

February *in the* FRAMIE

This cold, chilly month does have moments of beauty worth capturing forever, writes a Chester photographer

WORDS BY ALISTAIR CAMPBELL PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALISTAIR AND JAN CAMPBELL





Photographically you could be forgiven for assuming that the months of February or March, will not provide the scenic splendour that the Cheshire winter and spring seasons have the potential to offer.

In theory, the winter snow and frost should be abating and the initial buds of spring colour starting to emerge. However, nature is seldom that predictable or convenient and you just never know what each day, or even season, will bring.

We have spent many days walking Cheshire's city, town, village and countryside trails with a backpack full of heavy camera equipment, only to be thwarted by dull grey skies. Perfect lighting conditions, at least for professional photographic purposes, are rarer than you may think. But when that blend of great scenery and perfect light do come along, all the trudged miles and unproductive outings are very quickly forgotten.

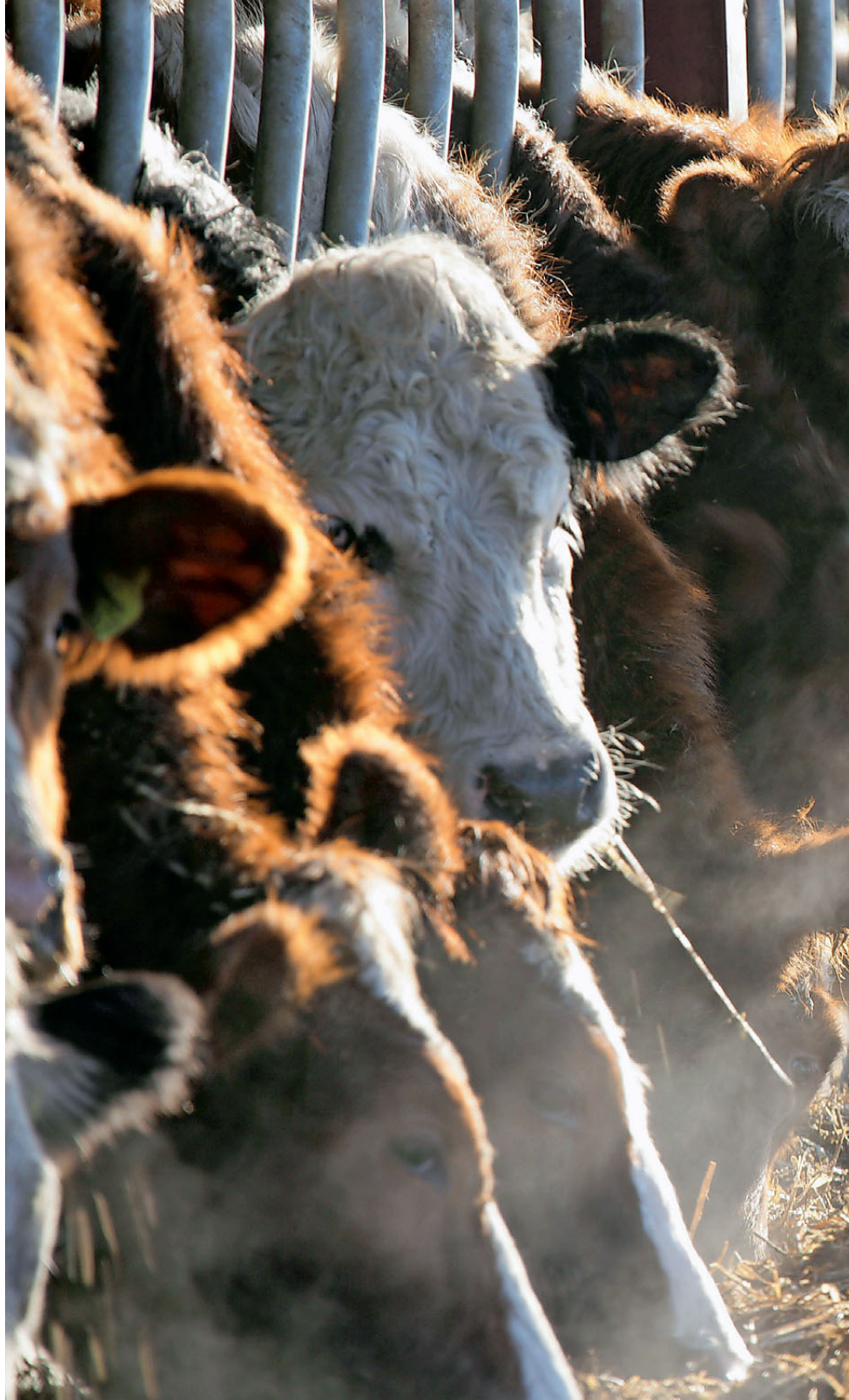
The image of the cows feeding from a barn was stumbled upon during a frosty morning walk. The direction of the >

Above: Crocuses in Port Sunlight Dell with the 19th century Lyceum in the background
Left: a lone cyclist walking near the Marine Lake at West Kirby, with the River Dee Estuary
Below: Crocuses at Rode Hall





Above: Snowdrops at St. Mary's Church, Coddington
Right: Cows feeding in a barn on a cold afternoon on a Cheshire farm
Below: Snowdrops and crocuses growing by the side of the Boathouse Walk at Rode Hall



winter light coming towards the camera accentuates the shape of each feeding cow, while the exhaled air confirms that it is indeed chilly. All of these visual elements add a little drama to the image and any change of camera angle, or lighting conditions, would have conveyed a different emotion.

Frosty snow-covered landscapes, even on dull grey days, offers a different visual perspective and makes us look at a previously familiar scene with a fresh pair

of eyes. Snow will camouflage winter blemishes, and most of us will be unable to resist the temptation to capture a snowy scene in a photograph.

When sunshine is added to the equation, it offers a complete new outlook and almost everything becomes worthy of a photograph. The snow covered images of fields in the village of Coddington were captured in early March. Interestingly, these snow images along with the cows and St Mary's Church were all taken within a

few hundred metres of our front door. This aptly illustrates that you don't have to venture any great distance to photographically capture, or just simply admire, the aesthetic beauty of our county.

Slightly further afield, the silhouetted view of a cyclist at West Kirby's Marine Lake may lack any snow or frost, but the scene still manages to convey a wintery theme.

The transition from dormant winter to early spring brings a little vibrancy and >



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Winter scene in a farming field in the village of Coddington



colour back to the Cheshire landscape. These early spring floral shades prime us for what is to come in the weeks ahead. Crocuses add a colourful contrast to a backdrop of snowdrops at Rode Hall's annual Snowdrop Walk - an event acknowledged as one of the finest displays of snowdrops in the north-west. St Mary's churchyard, also carpeted in snowdrops, is a perfect vision of early spring.

No matter the season, Port Sunlight is always a pleasure to photograph, but the foreground of crocuses add an extra dimension in the framing of an already attractive vista.

To some, February and March may not be the most picturesque time of the year but it can be the most photographically unpredictable. ■

Alistair and Jan Campbell are Cheshire-based professional photographers who specialise in garden and landscape images.



Above: Alistair and Jan Campbell
Photograph by James Cundill



Country lane
in Aldersey,
Coddington