

Thoughts...

Edward Fox

GATEWAY TO THE MOORS

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Excepting religious faith, an awareness of the extraordinary potential for goodness in humans and of the beauty of birds and animals... how else can we know what God is, or might be? And how can Man be truly alive if robbed or debarred from an enduring contact with Nature – be it a hedgerow that borders an allotment patch, or the windy mountain crag?

I believe that Man is no more than the temporary steward of Nature, and must preserve her with devotion not just for his own, but for succeeding generations. The sight of neglected land by railway tracks, lazy hedgerow bashing by mechanical cutters and ugly storage buildings on farmland, devoid of sensitivity in their construction, are just three examples among countless other neglects of stewardship.

How fortunate that for every one of life's circumstances, Shakespeare, in beautiful expressive verse, encapsulates one's thoughts. I quote Duke Senior's speech from *As You Like It*; the last four lines are, in my view, piercingly succinct and relevant to today's world.

“Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,
 Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
 Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
 More free from peril than the envious Court?
 Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
 The seasons' difference; as the icy fang
 And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,
 Which, when it bites and blows upon my body,
 Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say
 This is no flattery; these are counsellors
 That feelingly persuade me what I am.
 Sweet are the uses of adversity;
 Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
 Wears yet a precious jewel in his head:
 And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
 Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
 Sermons in stones, and Good in everything:
 I would not change it”.

Edward Fox has spent his career in the theatre, and has acted in numerous films, including *The Day of The Jackal* (1973), *The Go Between* (1971), *A Bridge Too Far* (1977), *Ghandi* (1982) and *Never Say Never Again* (1983). He loves and supports all aspects of rural Britain.