

CVG April 2020 Virtual Trip 3: Rutland Water (Exton and Burley on the Hill).

In April we were due to go to the lovely area around Rutland Water to visit some interesting churches set in stunning countryside. It's also the area where I was brought up, where I spent my teenage years.

We start our virtual trip with two churches which are separated from their villages and both relate more to the stately home that is next to them. First up is Exton, home to the Earl of Gainsborough, and a church which is not only beautiful in itself but is stuffed full of memorials to former Earls with sculptures of the highest quality. To see what we are missing you can Google Exton church Rutland Images and there are many photos to enjoy. You can find text about the church at <https://www.leicestershirechurches.co.uk/exton-church-st-peter-and-st-paul/>.

The second church is even more connected to its adjacent stately home, quite literally as it is physically connected, no doubt so the aristocratic family that lived at the great house, Burley on the Hill, did not get wet and muddy when going to church. The village peasants would get wet of course as their houses were located some distance away! Burley on the Hill was associated with the Dukes of Buckingham and Earls of Nottingham and latterly with the Finch family. Now the house and outhouses are divided into separate houses and apartments and the church has been declared redundant under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. The church has Norman arcades, quite plain inside with a lot of Victorian work as well. What is well worth seeing is the lovely plaintive monument to Lady Charlotte Finch by Chantrey (1813). Photos again via Google and text at <https://www.britainexpress.com/attractions.htm?attraction=4181>.

Lunch possibly at The Noel at Whitwell <https://www.thenoel.co.uk/> or Finch's Arms at Hambleton, the Harbour Café or the Tea Rooms at Barnsdale Gardens (remember Geoff Hamilton on Gardeners' World?) What a shame we cannot go! Oh well it'll probably rain so we can imagine it in glorious sunshine!

Three more churches later, Hambleton, Whitwell and Empingham.