

andomness is not good enough when it comes to meeting .

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I have started a little slowly for me this morning as I had what was, for me, a late night yesterday. That was because I went out owling.

I do mean 'owling'. I was not howling. I was look for the barn owls that hunt the marshes next to the river north of Ely, where I live.

They did not appear. People I met reliably informed me that they were there the night before. Rumour is already reaching me that they have put in an appearance this morning. But, last night there was no sign of them, although as the light finally disappeared there were a couple of screeches that could have been them.

There were compensations though. One was watching herons go to roost in their regular tree. They always seem to me to be one of the closest links we have to dinosaurs. Watching them disappear into the trees for the night is a strange sight: it's just not what you expect from a bird usually seen with its feet firmly in the river.

Another compensation was a red kite, also going to roost not far from the herons. They are still uncommon here. Not rare, but not common. Coming in to roost in the fading light, this one's white head and white wing markings really stood out. It was a good bird to see.

There were also hints of linnet being around, although not seen. I will never complain about that.

Why mention all this? It is because of the randomness of it all. Birdwatching is an exercise in hope. For me, it is also an exercise in learning to live with whatever is given to me. I went to see owls. I didn't see them. I came home happy anyway. That's my approach to the subject.

That said, I am aware of the luxury of being happy because my other needs for the day had been met. Randomness has its place. But meeting essential need should not be random, in my opinion. That is something government should guarantee.

This government is not doing that. Whether it be healthcare (the issue for the day with doctors, rightly, on strike largely because the government is preventing them from meeting that need), to basic income, to education, transport, care and much else, need is not being met.

There is a place for randomness. But to pretend that it is the essence of political economy is wrong. Political economy is all about defeating the randomness of markets and the power structures that they create to ensure that the basic needs of all are met.

The Tories have failed that test.

Labour does not look as if it even wants to take that task on, making it unfit for government.

I never forget this, even when owling.

Nor do I forget that neither of these political parties is taking the threat to nature seriously enough.

There remains so much to do.