

Country Notes for March 2015

'In like a lion; out like a lamb'. This is probably one of the most well-known quotes about March - and I wonder whether it will be true for this year. We have certainly had a taste of everything through the past winter -from the very mild, to very windy - to hard frosts and snow showers, plus a spell of very cold northerly winds.

However this is the month when winter gives way to spring and we can begin to look forward to some warmer days ahead. One of the glories of March for me is looking at the daffodils in the gardens and lanes of our village. Snowdrops and crocuses were the overture, but with the arrival of daffodils there is a magnificent drum roll and the music bursts into a wonderful symphony of whites, creams and yellows.

They are sometimes referred to as Easter Lilies, and Wordsworth certainly enjoyed their spectacle of colour as he walked through his beloved Lakeland.

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

These daffodils were probably the native *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, sometimes known as the Lent Lily. Not as blousy as some, they are very delicate and beautiful. I really must plant some in my garden! It is said that they were brought to England by the Romans - but that is just one theory! They believed that they had healing powers - but actually their sap contains crystals which can irritate the skin!

The family name is *Narcissus* and the name derives from Greek Mythology. *Narcissus*, it is said, considered himself to be very handsome, and seeing himself in a pool leaned over to see better, fell in, drowned and turned into a daffodil!

Whatever its history, it is just an exiting thought that very soon our village will be filled with the pastel shades of daffodils to brighten March and lead us onwards into the glories of spring.

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