

CVG Virtual Visits 2020: Visit 9, Clipsham and Castle Bytham, Lincs.

Our next trip takes us down the A1 to **Clipsham**, still in Rutland but right on the border with Lincolnshire. It is well known for its limestone quarries and Clipsham stone can be found in many of Britain's most famous buildings including King's College Chapel (Cambridge), York Minster, Windsor Castle and the Houses of Parliament. Also well known is the 200 year old Yew Tree Avenue, once the carriage drive to Clipsham Hall, and currently maintained by the Forestry Commission. This stretches for some 500 metres and included some 150 topiary shaped yew trees but since austerity cuts to the Forestry Commission most of the intricate shapes have grown over and have been lost. However there are some moves aimed at re-establishing at least some of the images. The yews were recently featured in *The Guardian* (Country Diary, 18 July) and we might a diversion to see them after we visit the fine old church of St Mary with its "wedding cake" spire and medieval glass depicting many types of birds. Perhaps those of you who are in one of our Bird Watching Groups can identify the species?

Clipsham also has a village pub, the **Olive Branch**, and my claim to fame is that I delivered beer there when working for Ruddles Brewery, the best holiday job I had when I was a student, with usually a free pint on offer at every pub visited. In recent times the Olive Branch has become one of the very few pubs to be awarded a **Michelin** star and in 2008 it was the Michelin Pub of the Year. Prices I suspect will be a little out of our range for lunch!

For pictures of Clipsham try Googling Clipsham Church Images and Yew Tree Avenue Images. More information at

<http://churchcrawling.moonfruit.com/clipsham/4588169510>

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/rutland/vol2/pp41-45>



Clipsham St Mary



Castle Bytham St James

Our next stop is **Castle Bytham**, once with castle as the name suggests though today only earthworks remain. The church is not spectacular but it is a good old village church with the usual quirks and scars accumulated over the centuries.

<http://www.castlebytham.com/church.php>

<https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101360095-church-of-st-james-castle-bytham/photos>