

Daffodils- Holiday thoughts

It's early February and there they are again - a first sign of Spring Daffodils bravely pushing up out of the ground in spite of the frost, snow and heavy rain. As soon as I see them I'm immediately taken back to the time I saw them covered in snow on an icy cold day in March 1994. We were in New York to visit our daughter and Grandson Jack, in time for his Birthday, staying in a small apartment in Greenwich Village, an old Brownstone building in the centre of the village, usually teeming with noisy traffic, but on this morning we woke up to a quiet place: overnight snow had fallen covering everything in a white blanket. Traffic had stopped, people were coming out on to the streets laughing and chatting with each other, the shop keepers were out clearing the snow away from the entrance to their shops and cafes ready for the customers to buy their early morning Coffee and croissants or Bagels.

We decided to head to Central Park with Jack, a rather excitable four-year old who could not wait to go there. We took the Subway because no buses or cabs were going anywhere fast. Manhattan Central Park didn't disappoint us. It was magical place with people skating on the ice rink resembling a Lowry painting, flowers covered in a soft dusting of snow, blossoms of the winter Cherry trees which lined the path, now weighed down in an icy covering.

Jack was thrilled. A little boy running about in the snow having a great time someone had carved out an Igloo there and made some ice sculptures - all such lovely memories, but then I saw some daffodils showing through the snow-covered ground.

Daffodils have always brought me happiness. Whenever I see them it brings to mind a holiday in the Lake District in Spring, such a beautiful time to be there. Wild Daffodils everywhere, the fields filled with sheep and the new born lambs bleating for their mothers: things conjuring up such happy moments in my life.

I visited The Lake District many times and each time when we turned off the M6 we were in another world, low stone walls bordering the fields driving through villages past farms and small towns towards our destination in Cumbria, Broughton In Furness, a place we knew so well to Garton House, a Guest House built on the side of the town and a place we knew would always welcome us with good food and a comfortable bed, run by Alan and Maude, a Swedish lady. She took time to know but when you did you would find out that she was an extremely hardworking woman who loved animals and birds. She had a pet lamb called mint sauce who grew up with her. She used to take it for walks through the village. She was always taking care of injured birds and she had a pet robin.

Early in the morning she would knock on my bedroom door and we would take her four rescue dogs with her through the fields that led to the old railway line, a walk we loved to take. The sheep in the field hardly took any notice of us we were so quiet. She always carried some crumbs of cheese in her pocket so we always had the company of the Robin flying from one hedge to another to try and attract her attention. She would usually leave the crumbs on the gate post for it. We would reach the large pond at sunrise just in time to see it turn to

gold to watch the flock of Shellducks arriving: they looked so beautiful as they landed on the water, their brown and white feathers glinting in the sun light.

I believe that in Japan they call The Lake District Peter Rabbit country and it is very popular with tourists. For me it's Wordsworth Country especially in Spring where you can as he says wander through a crowd of Daffodils.

In Spring daffodils grow on the side of the road in Turners Hill and up the bank and on the green and also in front of the school, planted by the children. in spite of everything they will be there again this year bringing joy to everyone at a time when we all need it so much.

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