as a wet room or whirlpool bath. **Pets are welcome** in most cottages which are surrounded by over four acres of lovely private natural grounds attracting wildlife and offering panoramic views across the countryside. To enhance your relaxation we can also offer a selection of [holistic therapy treatments](#).

With wonderful scenery, historic market towns, popular east coast seaside resorts and beautiful sandy beaches nearby, there is something for everyone. Greetham Retreat, with its selection of stylish luxury holiday cottages in Lincolnshire, provides an idyllic rural retreat for those who want to escape from it all, offering self-catering short breaks and longer holidays all year round.

The Perfect Getaway...

An historic barn in an area of outstanding natural beauty has been converted into a tranquil holiday haven by owners Rob and Jeanette Fowell who are offering a 'get away from it all' experience. The serene location in verdant Lincolnshire is perfect for nature enthusiasts and those with an interest in conservation, as well as those just wanting to slow down and relax in the picturesque countryside. Treat yourself to a revitalising break in one of the fabulous, four-star, luxury cottages.

Wind down in the Wolds

Greetham Retreat is nestled in the Lincolnshire Wolds, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Walkers, cyclists and nature-lovers alike are drawn to this area to appreciate the magnificent scenery. [Click to discover more about Lincolnshire](#).

CYCLISTS WELCOME
PETS! WELCOME
FAMILIES WELCOME
WALKERS WELCOME

THE CARAVAN CLUB
CERTIFICATED LOCATION
5 MEMBERS ONLY

Free Wi-Fi
Free Internet Access

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[Privacy Policy](#)

Business Success.....

Trip Advisor – Over 185 reviews, most are 5 out of 5 stars.

Repeat Business – Large number of guests (almost 60%) are returning customers staying several times in Cottages & on Caravan site.

Extended season – We have a long season from February to December – *Proactively use nature events to extend appeal throughout the year e.g. Donna Nook seals.*

Why have we been so successful?

- We honestly don't really know?
- Its probably a mixture of things, but we're sure it's **NOT** just the quality of our accommodation



We think that our success is down to many things...

- Personal welcome.
- Depth of info offered.
- Places to visit.
- Nature & wildlife.
- Wonderful Wolds views.
- The sights of Barn Owls, Buzzards & Woodpeckers.
- Fall asleep with the “twit twoo” of the Tawny Owl.
- Our location, being between Lincoln & the coast.
- Lincolnshire is a great, but underrated place to visit.



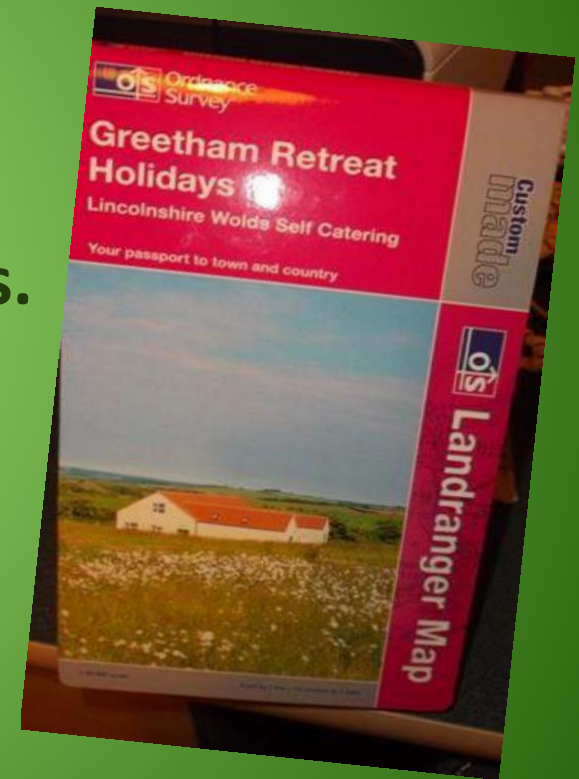
But one of the main reasons is...

- We have embraced & included nature in everything we do. From initial inception & at every stage including our final service delivery to our guests.
- Nature is **INTEGRAL** to everything we do.
- We are not just offering accommodation and a caravan site we are offering that dream of 'Escaping to the Countryside'



Facilities provided for those who enjoy outdoors and nature...

- Drying room available for cottage & caravan guests.
- Laundry facilities.
- Personalised OS Maps.
- Boot trays are provided in cottages.
- Folder of walks and cycle routes throughout Lincolnshire.
- Laminated A4 maps and walks.
- Nature detective spotter sheets.
- Tree, wildflower, wildlife & bird spotter books.



We try not to stand still...



Always looking to improve...

Adding facilities & introducing new ideas.

That help enhance the 'Nature' on offer.

Nature is not an 'add on' but is included in every decision...



Encouraging nature can save money...

Wildflower meadow

- Only needs cutting once a year saving time & money on weekly grass cutting.



Bug Hotel


- Old pallets from builders merchant for FREE.

Website Videos

- Guest made them in exchange for a couple of FREE weekend breaks at Greetham Retreat.



Major Challenges...

- We are not IT specialist with minimal knowledge of SEO.
- We are not nature or wildlife specialists.
- Not natural sales people. – This could be a bonus as we let our product do the talking, always willing to let people have a look round & involve past guests by encouraging them to become part of our  **'Marketing Team'.**

Birds eye view of Greetham Retreat...



Thank you
for reading
Our story....



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