

# Problems, perspective and Pigeons

A little bit of perspective.



Gill has been getting arty with the camera

After my self-indulgent moan about not being able to buy our narrow boat right now I was reminded of how trivial a problem that is when I read a friend's blog. His subject deals with life after the loss of a loved one, his partner and mother of his young children in fact, and reading it made me realise that perhaps I was getting things a little out of perspective. It's worth a read by the way.

It's easy to do though isn't it?

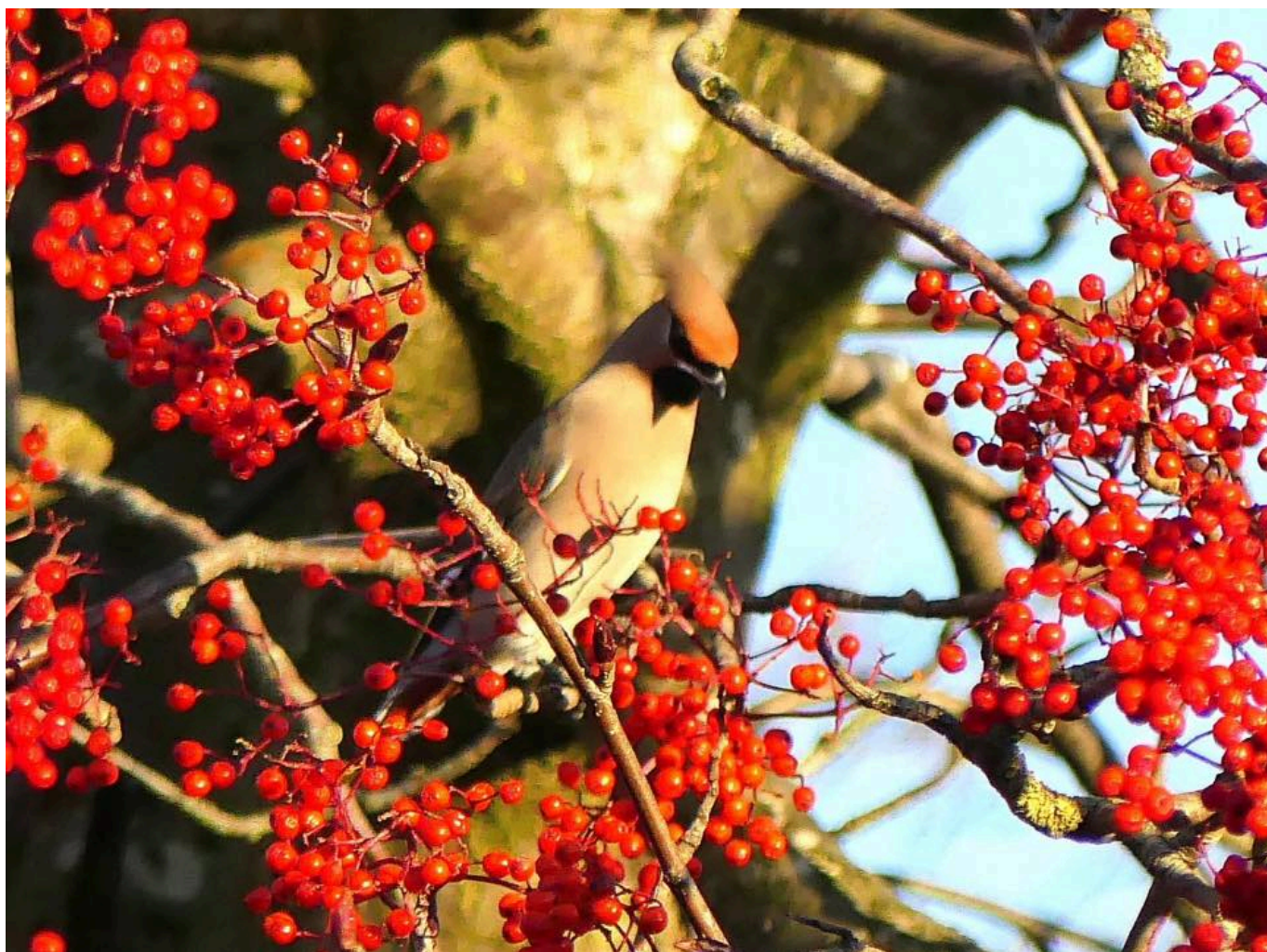
“There’s always somebody in the world worse off than you”, people say to you. Of course there is. It doesn’t matter how bad your circumstances are there will be somebody somewhere in a more difficult situation. Pondering this might put some perspective on your own problems but it doesn’t make them go away. What it actually does is make you realise that not only do you have a problem that is less enormous than somebody else’s but that you should also feel guilty about your problem because it is inadequate. So now you have two problems!

It was also pointed out to me that struggling to sell a property is only a problem if you have a property to sell in the first place. Very good point. That really is perspective isn't it? So, time to move on to other subjects I think.

There is something that I need to get off my chest. I suppose it's a bit of a confession or at least, an admission. I've kept it quiet for a while but I feel that the time is now right to open up and share with you. I've become a bird watcher. So has Gill. As you know

we have been feeding the birds in the garden all year but now we have taken it to another level. We have been visiting wild places at strange times of the day armed with binoculars, ham sandwiches and a flask of tea. I've always had a passing interest in birds ever since I used to nick their eggs as a boy but I've never actually gone bird watching before. I wouldn't go so far as to call myself a twitcher at this point although we did go looking for Waxwings in Preston the other day because I've never seen one. We looked for them on the Rowan

trees in Morrisons car park but we were disappointed and had to settle for a cut price bottle of Gordon's Gin instead.



The fabulous but illusive Waxwing.  
(Photo by Janet Stocks)

I suppose there was a certain inevitability about it once I started working at [Brockholes](#) nature reserve.



Not a bad place to work really. (Photo  
by Gill)

Conversations with the bird



enthusiasts there about what they had seen left me intrigued and wanting to go and look for myself. By happy coincidence Gill acquired a bit of unexpected cash at around this time and very kindly bought me a new pair of binoculars. She also borrowed them and enjoyed herself so much she bought herself a pair. Added to these things we found we could go bird watching without walking too far which fitted perfectly with my gradual recovery from Plantar Fasciitis. Before we knew it we were sitting in draughty hides misidentifying all manner of small feathery

things and discovering that 99% of all birds are actually pigeons.



Indoor Pigeon. Handy for bird watching

in poor weather conditions.

For all I have a basic knowledge and we are both learning fast we are still capable of providing much entertainment amongst real birdwatchers by mixing up our Dunlins and our Sanderlings or getting told off for talking too loudly in the hides. Also, Gill's hat is pink, which is not the colour for any self-respecting ornithologist to be seen in and I suspect we aren't always being taken seriously. We don't really look the part. The real bird watchers are all in green.



A rare sighting of  
the fabulous pink  
hatted smiler.

They even have green binoculars.  
You wouldn't think there would be  
much danger of injury from such a  
sedate pastime as bird watching  
but tripping over a well  
camouflaged birder is a genuine  
hazard. I spent five minutes  
scanning a small bush for thrushes  
the other day when it picked up a

tripod and walked away! Some of them are harder to spot than the birds.

Anyway, it's all a bit of good clean fun and the perfect accompaniment to life on a narrow boat but we are trying not to think about that at the moment. For now we will be doing our observing from dry land but it should be a good excuse to write nonsense on this blog which is something I haven't been doing enough of lately. You have been warned.