

Country Notes for July 2022

What a pleasure it is to walk around our villages at the moment, with my spaniels, soaking in the glories of this time of year. As I write these notes in mid-June, the vibrant green of so much new growth shows the countryside off at its very best. The meadows look amazing, especially in a light breeze, as their flower heads dance in waves. The woodlands look so dense, with their newly emerged fresh green leaves and there seem to be flowers everywhere. In the hedges the dog roses are proudly displaying their wonderful, lightly scented pink flowers and the meadow brown butterflies have just started emerging, to join the many varieties that have already shown their faces. There seem to be quite a few small tortoiseshells too, which is good news, as their fortunes have been rather varied in recent years.

There are birds busily scurrying around feeding their rapidly growing nestlings, and two bird families in particular have given me special pleasure this year. One of them is a family of kestrels nesting in a beautiful oak tree under which people frequently pass. As the adults return with yet more food, the young can be clearly heard shouting encouragement to Mum or Dad to choose their mouth in which to deposit the latest offering. The other nest is in my own garden where a pair of dainty dunnocks have chosen to build a nest in a mixed hedge that I only planted about three years ago. I love hearing the sound of those nestlings too, as the parents return time and time again to feed them. Dunnocks are tiny birds in comparison to the kestrels and they must be exhausted! I take their choice of my hedge, in a spot very close to my cottage door, to be an endorsement of my choice of planting!

They, and all the other birds working hard to fill their nestlings empty stomachs, are a delight to witness as full blown summer takes hold of the countryside in our villages!

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