

FROM THE FISHING LODGE

I had not heard the cuckoo for three or four years until this June, when early one morning as I walked across the green I heard a cuckoo calling in flight. I stopped to listen and to my great pleasure it alighted in my beech tree and sat there for some minutes calling for all it was worth. Until then I hadn't realised that they have such a loud voice - no wonder it can be heard all across the meadow. So this has made up for the lack of the past years.

It is nice to be able to say that the water voles are much back in evidence. They continue to hurry back and forth in the water under the overhanging bank, disappearing in one hole only to re-appear out of another. A betting man could lay

considerable odds on the hole from which he would pop out of next. 'Ratty' is alive and well!

All winter, every day, the kingfisher has sat in my willow, fishing for minnows in the slack water under my window. But now, as it has come into leaf, his view is obscured, and so he has gone to a fishing ground elsewhere I suppose, as I have not seen him for a week or two now. I hope he will be back again when the leaves are gone (I hope I shall be back too - one never knows!)

Standing on the bank in the spring, watching the haze of mayflies, a voice from behind boomed in my ear.

"Looks frightfully wet, what"

I was speechless for a

second or two before I replied with an equally inane remark.

"Well water is wet you know"

Quick as a flash he was equal to the cut and thrust of the conversation.

"Yes I suppose it is" and he stomped off across the green.

I continued to watch the mayflies for a few minutes, but I couldn't help wondering whether our brains were really any bigger than the mayflies after all.

I walked on across to the car park and saw a large man lurking behind the hedge. On the other side a car was slowly coming in and eventually parked. The large man stood on tiptoe to peer over the hedge and observe. The elderly couple got out and walked back, and the large

man conveniently bumped into then as they rounded the hedge.

“Did you know you are supposed to display a ticket if you are visiting” he said.

“Yes thank you” the lady replied.

“But I don’t see one on your windscreen.”

“That’s because we live here” smiled the elderly lady. Result - deflated big man.

Which reminds me of the episode, some time ago when the same big man followed me into the City and in the middle of the High Street, laid a hand on my shoulder.

“I say old chap, do you know you have just parked your car in a private car park?”

“Yes”

“Well it’s private”

“That’s right”

“That means it’s not a public car park”

“Exactly”

And this silly cat and mouse conversation went on until eventually the error of his

ways were made clear to him. Once again - deflated big man.

Now to the subject of the trees.

In the time I have been at the Fishing Lodge, we have lost no less than five trees. Two have fallen of their own accord, but three have been felled to order. All three have been felled for personal reasons. And I am still a bit apprehensive about the future of the two apple trees, because despite what the agents said, a management committee member did say that they ‘have had their day’.

The latest to be felled for no acceptable reason was of course the Catalpa. Which begs the question, whoever was responsible for commissioning an estate agent to re-design Catalpa square? And whatever possessed anyone to want to cut down the tree in the first place. Whatever the excuse may be, it was wanton vandalism. Now that the Square has been

reduced to a common suburban plot, I wonder what we can next expect in the Close, and where will the Close Preservation Society be?

Are we therefore going to fly in the face of the National requirement to replace all trees as they are lost; do we not care a hoot for our environment. Obviously not!

Nevertheless, as I was looking through the gate and trying to come to terms with what I was looking at, a resident came up behind me .

“Coming along nicely don’t you think?”

“No madam I do not”

Without more ado she disappeared into her flat, and I shuffled back to the Fishing Lodge.

Sometimes it is a job to remain civil.

B. Foster