

Country Notes for February 2025

I am often asked what my favourite season of the year is, and I always find it a difficult question to answer, as they are all special and frequently so very different. This winter so far has been unusually varied. We have had foggy days, sunny days, days when it has been so warm that a coat has been unnecessary and more recently mornings of heavy hoar frost, when the ground and the trees have been temporarily painted in powdery white. We have also had high winds and torrential rain. A few days ago we had an overnight snowfall, albeit very wet snow, which had largely disappeared by the time we woke the following morning. At the time of writing there is more forecast for the coming days with several inches a possibility. I am sure that nature has yet more surprises for us before winter is done.

As I came inside to write this article I heard two ravens noisily jostling with each other as they flew over my garden. I still find myself surprised to hear the call of a bird that until recently I associated with the tops of our highest mountains! Amongst these special moments it is reassuring to see the predictable too. Now that February is with us we are able to enjoy the usual display of beautiful snowdrops. These wonderful harbingers of better days to come are also known as February Fair Maids and Candlemas Bells, Candlemas being on 2nd February each year. In our gardens the first hellebores are flowering and, although we know that there are still many wintry days to come, we also know that as every day passes warmer and brighter days are not far away.

In the meantime let's enjoy whatever February holds for us as we venture outside to enjoy the glories of winter!

Andrew G Snowdon