

Country Notes for October 2023

Now that we are in the first full month of autumn we can enjoy the autumnal light in our countryside, which always has a mellow glow to it. As the leaves begin to turn this can provide us with wonderful vistas. After a fairly average summer, and an especially disappointing July, the last few weeks of summer provided some very warm and even hot days in the earlier part of September. These wonderful days provided us with ample opportunity to get out and appreciate some of the skills of farmers and gardeners.

I particularly enjoyed the Ploughing Match in Greenway Court Road, with its beautiful backdrop of the North Downs. Not only were there some wonderful old tractors which had been lovingly looked after by their owners but there was also real skill being demonstrated as these beautiful old work horses were driven up and down their allotted patch, skilfully controlled by their drivers and owners. Each tractor driver was watched very intently by their judge who was clearly checking every furrow and every detail. It was truly wonderful to be at an event where precision and skill in the hands of true countrymen and women mattered so much. The event was gloriously free of razzmatazz with just somewhere selling a few refreshments. Who needed more? In addition, the weather was glorious, if perhaps a little too hot. But who in September is going to complain!

Just a few days before, many of us had enjoyed the final show of the year of the Leeds Castle and Hollingbourne Garden Society. Our villagers really pulled the stops out and there were more exhibits than we have seen for some time. In addition, and despite the summer, the standard was extremely high. This was a real testament to our dedicated gardeners who are keeping one of the oldest garden societies in the country not just surviving but flourishing.

Now that we have reached October every fine day will be a bonus. However, it is important that we regard these days of autumn not just as a corridor leading to winter but as a season in its own right. At its best who would choose to be indoors at this time of year. There will be plenty of time for that when winter really does arrive!

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