I'M A DWARF, NOT A HOBBIT

Posted on May 1, 2014 by Eddie

Category: Observations



A few days ago, I posted this picture on Facebook and Twitter. It is of Sue on top of Helm Crag in the Lake District looking down towards Grasmere. I commented: "when you live in exile most of the year, it's good to get back to civilisation". To which a good friend replied:

> *@kouya Ah, yes, back to the shire and the 11ses! â€" Leslie Brinkerhoff (@MrLes) April 25, 2014*

Which gave me something to think about. You see, we live in the "Shire", or pretty close to it.Â I've always assumed that the Cotswold Hills were the basis for Tolkein'sÂ Shire, but the Chilterns where we live would be a good stand-in. We have stereotypical rolling English hills with quaint villages. It is pretty enough to be the home of Inspector Barnaby and Midsomer Murders. It certainly looks like the Shire. Though I'm not a great fan of High Wycombe as a town, I am keen on the woods and hills that surround it. I've walked and run along the same tracks at all seasons and in all weathers; I know every little hill and valley in my part of the Shire and they do my heart good. And then I go and spoil it all. The thing is, it only takes a few minutes on the Lakeland Fells or Scottish Mountains to make me feel that the Chilterns are rather dull. They are fine if I don't have anything better under my feet, but they aren't realÂ hills. Â  Â I like high hills, wild country, grey rocks and purple heather. If I was in Tolkein's books, I'd come from

the Iron Hills, not the Shire.

But my alienation fromÂ the Shire goes deeper; my ancestors mined coal and shaped metal, they weren't farmers and they certainly weren't gentlemen. I identify far more with the heavy industry of the dwarves than I do with the gentle pastoral life of the Hobbits.

There is a serious point to this. If I am to learn to be "content in all things" as Paul was, I'm going to have to learn to be content to be away from the wild country of the North of England and Scotland. This really is a lifelong struggle!

You may be interested to know that I do have one thing in common with the Hobbits; I have hairy feet. Or, perhaps, you didn't want to know that.Â