

[Rodney Culpepper is a timid, unassuming man with a mild temperament. He is bookish, likes routine and can be fussy and particular.]

MUSIC

Bit of excitement in Hide Four today, and I'm not talking about the early sighting of a Jack Snipe, who usually only grace us with their presence in late Winter. New face at the far end of the bench. Chap in a wax jacket with an impressive set of image-stabilised binoculars. When he turned and smiled to nod a greeting, I instantly recognised him. He'd been standing in front of me in the queue at Wendy's, my usual stop-off for breakfast on the A52. I remembered him because he'd ordered a takeaway bacon sandwich with brown sauce and a milky tea - exactly what I would have ordered myself if I hadn't have decided to push the boat out and sit in to have a full English. I have to watch my cholesterol but I like to treat myself once in a while as I'm particularly partial to their hash browns. (Beat) Anyway, when he turned round, I said to him, 'How was your bacon sandwich?' He looked a bit a gone out, I had to chuckle. 'I saw you,' I said. 'In Wendy's on the A52 earlier this morning - I was standing behind you in the queue.' He smiled. 'I've had worse,' he said. 'I was pleased to see you're a brown sauce connoisseur just like myself,' I said and laughed. 'Oh, yes,' he said. 'It has to be brown sauce'. Of course, this starts up a big debate in the hide on the merits of brown sauce and how it fares against tomato ketchup. Mr Pollard is firmly in our corner, and believes the peppery taste of brown sauce cuts through the greasiness of the bacon perfectly. Whereas Ray Draper is in the ketchup camp, saying the tanginess of the tomato sauce is a lovely contrast to the saltiness of the cured meat. The discussion got to such a fevered pitch that it almost caused a domestic between Mr and Mrs Blundell but luckily any tension was soon dissipated by the arrival of a pair of reed warblers.

[Pause]

A bit later on he passed around a bag of Mint Imperials. Mrs Blundell said, 'You can come again!' He said, 'I'll definitely be back. I'm looking to spot a red-crested pochard and I've been told I stand a fair to moderate chance in this neck of the woods.' He packed up his things about half an hour later, one of his aunties had taken ill so he'd scheduled in a visit with her. 'Cheerio,' he said as he left. (Beat) 'He may have dubious taste when it comes to condiments,' said Ray Draper. 'But he seemed like a nice bloke.' I said, 'Yes, he did, didn't he?'