

20th August 2021

Walks

**“The walks put on their summer liveries,
And all things else did hold like smiles:
The trees with leaves, with fruits, with flowers clad,
Embrac’d each other, seeming to be glad.”**

Emelia Lanier, The Description of Cookham (1611)

I’ve never been to Cookham where Emelia Lanier walked in the 17th century. But I know the value of walks. On a recent holiday in Morayshire, we had several walks along parts of the “Moray Coastal Trail”, trips to bird-sanctuaries and meanders on abandoned railway lines. On every walk, long or short, whatever the weather, there were things to marvel at.

There were, of course, the “summer liveries” that give us pleasure: trees, berries, flowers, rivers, birds. But, because we had time on our unhurried walks, we noticed things we’d normally miss: a rabbit scurrying for cover; a swallows’ nest in a barn’s eaves; a spider’s web on a thornbush; a bee covered in pollen; butterflies on bright flowers; a fish jumping in a pool. Some we gazed at for ages. Some we photographed. Some we talked about. Some we absorbed in silence. But none of them were forgotten.

William Henry Davies’ poem, *Leisure*, says it all.

*What is this life is, full of care,
We have no time to stand or stare;
No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows;
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass;
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night;
No time to turn at Beauty’s glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance;
No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.
A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand or stare.*

Thank God we had time on *our* walks to “stand and stare”. What a poor life this would be if we didn’t make these opportunities.

A prayer for today

Lord, if I’m “seeming to be glad”, it’s because I most certainly am! Amen