

Country Notes for October 2019

As we enter the first full month of autumn it seems good to reflect on some of the highlights of the summer that has just passed. Over the past few months, whether we have been away or whether we have stayed at home to enjoy the glories of our villages, there has been so much to look out for and enjoy.

Certainly for me one of the highlights has been to see so many butterflies in both Hollingbourne and Huckling. The Meadows Trust was teeming with meadow browns, gatekeepers and ringlets at one point and the Huckling Estate had small skippers in profusion. The discover of a white admiral in the home of a Hollingbourne resident led to the discovery of several more over the next few weeks. This was a butterfly that I had not seen for many years.

However for my sighting of the summer I need to leave our villages and go to the Highlands of Scotland, where on a walk in the mountains of the Northern Cairngorms I set out to try to see a golden eagle. I knew that they were in the area and had seen them there before and it was not long before I saw one. After about ten minutes it was joined by another, and shortly after that by a third. At one point I had all three in my binoculars at the same time! Whilst watching them I heard the cry of another bird of prey - and into the sight of my binoculars, and flying under the eagles, was a red kite!

I watched the eagles for about an hour, much to the annoyance of my dog Bracken who just wanted to get on with our walk! I have seen many golden eagles in the highlands - but never three together at the same time!

Although there are no golden eagles to be seen in our parishes there are certainly regular sightings of red kite - and a lot more besides. I wonder what your highlight of summer was, and what you will see through the remaining part of autumn in our parishes.

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