

## July 2022: Sunshine and flowers

I am writing this having just returned from what was technically a seaside holiday, though I neither paddled nor swum in the sea, nor built any sandcastles. But I did enjoy time with family, I did visit some places that have special memories, and I did have time to relax and simply to 'be'.

We stepped straight out of the chalet where we stayed, onto a strip of sand dunes that is the most beautiful wildflower meadow I have seen for a long time, vibrant with colour and fragrance, and humming and twittering with insect and bird life. I spent several happy hours reconnecting with species unknown in Derbyshire but familiar from the sandy soils of my childhood home. Another rare treat was walking along the beach almost every morning, watching the sun come up over the sea. And, as we usually do whenever we visit Somerset, we went to Selworthy Church to visit the graves of many of Richard's father's family, buried in the churchyard. It has always been a lovely churchyard, but this year they have left the grass in the older part of the churchyard uncut, resulting in an absolutely haven of peace and beauty and birdsong; a mini taste of heaven amid the surrounding countryside.

As I reflected on what, for me, has made this recent holiday one of the best we have had, the word that came to mind was 'connections.' There was the obvious connecting with family whom we have not seen for a long time, but there was also the less obvious connecting with what matters to me at the deepest level of my being. I find that watching the sunrise, and feeling the quality of light just before and after dawn, which is unlike any other time of day, fills me with wonder at the sheer miracle of life and the goodness of God. And experiencing, if only in a small way, the richness and diversity of nature that has not been 'managed' by humanity, fills me with joy at the beauty and complexity of God's world. But with sadness too at how little we have left undamaged.

So as I carry into my everyday life the blessings that I have gained from my week away, my prayer for us all is that we will all find whatever it is for us that enables us to connect with God and with God's world, at the deepest level of ourselves. And that that sense of connectedness will strengthen our commitment to cherish one another and all that God has made.

Yours in Christ,  
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