

## Eleanor Cross Geddington

Eleanor of Castille, daughter of Ferdinand of Spain, married Edward son of Henry III in 1254. She was 9 and he 15 years of age. Upon the death of his father Edward 1<sup>st</sup> acceded to the throne and during his reign became the most powerful of the Plantagenet kings. Known as "longshanks" because of his height and "Hammer of the Scots" he was beset by rebellious Welsh and Scots alike.

He and his Queen Eleanor stayed many times at their Geddington Palace or more correctly hunting lodge in order to pursue game on Geddington Chase. They clearly found time for some more homely pursuits and Eleanor bore a large family recorded variously as 14 - 16 children.

On 28<sup>th</sup> November 1290 at the age of 47 and whilst on her way north to join Edward, who was hammering a few more scots, she was taken ill and died at Harby, Lincolnshire. Her body was carried south for burial at Westminster Abbey and the grief-stricken king ordered that a memorial cross be erected at each location where the cortege rested on its journey. There were originally 12 crosses from Lincoln to Charring but only 3 survive at Waltham, Hardingstone and Geddington which is said to be the best preserved example. Edward lived on until 1307 but never again stayed at Geddington.

The cross is presently maintained by English Heritage.

A mass is still said annually for the soul of Queen Eleanor in the Parish Church.

We will walk through a part of the Chase on our way back to Brigstock.

## Lyveden New Bield

Never completed this ruin was designed as an Elizabethan Summerhouse or "Secret House" ie somewhere to sojourn whilst the main home ( Lyveden Old Bield or Manor) was cleaned and debugged. It was built for Sir Thomas Tresham a fervent Catholic of Rushton Hall,

Northamptonshire. It was probably under construction in 1604-05 when Thomas died.

As with Treshams' smaller folly, Rushton Triangular Lodge, New Bield is designed with much religious symbolism on a plan of a Greek cross with 3 floors each with 3 rooms.

The estate was inherited by Thomas's son Francis who had joined the Earl of Essex in a failed rebellion against the government in 1601. Thomas paid a ransom of £2,100 to save Francis from the gallows on that occasion but in October 1605, according to his own confession, he joined the "Gunpowder Plot" intending to blow up the House of Lords whilst James 1<sup>st</sup> of England (6<sup>th</sup> Scotland) was in the building. Guy Fawkes was found with 36 barrels of gunpowder in the cellar. Francis died of natural causes whilst in custody on 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec 1605. Guy and seven other plotters died a more painful death from unnatural causes in 1606.

So the estate had 3 owners in 12 months and no doubt further penalties to pay. Construction of the New Bield appears never to have recommenced.

In 2010 whilst studying aerial photographs taken by the Luftwaffe in WW2 National Trust officers discovered evidence of an Elizabethan labyrinth garden and orchard in the grounds. These have now been recreated and 3 sides of the mote restored.