

SETTLING IN

“**A**RE YOU settling in?” So many people have asked. But nobody, thankfully, deals in sociology; we are not expected to declare a role, or profitability. What does often follow is, “Do you like it here?” Well, that’s rather constructive; it allows a stranger to start a page, to sketch what comes naturally. Anyone who is cheerful has scope, here, to find that previous arrivers and native-heathers, are potential allies. It’s very good, so yes, we like it here.

On our first day, last summer, milk and bread were brought as an act of kindness. Quite soon there was a visit of welcome by two charming children, and their mother carrying a posie. Gradually to the door came a flow of helpful and gentle people, and a man who mixed thought, good humour and happiness; his handshake was a blessing.

The driver of a lorry came to bring supplies for constructional activity. After a few pleasantries, he became aware of a further requirement, and in an hour had dealt with it. What was clear was that his acquaintance had begun with a nod at his place of work, and was immediately and securely based on the recognition that dealings were cheerful and cooperative. So also with two strong men who have helped with construction and excavation work; the latter refers to our garden, ‘a loathsome thing’, to any but optimists. And our first greeting from our neighbour was a head popping above a wall, a proffered hand, and a commendation of our choice of site. So we liked it again, with or without optimism.

There’s a shop that will add our particular likes (some of them!) to the stock list. There’s someone who will attend to an injury on a Saturday afternoon. There’s a lady who said she knew all about me. At first that was just a bit worrying, but it was, I have decided, absolutely friendly. After all, she can’t know, can’t possibly, not yet anyway, can sheZ? There, I’m starting to make typing errors.

Even while having supper, and friends with us, there was someone at the door. Elsewhere, it might have been inconvenient, but not here. After a longer than brief chat on the doorstep, I expected our visitors to be mystified, but one said “Oh! I realized who it was; he was so friendly and he called you Sir” I do think the last bit was a leg-pull by our guest, and she certainly has a sense of humour, but you may guess who had come to the door — a regular contributor.

Of course I’ve not mentioned everyone who conspired with our days of settling in. Two of you live at the other end of the village; she makes lovely marmalade. And at the summer fête there was a stall selling beautiful marmalade cake. Who was that cook please? Thank you very much, all of you.

Glyn Jones