

Country Notes for May 2024

May is, I think, probably my favourite month of the year, with June a close second. The countryside seems to be bursting with energy. Birds are busily building nests and feeding hungry mouths, the grass in our meadows seems to grow taller daily, flowers are bursting forth everywhere and ponds are seething with frog spawn, promising tadpoles and eventually frogs to aid us gardeners in keeping the slug population at bay. There suddenly seem to be butterflies everywhere. The new leaves on the trees have never seemed greener and the may blossom and cow parsley in our hedges sparkle with pure white splendour. Our woods are full of the colour and scent of bluebells. Whose hearts would not be lifted and jumping with joy at such a spectacle.

However it could continue raining – but lets hope not!

There are some wonderful country traditions and myths associated with this time of year. May Day was frequently celebrated with music and dancing, in the belief that the cold of winter was finally behind us. May, which is the blossom of the hawthorn, was hung on doors to keep fairies and witches from damaging the fertility of the new season and children walking to and from school would chew the fresh new growth on the hawthorn and enjoy its freshness.

Even in early April, at the time of writing, I have already seen swallows flying above our village and there are numerous nightingales calling in our thickets and woodland. Sunny days have rewarded us with numerous varieties of butterflies, including brimstones, orange tips and holly blues. What a wonderful season to be out and about in our glorious countryside.

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