

Tony Thinking Aloud lxxviii

I have turned to Alison's trusty Countryside Companion again ... what does it say about October? I think we all will have noticed that on most days' things are suddenly colder, the leaves are everywhere falling from the trees and the year moves on. It is a month of colour; the countryside can look flamboyant with autumn hue. I remember being so impressed to see one area in Derbyshire, a year or so ago, I went back the next day to see it again. As the leaves fall, lanes, lawns and woods wear a picturesque carpet of autumn colours. We appreciate the seasons as they come round.

Alongside the calendar of nature there are other events which come round. We have seen the Burton Statutes again, which used to be a hiring fair – now a very different kind of fair but equally convivial. There was at the weekend, the annual ride to the wall at the National Memorial Arboretum when thousands of bikers travelled in convoys from all over the country to pay their respects to the fallen. The shops are beginning to think about Christmas. A visit to a card shop and it is difficult to find anything but a Christmas card! People say, we do not send them anymore ... well a great number of people obviously still do!

So, what has the year meant to you personally? A relief of moving hopefully and gradually away from the pandemic? How do you view the future? Nothing will be quite the same again ... I never knew that there were antibacterial hand sanitisers and now we are rarely far from one! Are we more careful and caring, are we concerned more about other people? Do you still push the bin in for the elderly neighbour next door, amazing what this expression of care can do for them or do we just not think anymore – although we will say something when prices going up affect us directly.

So, some wondering thoughts this week. Perhaps time to think back as we appreciate the countryside at this time of the year and in the peace remember we are all part of creation – reflect on the Creator (in whatever terms) and realise we have much for which to be grateful.