

# Thought for the Month

June 2021

## **'Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May'**

Well, Shakespeare was certainly right about that this year. (I write this in May on a wild day of rain and wind, with occasional thunder and lightning to add to the excitement.) But for most of us such conditions and the even worse floods and droughts which so severely affect the living standards of people in less prosperous societies, do not leave big gaps on our supermarket shelves – ironically that only happened recently when there was plenty for all but greedy people grabbed more than they needed.

But another danger has emerged over several decades, although it is actually based on the same short-sightedness, the drive to make the land productive beyond a sustainable level, seen at its worst in deforestation schemes but also in the lavish use everywhere of chemical fertilisers. The desire for ease of control has had a negative effect, too, with the grubbing up of hedgerows and their replacement by post-and-wire fences.

Fortunately wiser counsels are now being heard. Trim grass verges and bedding-plant plots along municipal roads are being re-sown with meadow-grasses and wild flowers, and we are encouraged to 'wild' at least part of our gardens as havens for the bugs and beetles and the toads and hedgehogs which enjoy them.

It is a cause for rejoicing that we are learning the wisdom of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1899), who spoke before his time against his contemporaries' obsession with neatness and tidiness when he said,

'What would the world be, once bereft  
Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,  
O let them be left, wildness and wet!  
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet!'

*Geoff Gibbens*