

Orchids

This seems to have been a stunning spring.

The combination of sunny days and generally cool nights have meant that the season for everything seems to have been extended, from the first snowdrops through the blackthorn, fruit trees, now the may blossom. You name it, the countryside has been awash with colour and scent. The bluebells as well were at their most dramatic, in the dappled sunlight of freshly emerging beech and oak leaves

On the down the first Early Purple Orchids are beginning to go over which always sparks anticipation for the ones to follow. As I write in the middle of May, the Burnt Tip will soon be out and then the others follow on quickly. When I was farming, we had nine species on our land including others such as the stupendous Bee Orchid, the hidden Frog, and other more common ones such as the Twayblade and Fragrant. An occasional visitor was the Lesser Butterfly.

But what *good* is an Orchid? Why have nine species when one would do? These may seem odd questions but for me their exquisite beauty, extraordinary life cycle, and delicate nature speaks of the gratuitous creativity of God. What 'good' are they? For our pleasure and enjoyment and for God's pleasure and enjoyment.

God has revealed himself to us though the Bible and through coming to earth as Jesus. But he has also revealed himself to us through his creation. Many people say that they feel closest to God on a long walk on the Down or in the Forest, amongst the trees and plants and wild animals. The glory we see in them speaks of the glory of God. Walking and bicycling around the lanes, the verge side flowers, the Celandine, the Campion and the Cow Parsley, each seem to be stretching heavenwards in praise to God, telling his story to anyone who will listen.

And as we respond with pleasure, awe and wonder, that in itself is our own act of worship.

This Haiku comes to mind:

Oak leaves in spring green
With bluebells, God's tapestry
Shout resurrection!

Gerald

Canon Gerald Osborne

Rural Dean