

Feral – searching for enchantment on the frontiers of rewilding, George Monbiot, Allen Lane, 2013

With apologies to Pooh, Christopher Robin and Friends

Christopher Robin is much older now, but he does still talk things through with Pooh when he needs to think...

A few weeks ago, the old bridge over the stream where Christopher Robin played pooh sticks with Pooh and Piglet was washed away in a flash flood. Eeyore's lovely house was washed away too.

Christopher Robin had been reading a book called "Feral" which talked a lot about a lot of different things. Christopher Robin talked to Pooh about rewilding – about introducing wolves and elephants back into Britain. Pooh was very worried about this: he did not want heffalumps rampaging around in the Hundred Acre Wood – he still had bad dreams about them and his heffalump trap. And as for wolves – Tigger was more than enough to cope with – Pooh did not want any more fierce animals in the wood!

Christopher Robin laughed and said "Oh Pooh – you are a silly bear! Of course we won't have elephants and wolves in our Hundred Acre Wood!"

This reassured Pooh a little, but he was still very nervous.

However, when Christopher Robin explained that the flood was caused by the water rushing down the stream and that beavers building dams could slow the water down, it set Pooh Bear thinking...

A few days later, Pooh got up very early. He went to where Christopher Robin had made a new bridge to play pooh sticks and then walked up stream. Pooh found a place where the stream was narrow, and puffing and panting, he dragged a branch across the stream. Water still flowed under it, but it did build up a little behind it too.

Next, Pooh walked downstream of the bridge and placed stones across the stream in a line. He left gaps so that the water could get through, but then went back to the bridge to play a game of pooh sticks. The stream was flowing fast enough to carry the stick, so Pooh ran down to his stone dam – he was so excited to see the stick caught up in the dam that he ran all the way to Christopher Robin’s house. He got there just in time for a late breakfast, which was lucky, because Pooh is rather peckish after his hard working morning!

Pooh was explaining to Christopher Robin how he had built a dam to protect the bridge and another to protect Eeyore’s house when there was a loud knock at the door. Christopher Robin opened it to see Piglet and Eeyore outside looking very worried:

“Th... the... there’s a thing in the stream...” stammered Piglet
“B... by the bridge...”

Eeyore joined in: “I don’t like to complain, as you know, but...”

Christopher Robin smiled and Eeyore continued: “someone has been blocking the stream near my house... and it has slowed the water right down! Not that I am complaining you understand...”

Christopher Robin invited Piglet and Eeyore in for breakfast and he and Pooh explained again about the bridge and Eeyore’s house being washed away and about Pooh’s dams to slow the water down and hold the water upstream when it rained – and then they all went to look at Pooh’s handiwork. They all agreed that for a bear with very little brain, Pooh had done a remarkable thing! Then they played pooh sticks until lunchtime, and Pooh went home for a nap with a warm helpful feeling inside – but he did have that old dream about heffalumps and woozles...