

Country Notes for January 2016

What a mild winter it has been so far. On 17th December the temperature was forecast to reach 16c. There were some days in 2015 when it wasn't much more than that in August! What, I wonder, will the New Year hold in store for us. In 2013 there were regular snowfalls from mid-January through to almost the end of the month - but for the last two years there has been very little snow indeed.

So far this winter there have been very few frosts either. At the time of writing there are still geraniums and roses flowering in my garden! However there are also plenty of snowdrops peeping above the surface of the soil - and before long they will be in flower. Snowdrops are members of the Galanthus family and are the very first harbingers of the new season. Very soon after they flower, other bulbs will start to brighten our gardens - and what a pleasure it will be to see them! Crocus and Iris are all bulbs that can appear in the garden in January - and this year they will be joined by the earliest of the daffodils. At the time of writing in mid-December, daffodil Rijnvelds Early Sensation already has large buds in my garden.

As we watch the old year end and the New Year begin, a close look at our gardens and in our woods and fields, show that the continuous cycle of growth continues, with all its promise of things to come. Bluebells are already an inch or two above ground, buds are swelling on trees and bushes and below the surface of the soil things are already stirring.

However it is still wonderful to enjoy what the countryside has to offer right now. Make sure that you enjoy winter walks in our countryside whatever the weather, as every month and ever season is a thing of beauty in itself.

A very happy new year to you all.

Andrew Snowdon