

Hereford Times

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JANUARY is quite a strange time, and everything is very quiet as people recover from the festivities in December.

A time to reflect is very important - traditionally winter was the time when people recharged and slept longer due to the shorter days.

As we are less in tune with the seasons than we used to be it's harder to take advantage of the fallow period offered by dark winter days.

Here at The Riverside January provides a pleasant respite after the manic days of December, helping us regroup for the busy times ahead.

Looking back and taking stock of events, I am automatically drawn to the massive snowfall in December. Although it was beautiful, it also made things difficult for a few days with staff unable to get to work, and suppliers struggling to get through to deliver essential supplies.

Extreme weather shows how

TALKING POINT

ANDY LINK
Patron,
Riverside Inn



badly prepared we are when things veer away from the norm.

However, even nature herself struggles when the weather becomes harsh, and several trees are down in our orchard.

But it was also a very special time here, highlighting the strong community spirit that still exists in this area, with farmers clearing estates in Wigmore, as well as making side roads accessible, and even towing our guests out of the car park.

Although a full restaurant cancelled due to the weather, we decided to remain open, and the local community showed so much support, coming in for food and drinks, helping push cars and creating such a great

atmosphere.

Now in January we plan to repair some of the damage.

Luckily winter is the ideal time to plant bare root fruit trees, so we are looking to replace some of the damaged trees in our old orchard.

Our heritage fruit trees are a crucial part of the fabric of Herefordshire, as well as the wonderful traditions associated with them. Try and catch up with one of the fabulous wassailing events that take place throughout the county this month.

The ceremony, which frequently involves a great deal of noise, and offerings of bread or toast to the fruit trees, is designed to encourage a good harvest the following autumn, and to drive out any bad spirits.

And for our own celebration of the apple, throughout the month we'll have local apple based cocktails and a selection of ciders behind the bar to pay homage to that tradition.