

spring, though, has been the wildlife returning.

Every morning now begins with birdsong — and ewe-to-lamb bleating. Robins, blackbirds, wrens and the anticipated return of the infamous cuckoo provide a soundtrack from dawn onwards. One of the most exciting moments was spotting the swallows returning, swooping effortlessly through the air as though announcing that winter had finally loosened its grip on the valley.

The lambs in surrounding fields have brought endless entertainment too. There is something universally uplifting about watching them race around fields with complete abandon, seemingly full of energy no matter how wet the ground becomes.

We have also now experienced the wonderfully eccentric village tradition that is Lambing Bingo. Local farmer Emma marks numbers onto selected pregnant ewes, residents buy bingo cards, and updates arrive via the village WhatsApp group announcing which numbered sheep have given birth.

As newcomers, we assumed this would be a pleasant little fundraiser for the school.

We were not prepared for the emotional intensity of it all.

Within days, we found ourselves deeply invested in the reproductive success of sheep we had never met. Every WhatsApp notification suddenly carried enormous significance. Was Number 14 finally in labour? Had 27 delivered twins? Why was 32 taking so long? At one point, the excitement became so overwhelming that I genuinely considered taking Kalms before opening the messages.

And yet, this mixture of countryside chaos, humour and community spirit is exactly what has made our first spring here so memorable.

Even our garden, which looked rather tired when we first arrived, is beginning to reveal surprises. Flowers have appeared where previously there was only mud and uncertainty, and every week seems to bring something new into bloom.

What has struck us most is how connected the village feels to the changing seasons. In many places, spring can pass almost unnoticed. Here, however, nature feels impossible to ignore. The mountains, the rain, the blossom and the changing light all shape daily life in a way that feels grounding and deeply comforting. Rain and waterproofs have become essential daily attire. But alongside that has come extraordinary beauty, warmth from the community and a powerful sense of nature reawakening all around us.

And if this first spring has taught us anything, it is that Dolwyddelan does not simply experience the seasons — it lives them fully.

Lloyd C. Mason-Boardman