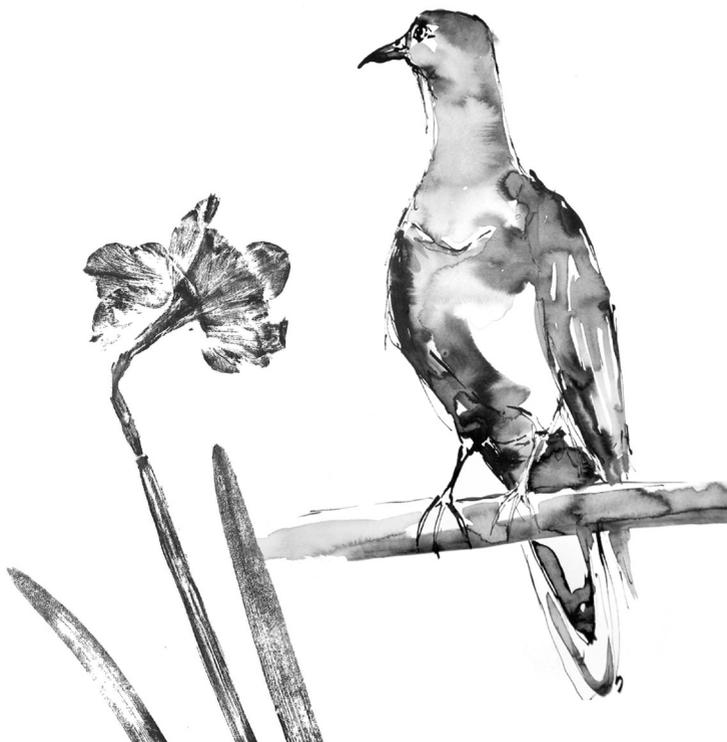


Impressions of Nature



March 26

March

1st St Davids Day

3rd Full Moon

5th St Pirans Day

15th Mothering Sunday

19th New Moon

18th Celtic Month of the Alder begins

17th St Patricks Day

20th Spring Equinox

29th Clock goes forward

Here in Cornwall we have had an astonishing stretch of weather, fifty-five days of rain. It has been unusually mild, but the horizon has almost completely disappeared, wrapped in mist for weeks on end. I hadn't realised quite how much I rely on that long line where land or sea meets sky until it was taken from view. Maybe because of this, I felt drawn to focus on that horizon and the wider landscape.

Spring is quietly assembling itself behind the veil of rain. Buds are swelling on branches. Blackthorn has begun to show its blossom. Alder catkins hang like tassels. Primroses, celandines, violets and dandelions are early food to pollinators especially if we allow a little wildness to remain in our gardens.

Above us, though often hidden in cloud, change is happening in the skies too. By the end of the month early migrants, swallows, sand martins, chiffchaffs, wheatears, firecrests and black redstarts, will begin returning. At the same time, winter visitors such as bewick's and whooper swans, white-fronted geese, redwings, fieldfares and many of our redshanks will be departing. The acrobatic flocks of lapwings that have animated our winter fields will thin as they head back to their breeding grounds.

On the ground, hedgehogs may be stirring from hibernation. If you see one out in full daylight it may need support, local rescue groups can advise. Frogspawn is appearing, newts are moving and bees and butterflies will soon follow when the rain relents.

March has long been associated with beginnings. In the Roman calendar it was once the first month of the year and in England the New Year was celebrated on March 25th until 1752. The Spring Equinox on the March 20th, brings that ancient sense of balance, day and night held in equal measure. Across cultures this turning point has symbolised renewal and awakening.

Even in this rain-soaked season, renewal is happening, perhaps less dramatically but happening none the less.

St Davids Day

With this month's focus on doves and daffodils, I found myself returning to the story of St David.

I'm often drawn to saints not through doctrine, but through landscape, wildlife and the fragments of story that linger around them. Birds in particular seem to perch quietly inside these old narratives. In depictions of St David, a white dove is almost always resting on his shoulder, a small but powerful detail.

One of the best-known stories tells of him preaching at Llanddewi Brefi. The gathered crowd struggled to hear his words. As the story goes, the earth rose beneath his feet, lifting him up into view and a white dove settled on his shoulder, a sign, it was said, of divine favour and peace.

Tradition holds that he was born during a fierce storm on the cliffs of Pembrokeshire, the son of Sant, a king of Ceredigion and Nonnita, a nun. He entered monastic life early and later established a religious community on the site where St David's Cathedral and the Bishop's Palace now stand. He is said to have lived a long life, dying on March 1st, 589 AD, reputedly at the age of one hundred.

His parting words to his monks were simple and resolute. "Brothers, be constant... bear the yoke you have taken to the end."

And as his feast day arrives each year, Daffodils open across Wales, with their bright, trumpet-shaped heralds of March. The daffodil is also the month's birth flower and stands as one of Wales' national emblems alongside the leek, a symbol not only of place, but of renewal.

There is something fitting in pairing the dove and the daffodil at this time of year, symbols of peace and spirit, but also of resilience and return.

March Nosegay by John Clare

The bonny March morning is beaming
In mingled crimson and grey,
White clouds are streaking and creaming
The sky till the noon of the day;
The fir deal looks darker and greener,
And grass hills below look the same;
The air all about is serener,
The birds less familiar and tame.

Here's two or three flowers for my fair one,
Wood primroses and celandine too;
I oft look about for a rare one
To put in a posy for you.
The birds look so clean and so neat,
Though there's scarcely a leaf on the grove;
The sun shines about me so sweet,
I cannot help thinking of love.

So where the blue violets are peeping,
By the warm sunny sides of the woods,
And the primrose, 'neath early morn weeping,
Amid a large cluster of buds,
(The morning it was such a rare one,
So dewy, so sunny, and fair,)
I sought the wild flowers for my fair one,
To wreath in her glossy black hair.

Plant Focus
Daffodils

Daffodils

Its botanical name, *Narcissus*, reaches back into Greek mythology, a well documented story retold most notably by the Roman Poet Ovid in the *Metamorphosis*. The story of Echo and Narcissus is a classic Greek tragedy about the perils of self-absorption and the pain of unrequited love. It begins with Echo, a talkative nymph who was cursed by the goddess Hera to only ever repeat the last words spoken to her. Isolated by her silence, Echo fell deeply in love with Narcissus, a hunter of breathtaking beauty who heartlessly rejected everyone who crossed his path. When Echo finally tried to approach him, she could only mimic his dismissive words. Heartbroken and shunned, she faded away in the mountains until nothing remained of her but her voice, forever lingering in caves and canyons.

Narcissus's fate was sealed when Nemesis, the goddess of revenge, decided to punish him for his cruelty toward his suitors. She lured him to a pristine, mirror-like pool where he caught a glimpse of his own reflection. Unaware that he was looking at himself, he fell hopelessly in love with the "youth" in the water. Because his love could never be returned or even touched, he grew despondent and wasted away by the bank. Upon his death, in the spot where he sat transfixed, a beautiful gold-and-white flower bloomed in his place, the narcissus, leaving behind a lasting symbol of vanity and lost potential.

There is another, darker thread woven through its history. Some traditions link the daffodil to the story of Pluto and Proserpine or Hades and Persephone in Greek myth. It is said that Persephone was lured by spring flowers before being taken to the underworld and in later retellings the narcissus became one of the blooms tied to that moment of descent. For this reason, the flower has been associated not only with spring's return, but with the cyclical journey between light and shadow, loss followed by renewal.

In Christian symbolism the daffodil became known as the "Lent Lily," flowering during the weeks leading up to Easter. Its emergence after winter mirrors themes of resurrection and spiritual awakening. That

trumpet-like corona, opening towards the light, has often been seen as a herald, announcing the turning of the season.

Across cultures the meanings shift. In Wales, the daffodil stands proudly as a national emblem, worn on St David's Day. In China, a bloom opening at Lunar New Year is considered especially fortunate, promising prosperity in the year ahead. Yet older European folklore held more cautionary notes, a drooping daffodil was once thought an ill omen, perhaps reflecting the flower's association with the boundary between life and death in classical myth.

Beyond story and superstition, the daffodil has also played a role in healing traditions. Extracts from certain species contain galantamine, a compound used in modern medicine to support cognitive function with hope that it may be beneficial in the treatment of Alzheimers.

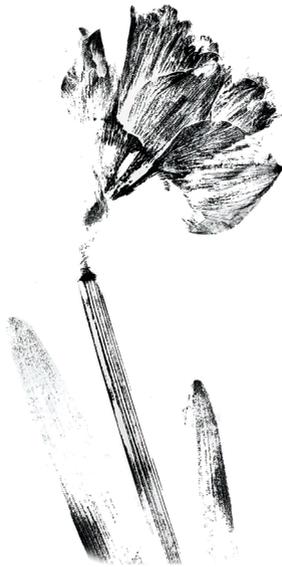
In the language of flowers, daffodils speak of rebirth, new beginnings, hope and creative inspiration. They are among the first to rise while winter still lingers, pushing through cold soil with an almost defiant brightness. Perhaps that is why they endure in poetry and art because they arrive at the precise moment we most need reminding that light returns.

In Cornwall, their early appearance, often as early as the end of December in the commercial fields, feels like a welcome promise of spring in the darkest days of winter. Although they were introduced to Britain by the Romans. Britain is now the world's largest producer of daffodils, with over 27,000 cultivated varieties. Their bright yellow blooms have long inspired poets, possibly most famously William Wordsworth.

To Daffodils by Robert Herrick

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet, the early-rising sun
Has not attained his noon :
Stay, stay,
Until the hastening day Has run
But to the even-song ;
And having prayed together, we
Will go with you along!

We have short time to stay as you;
We have as short a Spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you or any thing:
We die,
As your hours do; and dry Away
Like to the Summer's rain,
Or as the pearls of morning dew,
Ne'er to be found again.



Monograph on Paper

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud By William Wordsworth

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.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.



Monoprint on Paper

Featured Creatures
Doves



Doves

In zoological terms, there is no difference between doves and pigeons. The two names are used interchangeably for members of the same bird family, all descended from the Rock Dove (*Columba livia*). Today there are over 300 species worldwide. In the UK we see Woodpigeon, Rock Dove, Stock Dove and Collared Dove and very rarely now, Turtle Dove.

It was the pigeon that helped ignite Charles Darwin's thinking about inheritance and variation. His intense interest in breeding pigeons informed his ideas on heredity and later shaped sections of *The Origin of Species* and *The Variation of Animals and Plants Under Domestication*. Victorian Britain was gripped by "pigeon fancying," a pursuit that crossed social boundaries, from miners and weavers to Queen Victoria.

Pigeons are among the most intelligent of birds. They have passed the "mirror test," recognising their own reflection. In controlled studies they have demonstrated remarkable visual memory, recalling hundreds of images over long periods. They can distinguish between artistic styles, even telling the difference between works by Pablo Picasso and Claude Monet and apply what they have learned to new, unseen images. They recognise letters of the alphabet and can learn complex response sequences, revealing a level of cognition once thought exclusive to primates.

Their relationship with humans stretches back thousands of years. They have carried messages across many miles, delivered results from sporting events including the Olympics, served as food, sacrifice and symbol. During wartime they acted as vital messengers when other communications failed saving thousands of lives.

Despite their everyday familiarity, their abilities remain extraordinary. They form strong pair bonds and typically mate for life. A breeding pair may raise up to eight broods a year when food is plentiful, laying two eggs each time. Both parents share incubation and both produce the nutrient-rich "pigeon milk" fed to their young, known as squabs.

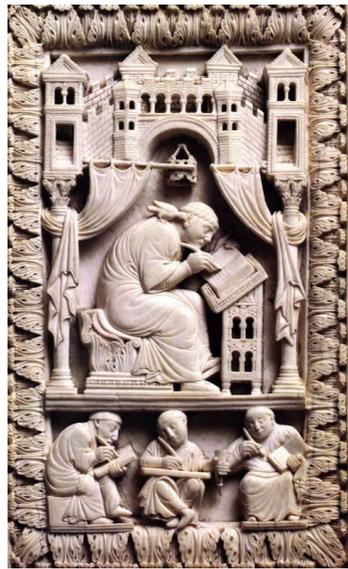
The chicks grow rapidly, doubling their weight within a day or two and fledge at around eight weeks.

Their navigational skills are still being studied. Research suggests they use a combination of landmarks, the sun, the Earth's magnetic field and even low-frequency sound. A long-term study by Oxford University indicated that some pigeons follow roads and motorways, adjusting direction at junctions as they travel. In terms of speed, while the diving prowess of the Peregrine Falcon exceeds 200 mph, racing pigeons hold records for sustained, self-powered horizontal flight. They can cover hundreds of miles in a day and have been recorded flying at remarkable speeds with unwavering endurance.

Symbolically, pigeons and doves carry immense weight. In the ancient world they were associated with goddesses of love and fertility. Aphrodite (Venus in Rome) was often depicted with doves and offerings of pigeons were made in her honour, she was also said to be carried by a Dove drawn chariot. Earlier still, in Bronze Age Mesopotamia, dove imagery appeared alongside mother-goddess figurines. In Greek legend, the sacred oak of Zeus was attended by dove-priestesses who interpreted omens from the movement of birds. Across cultures the dove has symbolised peace, devotion and the soul. Folklore even claimed that the devil could assume any shape except that of a dove such was its purity in the popular imagination. For a bird so common it is often overlooked, the pigeon holds an astonishing story of loyalty, endurance, intelligence and partnership with humankind.

I have already mentioned St David but there are other saints associated with doves. St. Columba, Born Crimthann, he was later renamed Columba (Latin for "dove") because of his peaceful nature as a child, or perhaps as a nod to his role as a messenger of the Gospel. His Gaelic name, Colum Cille ("Dove of the Church"), perfectly captures his mission. Just as the dove in Genesis returned to the ark with an olive branch to signal a new beginning, Columba travelled to the rugged Isle of Iona to bring the "Peace of the Church" to the Picts.

St. Agnes, While the lamb is her primary symbol (a play on her name and the Latin *agnus*), St. Agnes is occasionally depicted with a dove bearing a ring in its beak. This imagery stems from her status as a "bride of Christ." According to legend, Agnes was a young Roman girl who refused all earthly suitors, declaring herself already betrothed to God. The dove appearing with a ring serves as a heavenly confirmation of this mystical marriage, symbolising the purity and the divine seal of her commitment even in the face of martyrdom.



St. Gregory the Great, In the iconography of St. Gregory, the dove is not a pet, but the Holy Spirit itself. The most famous legend tells of Gregory's secretary peeping through a curtain to see why the Pope was pausing so frequently while dictating his sermons. He witnessed a dove perched on Gregory's shoulder, its beak pressed to his ear as if whispering the words directly from God. This "divine dictation" explains why he is the patron saint of scholars and teachers; the dove represents the direct bridge between celestial wisdom and human penmanship.

St Scholastica, The twin sister of St Benedict, is often shown with a dove rising heavenward. According to tradition, when Benedict once refused to prolong a rare visit with her, Scholastica prayed that he might be persuaded to stay. A sudden storm prevented his departure, which he understood as the power of her prayer. Three days after her death, Benedict is said to have seen her soul ascend to heaven in the form of a dove. In her story, the bird becomes a symbol of contemplative devotion and the soul's release gentle yet powerful, grounded in love yet destined for flight.



St. Francis of Assisi, his association with doves was one of radical kinship and protection. One popular story tells of Francis meeting a young man on his way to market to sell a crate of wild turtle doves for slaughter. Moved by their innocence, Francis "advised" the birds to come to him, then built nests for them and fed them, eventually taming them so completely that they lived as part of the friary. For Francis, the dove was a fellow creature of God that deserved the same "brotherly" love as any human, cementing his role as the patron saint of animals and the environment.

The Dove By Paul Laurence Dunbar

Out of the sunshine and out of the heat,
Out of the dust of the grimy street,
A song fluttered down in the form of a dove,
And it bore me a message, the one word--Love!

Ah, I was toiling and oh, I was sad:
I had forgotten the way to be glad.
Now, smiles for my sadness and for my toil, rest
Since the dove fluttered down to its home in my breast!

The Voice Of The Dove By Joaquin Miller

Come listen, O Love, to the voice of the dove,
Come, hearken and hear him say,
There are many To-morrows, my Love, my Love,
There is only one To-day.

And all day long you can hear him say
This day in purple is rolled,
And the baby stars of the milky-way
They are cradled in cradles of gold.

Now what is thy secret, serene gray dove,
Of singing so sweetly alway?
There are many To-morrows, my Love, my Love,
There is only one To-day.

The Dove Of Peace By Oliver Herford

Here's to the Dove of Peace!
May she find a mate some day,
And may her tribe increase
As fast as she can lay!

With cooing doves galore
Then may the sky be dark
Until the Dogs of War
Can't see each other bark!



We are delighted to have you join us on this journey of discovery. This newsletter and research project explores a different bird, animal, plant, or tree each month, inviting you to look more closely at the seasonal wonders of our natural world.

You can find more of my work on the website, including step-by-step guides, tutorials, and online workshops.

You may have noticed I love gathering poetry, songs, facts, and stories that celebrate the profound connection between humans and the natural world. Drawing from medieval bestiaries, mythology, folklore, and fables, I aim to uncover the often intriguing lessons and allegorical meanings behind these tales in this newsletter.

Disclaimer: Please remember that this booklet serves as a starting point for your own exploration. Some of the information is rooted in folklore, storytelling, and non-scientific hearsay, so please approach it with caution and always conduct further research.

I hope you will join us in exploring your own creative practice and perhaps discover something that resonates with you.

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Things I try to do

- Join conservation groups
- Support Charities who protect habitat and wildlife
- Share good practice in Fishing, Farming and Land management
- Vote with my purse, dont support substandard practice in anything.
- Sign petitions to protect birds and habitat
- Share my love of wildlife with friends and family
- Sign petitions to end persecution and improve understanding
- Dont use pesticides, herbicides or poison in the Garden
- Let the grass grow, insects love dandelions and daisies.
- Grow wildflowers, plant native trees and plants that support pollinators.
- Encourage insects to the garden, it all starts with the insects.
- Put up bird Boxes
- Mulch flowerbeds to keep moisture in
- Grow some food... no matter how little.
- Have as many waterbuts as I can.
- Leave the leaves to provide habitat for insects etc.
- Plant trees
- Only ever forage sustainably and responsibly

Some links for further information:-

[British Trust for Ornithology](#)

[RSPB](#)

[Birdlife](#)

[The Wildlife Trusts](#)

[The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust](#)

[Plantlife](#)

[The Hare Preservation Society](#)

[The Badger Trust](#)

[RSPCA](#)

[Woodland Trust foraging guidelines](#)

[Curlew Action](#)

See You In....



April 2026

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