

Countrymen Chatter

Keeping in touch on a regular basis



Getting back to being you

**If I were a season,
winter it would be,
not by choice but
by the many years behind me
and the few before me.**

**If I were a season,
winter it would be,
always my least favourite of the four,
too cold and bleak
to be embraced and celebrated.**

**If I were a season,
winter it would be,
my appreciation grows for
these brumal days,
knowing they are the last.**

**If I were a season,
winter it would be,
because I was granted days
beyond spring, summer, and autumn
when many were not.**



**If I were a season,
winter it would be,
separating needed from wanted,
desiring less in shortened days,
choosing quality over quantity.**

**If I were a season,
winter it would be,
spending these days
with you, joyful for this
seasonless love.**





In the US call this season 'the fall', very apt as a description of Autumn, falling leaves one of the most dominant features of this time of the year.

Vibrant leaf colours start to appear as cooler and shorter days stop the production of chlorophyll, the green pigment responsible for photosynthesis. This reveals pre-existing orange and yellow pigments, hidden by the dominant green.

This year, especially after a sustained dry summer these pigments show very vividly, even as purples and reds with every hue in between., beautifully offset by occasional sunrises and sunsets to match, ('red sky at night a shepherds delight, red sky in morning a shepherds warning' as the old saying goes.

Autumn leaves as sung by Nat King Cole is one of around 1400 variations of this ageless and popular song. its origins are French, les feuilles Mortes reminding us of the significance of autumn for everyone, wherever they live and from whatever background.

All of this especially for those of us in rural Dorset, reminds us of the festival, reminds us of the festival of Harvest, the word taken from the Old English, harvest from the Germanic word of crop picking. As well as the practical there is the spiritual element to Harvest, the symbolism of falling leaves as a reminder that all things change and letting go of what no longer has any purpose for us is a healthy transition.

The witches amongst you will know that autumn is, as well, a period of transition and reflection, the festival of Mabon prompting gratitude for what has been reaped.

Thanksgiving, Octoberfest, Eid and Sukkot all celebrate the fruits of the harvest in one way or another.

In many ways these harvest rituals came together this year on the September 9th with a rare Corn moon a total moon eclipse (if you were lucky enough to see it, signifying for some a profound moment of reckoning and release

In the words of William Barnes the Dorset writer and poet, "The work of harvesting, the feast of beef, bacon and puddings and the joy of the community celebrating together"





BACK WHERE HE BELONGS

Andy attended CountryMen UK right from the beginning. Having spent his life as a farmer, the onset of Parkinson's and dementia meant he could no longer work the land—but Rylands Farm gave him that sense of purpose back. Wednesdays were his day, and he'd always say, "I'm going to work today!" He'd be ready hours before it was time to leave.

As the years passed, Andy's conditions progressed, but he continued attending until two years ago, when a five-week hospital stay for sepsis changed everything. He received no physio and was left in bed the entire time. When he came home, he could no longer walk. I had to accept that this was our new reality.

But the support from "Andy's farm," as he called it, never stopped. The team stayed in touch, and some of the helpers even came to visit him at home. I was in tears—his face lit up with the biggest smile when he saw them. It broke my heart in the most beautiful way. Now, two years later, we have a wheelchair-accessible vehicle, and Andy is back where he belongs: Rylands Farm. Being in a wheelchair makes no difference—the helpers take him all around, feeding cows, holding small animals, and of course, spending time with the donkeys. It's everything he loves.

We've even appeared on *Countryfile*, talking about the link between farming pesticides and Parkinson's, and we've shared our story on video to show how the farm helps people like Andy reconnect with life. CountryMen UK hasn't just opened doors for Andy—it's opened them for me too. Andy has lived with Parkinson's for 30 years. When he comes home after "work," he's like a different person. It's as if a light switches on in his brain. No therapy could ever do what CountryMen UK does. Seeing the photos of what he's been up to fills me with joy.

Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts.

We can't wait to see you all on Thursday.

Best wishes,

Sue



THANK YOU

Carers' News

We would like to thank Mike for providing us with tea on cake on the 11th December at Castle Garden Centre.

Next Carers meet up will be in Olivers Cafe in the Spring we have been kindly provided with coffee and cake date to be arranged

**Christmas Party
Tuesday 23rd
2-4 December**

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Email:

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- We are indebted to all those who contribute so generously with their time, money and expertise. A special thanks this month:
- Our Volunteers who donate their precious time every week, fortnight or month!
- The VCD for their support in short videos
- Our staff and trustees who provide us with never ending scones and cakes.
- Castle Garden Centre for donating drinks and cake for carers
- And of course thanks to all our men and their wives and families.

A big thank you our funders :

Garfield Weston

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