

Country BOOKS

reviewed by Lorraine Connolly



***In Search of One Last Song*, Patrick Galbraith. £18.99 hbk.**

As wild places disappear, journalist Patrick Galbraith goes in search of ten of Britain's most endangered birds. His mission to document these struggling species takes him from the Western Isles to the Norfolk Broads, presenting unexpected encounters not only with the birds but also with the people doing their very best — often against the odds — to save them. He learns their frustrations and witnesses the passion that spurs them on to do what they can for the creatures they love and weaves all this into a very readable account.



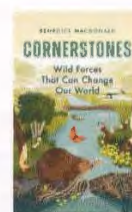
***The Wilderness Cure*, Mo Wilde. £16.99 hbk.**

This is a story of one woman's decision, made in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic, to live off only free, foraged food for a full year. The author, a herbalist, was already an experienced forager, but here she documents her extraordinary year — beginning on Black Friday — turning her back on rampant consumerism. Mo honestly documents the highs and lows providing a fascinating narrative.



***Cornerstones*, Benedict Macdonald. £17.99 hbk.**

It is often said that the UK is one of the most Nature-deprived countries in the world. This is the backdrop of naturalist Benedict Macdonald's latest book. From the first sentence of the introduction, I was drawn in by evocative descriptions of Nature at its best. The following chapters are devoted to the cornerstone species of the title — from boars to wolves and lynx — explaining how they may hold the key to recovering our biodiversity. The final chapter is devoted to humans “the greatest cornerstone species”. It is ultimately a hopeful tale, and one well worth reading.



***Edge of England*, Derek Turner. £20.00 hbk.**

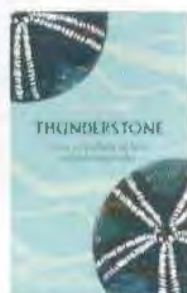
England has its “star counties” and I am sure readers of *The Countryman* will have their own favourites. Lincolnshire, though, is not generally seen as having much of interest outside the city of Lincoln with its impressive cathedral. Derek Turner aims to set the record straight, as he delves into the geology, history, landscape and characters of England's second largest county.



***Thunderstone*, Nancy Campbell. £14.99 hbk.**

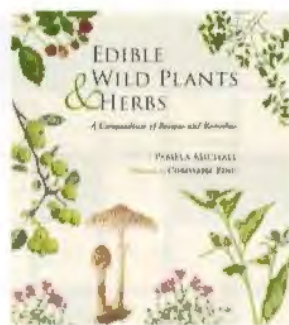
I picked this book up to have a quick browse and two hours later wondered where the time had gone.

Thunderstone is an honest and moving account of the author's journey through a series of traumas, from the onset of the pandemic — coinciding with her partner's stroke — to dealing with her own illness. This book is an uplifting, positive and poetic look at life in all its rawness: a celebration of change, self-discovery, and off-grid life that is, quite simply, a pleasure to read.



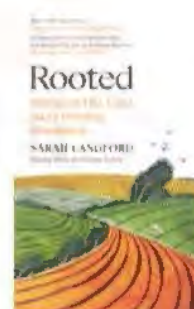
***Edible Wild Plants & Herbs*, Pamela Michael. £25.00 hbk.**

A “Compendium of Recipes and Remedies” beautifully illustrated by Christabel King. The book has a useful calendar indicating what to look out for in each season, while the plants are presented alphabetically (from Agrimony to Yarrow). Each plant has a botanical illustration, information on where to find it and a description of identifying features to look out for, along with historical facts. But for me the real pleasure is in the almost 400 recipes and other uses, including Tansy Cake, Primerolle (primrose pottage) and Sea Beet Flan. I look forward to expanding my foraging knowledge with the help of this volume.



***Rooted*, by Sarah Langford. £16.99 hbk.**

Returning to her rural roots after spending years working as a Barrister in London, the author finds that a planned “break from real life” ends up leading her back to the land for good. In *Rooted* Sarah introduces us to the farmers she met, recounts their stories, helping us to understand how they think and giving us an insight into her journey to understand how the land is at the heart of our lives, wherever we choose to live. Along the way, she makes a strong case for sustainability to ensure not only our food security but also our society, our mental and physical well-being.



***Sixty Harvests Left*, Philip Lymbery. £25.00 hbk.**

The title of the book stems from a UN warning that the world's soils are being so damaged by intensive agriculture (Big Ag) that they will be gone in just sixty years. From that starting point, the author — who also happens to be the head of Compassion in World Farming — provides a history lesson on farming through the ages, and looks to how farmers are increasingly adopting regenerative agriculture techniques and are working to not only preserve what is left but also to rebuild healthy soils and restore the environment while feeding a growing global population.

