



I SUPPOSE that what has been on most of our minds this 'summer' is the weather. A friend called to see me and brought with her a gardening magazine. Outside, there was torrential rain, but the front cover of the magazine was telling us 'How to cope with the drought'.

That is on a light note, but we can only sympathise with the people in other parts of the country where the floods went on for days on end. I can only imagine the heartbreak of seeing your furniture floating round and soaked beyond any hope of drying, then to have no power or fresh water.

A FRIEND in the Close, whose nesting boxes are always occupied as she provides food for all species in her garden, watched the blue tits fledge this summer with pleasure only to find a few weeks later that their home had been taken over by very unwelcome guests. *Wasps!* She enjoyed watching them constructing their beautiful paper mansion, but decided that enough was enough. The nests are incredibly complex and beautiful, we had one in a tree in the back garden many years ago when the children were at school. When we had dealt with it we cut it out of the tree on the branches and eventually took a section off the back so that we could SEE the cells inside. The children took it to school and we kept it in the back porch for several years until it began to fall to pieces. The same lady has a cat that likes to murder frogs she tells me. My neighbour's cat (the one that I borrow regularly) seems to be more frightened of them, when they jump, he jumps back!

A NEIGHBOUR discovered a squirrel at the top of a lamp post in the spring. It stayed there for some time and we were not sure whether it was scared to come down or if it had been 'treed' (or 'poled') by a dog, which was in hiding waiting for it to come down. As far as I know, no-one stood around waiting to see.

IN THE LAST issue of *Hilltop News* I mentioned that we hadn't seen a spotted flycatcher for some years. Soon after I came home from hospital in July, I was housebound and wheelchair bound for a week and spent a good deal of time looking out of either the French windows or the front porch. To my amazement I discovered that we had a family of spotted flycatchers coming for food. The favourite perch was a forked branch across in the copse, where they would sit and wait for something to eat. Of course, July is the month when ants fly and on one particular day they ate really well. We always have an ants' nest near our front door and after that the birds would sit on the fence and then come right down to the door and pick them off as they came out of the nest. The buzzards also have been seen several times in the area, on one occasion right over our garden.

I HAD A CALL recently from a friend in the Lane who was able to see a pigeon's nest from

her bedroom window and that for several days the parent bird has been clinging to the 'nest' made up of a few badly placed sticks in the teeth of the gale blowing across the acres in front of the house. Neither of us know whether or not both parents sit on the nest, but if it is only the hen bird, then she deserves a medal. Wood pigeons notoriously make a silly little platform of sticks and the young, called squabs (why?) often fall out.

ANOTHER neighbour in Iffin Lane was doing the ironing in her conservatory about dusk with the windows and doors open when she heard an unfamiliar sound and on looking up saw a tawny owl. It was calling to one in the copse opposite. I was astounded to hear that another neighbour saw what he believed to be a red kite over his property. A little later he attended a barbecue at Crundale where his host mentioned that he had also seen red kite. The RSPCA told the man from Crundale that they were none in this area but after sending an officer to check, they eventually confirmed that he was right.

I'D LIKE to apologise to anyone who has supplied me with

You decide Cyril - it's me or the sideboard!



My
VIEW

By JOAN GOWER

information that I have not used—life has been somewhat chaotic recently (more than usual). After my op I was only able to put weight on my left leg. I was told I must HOP. Unsurprisingly, I was unable to do this and was told that I would have to go into rehab for 6 weeks. I could go home only if I were housebound and wheelchair-bound. Having told my husband this and said that we would have to take doors off and put the sideboard out of the French window, he was not at all pleased with the idea. I asked him if he would rather have the sideboard or me and, fortunately, he made the right decision! I have 'lost' many things including three books from the hall library. I have not had the courage to tell Jan yet, but she will know now! Please let me know if you have anything interesting to tell. I have to rely on other people for information now more than ever.

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