

## Country Notes for December 2023

As Christmas draws ever closer, the hype and razzamatazz seem to get greater. With advertisements everywhere encouraging us to buy more and spend even greater amounts of money there is one way to escape from it all, and that is to take a break and enjoy a walk in our wonderful autumnal and winter countryside.

If we do so we will find that the hedges are the same as they always are, the fields are as they always are and the woods will be exactly as they were this time last year, leafless but glorious. As evening falls, starlings will come home to roost, tawny owls may be calling and we may perhaps see a fox darting across our path. Fieldfares and redwings will be gathering a few more berries to sustain themselves through the long cold night and we will be able to breathe a sigh of relief in the knowledge that all is as it should be.

If the rain is pouring down and the wind is blowing it is harder, perhaps, to drag ourselves out but if we do so we will be glad we did and if we venture out on a cold and bright frosty morning, or if the snow has fallen, we will be able to enjoy the bright world that beckons us. Whatever the weather we will return safe in the knowledge that in the surrounds of our villages all is as it has been for generations in the past and as it will be hopefully for generations in the future.

Christmas is a wonderful time of year, especially if it provides the opportunity to meet up with friends and family, but it is wonderful all the same to enjoy the security and refuge that our glorious countryside gives us – whatever the weather.

A very merry Christmas to you all!

Andrew G Snowdon