

Country Notes for May 2023

As I walk around our villages I really enjoy the permanence of so much that I see. We are so fortunate to be surrounded by buildings that date back centuries and which, if they could speak, would be able to tell us so much. However it is not just our buildings that could do that. We have many trees in these villages and the surrounding area which saw two world wars. Some would have been around when Queen Victoria was crowned. Others might have witnessed roundheads or cavaliers passing by in the civil war of the mid 1600s. Some are probably even older than that. It makes one feel small, but at the same time it imparts a permanence which I find quite comforting.

Sometimes, however, we see something that we have never seen before and which we were not expecting to see. Walking near the Pilgrims Way a couple of weeks ago with Bracken and Tilly, just as the light was beginning to dim, I saw wandering between two areas of woodland an animal which at first glance I thought to be a fox. They are frequently in the area and their scent drives my spaniels mad! However, this creature was clearly a lot larger and definitely the wrong shape! The creature in question was a roe deer, and almost certainly a buck. It must have seen both myself and the dogs but distance gave it the security it needed to wander peacefully on its way.

In conversations recently I have discovered that a few other people have also witnessed roe deer in the area. The number of deer in this country has expanded considerably in recent years. In the absence of lynx and wolves the adults have no real predators, with the exception of man, meaning that once the young have grown a bit they are relatively safe. Whilst realising that farmers and gardeners won't be thrilled if their numbers increase too much, I have to admit that I found the sight really exciting. West of Maidstone there are considerable numbers of deer of several varieties but until now they have been few and far between in our area. Was this just a casual visitor or a new resident? We shall see!

Andrew G Snowdon