

MARCH 2024

PREAMBLE



Wildflower of the month: Daffodil/ Flower of the month: Jonquil

Tree of the month: Up to 17th March is the Ash, followed by Alder till 14th April

Full Moon this Month: SAP Moon

“A flower blossoms for its own joy”

Oscar Wilde

March 2024

Welcome to the March website entry, and I apologise for leaving this entry so late (published March 1st). February has been a crazy busy month for me at work and personally. I am of course as keen as ever and am loving taking this new adventure on for David, but am course am only human, and as such have prioritised as best as I could have this past month. I will do better in future.

As promised, I have been working hard on the new website which will be launching in May 2024. The new website is being built based on all of the feedback you have provided me with. Thank you for all of your comments and feedback on the pilot site which have been invaluable for me – keep it coming there is still time! I can confirm that the web address will remain the same, www.indigenousukweather.com and indeed the transition should be seamless, there will be no down time for you to have to endure.

I have made the decision to use a separate website for the children's nature detectives' entries. This website will be solely aimed for our young readers, giving them access to far more information and fun activities to get their teeth into, also ensuring they will not need to navigate any 'boring grown-up stuff' or encounter any rants intended for an adult audience. I am passionate about communicating responsibly with our younger generation regarding nature and the world we live in, and as such this new website will ensure we are able to do this more effectively. The new web address will be www.naturegnomes.co.uk and will go live in May 2024. I am delighted to announce I will be working on 'Nature Gnomes' in partnership with Seran Eves. Seran is a qualified teacher, certified nutritionist and herbalist enthusiast, bringing a wealth of experience in teaching children about such matters in a holistic way. Seran will add such value for our young audience, and I am delighted to be working with her on this. Seran is also a long-standing friend of mine, and so I am also very excited to have an excuse to spend even more time together 😊

COMING SOON....



Now for the collated expert notes on March:

MARCH 2024 – The first part of March is normally unsettled and stormy over western Europe particularly between Britain and the Baltic and is associated with north to northeast airstreams. On average, the stormiest parts of this period over Britain are the 1-2nd and 6-9th March, with Scotland and northern parts of Britain receiving stronger winds than districts further south. By contrast, 12-19th March is normally less stormy and produces markedly fine conditions. In east Scotland and many other districts of Britain, it is the driest period of the year. Night frost, however, is likely despite quite warm day temperatures at times. In the Home Counties and SE England, it normally remains dry until 25th March, and the period 17-25th March the driest part of the year for the London area. There is a tradition the equinoctial gales begin on or near the 21st March. In fact, they do not normally affect Britain before 24-25th March, beginning first in the northern and western districts. From then until the end of the month the weather is normally very stormy, and there is a general lowering of temperature as the winds blow first from the SW or west and then veer to the NW or north. Sleet and snow over northern districts and over high ground and elsewhere are a fairly regular feature of the last few days of March and produces storms two out of every three years.

MY NOTES:

February Review:

To be honest the early part of my February forecast was poor. Although some areas did have the cold and frost predicted, this wasn't the case for us in Dorset. February was wet and much quirkier weather than I had predicted. I believe this was due to the SW wind direction recorded on December 21st, November 11th and indeed September 29th (persistent SW winds always indicate a wetter, slightly warmer air flow). As such the learning continues, and the importance of these wind days cannot and should not be underestimated. Apologies, I live and learn and in future forecasts will ensure sufficient time and thought is given to such intricacies of the methodology. I can imagine you all reading this and screaming 'obviously'. Just one quick comment. When I was reading David's website entries purely as an enthusiast, I thought I had it all figured out. Since training with David (which began in October 2023), I cannot begin to tell you how much harder this is than it looks. There are so many intricacies, foibles and the like to get your head around that it is actually very easy to overlook a 'dead cert' factor. Do bear with me though, I have reason to

believe I am getting better at this every single day. It is also worth remembering that David has some fifty years' experience, which is very different to my six years (five of which I was going it alone, only with the website for guidance). Every month David comes to visit me, and we walk, talk and I learn huge amounts. Slowly but surely, it is coming together.

Anyway, back to the forecast review. Indeed, the dangerous combination of a super moon, perigee and highest tides delivered flooding and misery to many, and as such I extend my deepest sympathies with you all.

The snow moon also delivered a much colder air flow as predicted, not cold enough for snow, but that was only ever going to be an outside chance.

I am happy with the later part of the February forecast.

March:

The first week of March is going to be the best March has to offer, with relatively fair and mild days (although some rain will be inevitable). Given the persistent SW wind direction we have been experiencing, what comes next will come as no surprise to any of you.

The second week of March we will experience cold rain (why oh why did I book canoeing for Mother's Day)?! Ha. We also have the potentially dangerous combination of Perigee, a Super Moon and Highest Tides from 8th – 12th March so flooding could yet again become problematic.

Rain will be the predominant feature of March, up until 25th March when we can expect storms.

In summary a cold and wet Easter, which on the bright side is necessary if we are to enjoy a good summer! BST begins on March 31st, and as such Spring will arrive (Meteorologists say Spring begins on March 1st, however the Methodology dictates that Spring begins on April 1st). Just one more month of winter to go then!

Sorry to be the bearer of bad news! I do hope that I am wrong, but unfortunately, I trust the methodology to deliver. As such I would suggest keeping your umbrellas and rain jackets at the ready, and if you live in an area prone to flooding do ensure you take all precautions possible.

I will publish the Spring advance forecast after March 21st, for of course this is a vitally important wind day. Where the wind blows this day, so it will be until June 24th. Stay tuned.

For the growers, gardeners, and horticulturalists the good news is that the severe Ice Maidens from May 11th – 14th will be absent this year, therefore no frost damage for the fruit farmers & cider producers, a good year ahead.

No doubt you would have all noticed the early arrival of flowers this year, we are now well in advance of the norm, hawthorn and masses of cherry laurel already being the most noticeable. Common Hazel is left waiting in abundance (180 days later will come the harvest).

Indeed, Oak buds are now very apparent (Oak before Ash, we are in for a splash comes to mind).

Nature isn't silly. This Spring look and see how nature prepares for a long winter, and a relatively short summer. Remember to look and see in May that the fruit does not suffer from the severe May frosts (ice maidens). Nature has barely 180 days to grow and mature everything. Nature is organised and predictable and can tell us all we need to know about the year ahead. We just need to remember to look. Plants needs sunshine, rain and some heat to grow. Not ideal for us human folk – but perfect for plant growth. In the coming weeks the countryside will explode in colour as flowers, trees and plants grow and develop which will encourage insects to pollinate and then make seeds.

We are a season ahead this year because winter is coming early. Of course, it is too early to be talking about snow yet. At this stage what I can say with some confidence looking at what nature is already setting up, the moon phases and data sheets – we are in for a long, cold and hard winter. There is also just an outside chance of something special to come in winter 2024/25. More on that in the Spring advance forecast. Stay tuned.

As part of my training, David sent me some very useful notes on flowers to be looking out for.

We have an abundance of snow drops, spring snowflakes, daffodils, wood sorrel and crocuses already this year! Since the sun is weak at this time of year the colour white absorbs the rays the best, hence the predominantly white flowers.

I thought it would be nice to include a summary of David's notes below, so that we can continue learning together.

Flowers soon bursting upon us include the yellow celandine, then bluebells, and then a collection of small ground hugging plants including Danish scurvy grass, field penny cress. Following this will be longer stalky plants: shepherds purse, thrale cress, shepherds cress, all the stitchwort family, mouse ear.

A few paler yellow plants as the sun gets stronger appear: golden saxifrage, large bittercress. Then again, as the sun gets stronger all the violet family appear, a mass of colour, with primroses, pansies, primula, cinquefoil, tormentil, and silver weed. The cuckoo plant is a pale coloured plant, again to collect as much of the weak sun as possible.

Therefore the hedgerows and kerbsides start at first to turn white, then weaker yellow and then as the sun gets stronger full colour. The above is a fair selection of March to May plants (although some have come early this year for the reasons mentioned in the box above).

When the last frosts have gone then this is signified by the cowslips appearing and most importantly the red, white and pink campion flowers – these campion cannot tolerate such frosts, as such they are the best indicator of no such frosts.

THANK YOU DAVID!! Indeed we live in a magnificent world full of interest, beauty and wisdom.

March Foraging:

Many plants are at their best for foraging in March. Keep your eyes peeled for:

- Alexanders (found mainly in coastal areas)
- Common Sorrel
- Corn Salad (Lamb's Lettuce)
- Cow Parsley
- Dandelion Leaves
- Primrose and Cowslip
- Rock Samphire
- Sea Kale (new shoots only) (pebble and gravel beaches)
- Silver Birch (sap)
- Stinging Nettles
- Wild Garlic

I am at the stage of this process where I am still gathering all my photos together. My intention is that after the first year I will have photos of my own to show you. In the meantime photo credits for below are all owed to the wildlife trust 😊



A NOTE FROM DAVID:

The Met Office costs us, the ratepayers, some £249 million a year (2022 figures), so what value do we get for all this money? Well in the last five months, ten named storm warnings and not a lot else. There are murmurings that trust in such storm warnings are beginning to wane, (*maybe even calling 'wolf,' too often*). [Ed: There is no real evidence that this winter has been any stormier than previous winters; windy yes, but this was predicted months ago, and many such storms have come within the 'Met Office stormy periods' formula, therefore, as such, nothing out of the ordinary]

Met Office storm names 2023/24

NAME	DATE NAMED	DATE OF IMPACT
Agnes	25 Sep 2023	27-28 Sep 2023
Babet	16 Oct 23	18-21 Oct 2023
Ciarán	29 Oct 23	1-2 Nov 2023
Debi	12 Nov 23	13 Nov 23
Elin	9 Dec 23	9 Dec 23
Fergus	9 Dec 23	10 Dec 23
Gerrit	26 Dec 23	27-28 Dec 2023
Henk	2 Jan 24	2 Jan 24
Isha	19 Jan 24	21-22 Jan 2024
Jocelyn	22 Jan 24	23-24 Jan 2024
Kathleen		
Lilian		
Minnie		
Nicholas		

Today, atmospheric scientist Dr Simon Lee, joint chief editor of the Royal Meteorological Society Journal Weather, told MailOnline that naming storms has been 'shown to be an effective communication strategy, and it even helps scientists talk about specific events clearly'. He cited an in-depth research paper on storm naming by University of Reading meteorology expert Andrew Charlton-Perez in 2019, which concluded 'storm naming is a very successful means of raising awareness of the storm'.

Dr Lee, who is currently a postdoctoral research scientist at Columbia University in New York, added that a named storm does not mean that everywhere will see impacts that fit with what someone might expect from knowing a storm is named. He continued: 'For example, if a storm is named due to the winds it will bring to Ireland, then experiencing such a named storm in south-eastern England may seem underwhelming or even overhyped.'

But the weather that results in a storm being named is often quite localised. It's therefore vital that the detail of the weather warning – i.e. the regions affected - is also clearly communicated.' Dr Lee also pointed out that the UK's winter climate is 'highly variable year-to-year', with some winters seeing almost no severe storms, such as last winter. So much then for winter storms, but, we now have a suggestion that maybe no such let up for the summer.

On the point of possibly naming heatwaves in the future, this was brought up in a report by the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) issued yesterday. MPs suggested that the threats posed by extreme heat should be better publicised by naming heatwaves, as is the case with storms, to boost public recognition. This also said urgent Government action was needed to boost resilience in extremely warm weather amid warnings that up to 10,000 people year in the UK could die as a result of heatwaves.

[All the above taken from the Daily Mail 3 February 2024]

Water utility bills are to rise from April 2024 by about £27 a year, though there will be regional variations from the lowest, Northumberland water at £422 to £548 by Wessex water. The average in England is £473. It is higher in Scotland. It is claimed that this will be the year of highest investment in the industry opening the way for ten new reservoirs, a reduction in sewage outfalls, and more investment to secure security of supply. *[Ed: seeing is believing – but still massive dividends will remain]*

Thames Water has been ordered to update its service commitment plan by the regulator Ofwat after a minister said the company's performance in regards to sewage dumping and serving customers was "completely unacceptable".

Robbie Moore, the floods minister, said Britain's biggest water supplier was "under no illusions over the scale of the challenge" as MPs heard that Thames had allowed waterways to become polluted and homes to be flooded with sewage.

At a Westminster Hall debate on the performance of the company in Oxfordshire, Moore said: "Ofwat have directed Thames Water to produce a service commitment plan. "This will require Thames Water to publicly commit to a plan for how they will start to turn their performance around. Please be assured that regulators and the government will be scrutinising these plans in detail to make sure every possible is being done to get the company back on track in terms of service delivery, environmental performance and ensuring that the customers get what they quite rightly deserve in terms of good supply."

Debt-laden Thames has been repeatedly criticised for its record on sewage dumping and leakage, while fears have been raised about its financial position after [auditors said it could run out of money by April](#).

Moore said: "It is critical that all water companies, including Thames Water clean up their act, behave transparently and take urgent action to improve their performance

where they fall short. If they do not achieve this, this government shall not hesitate in holding them to account." *[Ed: since such promises have been made before, to no avail, why should we believe this latest rhetoric?]* *(The Guardian 8th February 2024)*
Executives at water companies could lose their bonuses in future if the firm they run causes environmental damage, like letting illegal sewage spills pollute a beach or river.

Environment Secretary Stephen Barclay said it was time water company bosses "took responsibility".

Campaigners and opposition parties said they had been calling for restrictions on water boss bonuses for some time.

Regulator Ofwat will run a consultation on the proposal later this year.

This will determine whether the plan will go ahead and what types of incidents would cost someone their bonus.

Mr Barclay said the sanction should apply to any company that had committed "serious criminal breaches".

"Tougher action" was needed to address water companies' "poor performance", he said.

"No-one should profit from illegal behaviour," he added.

"In cases where companies have committed criminal breaches, there is no justification whatsoever for paying out bonuses. It needs to stop now."

If the plan does go ahead, it would affect bonuses for the financial year April 2024/25 and would apply to water companies in England and Wales.

From Monday the regulator, Ofwat, has a range of other new tools at its disposal, designed to hold companies to account.

They include the ability to fine firms up to 10% of their turnover for providing poor customer service.

- **Why is sewage released into rivers and the sea?**
- **What's the black gunk polluting the 'Bake Off' stream?**
- **How clean are the UK's beaches and rivers?**

[Guardian report 12th February 2024.]

**THANKS DAVID, THIS WEBSITE WOULDN'T BE THE SAME
WITHOUT YOUR VOICE.**

MARCH 2024

New Moon 10th @ 09:00 = Cold Rain

1st Quarter Moon 17th @ 04:10 = Rain

Full Moon 25th @ 07:00 = Stormy

Last Quarter Moon on 3rd @ 15:32 = Fair & Mild

Spring/ Vernal Equinox = March 20th

DoP & Quarter Day = March 21st

Highest Spring Tides 11th – 13th

Apogee 23rd @ 15:45

Perigee 10th @ 07:04/ Super Moon

FULL MOON KNOWN AS SAP MOON

Micro Moon 25th / Penumbral Lunar Eclipse

BST begins on March 31st

Met Office Notes: None

Buchan Notes: None

Monthly Notes & Comments

1st	St David	Ever on St David'd Day, put oats and barley in clay.
2 nd	St Chad	Every goose lays before St Chad, whether goose good or bad (if your goose has not laid by this day start fattening for the pot for she is not a good layer). Sow Peas Day.
3rd	St Winneral	St Winneral: the holy day of the saint who controls tides and weather. If stormy today bad winds to follow, but if quiet - quiet end to month.
10 th	Mother's Day	Simnel Sunday. Super Moon. Perigee @ 07:04
16 th	St Piran	
17 th	St Patrick	Around this time Cheltenham races and some freakish weather
19 th	St Joseph of Nazareth	A fertile year if clear and dry
20 th	Spring Equinox/	Vernal Equinox. When there has been no particular storm around the time of spring equinox, if a storm arise from the East on or before that day, or if a storm from any point of the compass arise after the equinox, then in either of these cases, the succeeding summer is generally dry (4/5). But if a storm arise from SW or WSW or a frost before spring equinox, then summer is generally wet (5/6).
21 st	DoP	Quarter Day
23 rd	Apogee	Apogee @ 15:45
24 th	Palm Sunday	If weather not clear this day it means a bad year. If thunder today a merry year.
25 th	Lady Day	The day the cardamine flower blooms. Daffodil day.
28 th	Maundy Thursday	Fine on holy Thursday, wet on Whit Monday
29 th	Good Friday	Rain on Good Friday and Easter Day, good year for grass and a bad year for hay (wet June). This signifies a wet year and such weather on Good Friday will last for 40 days.
31 st	Easter Sunday	BST begins.

MARCH 2024

TOM	Moon	Weather	DoP	St/ Holy Day	Other Day	Quarter Day	Apogee/ Perigee	Met Off (stormy/ quiet)	Buchan (warm/ cold)	Super Moon	Highest Tides	Notes
1	F			St David								
2	S			St Chad								Sow Peas day
3	S	3Q @ 15.23	Fair & Mild	3rd Sunday of lent. St Winneral								
4	M											
5	T											
6	W											
7	T											
8	F											Natural diaster potential
9	S											Natural diaster potential
10	S	New Moon @ 09.00	Cold rain	Mothers Day/ Simnel Sunday			Perigee - 07:04			Super Moon		Natural diaster potential
11	M										Highest	Natural diaster potential
12	T										Tides	Natural diaster potential
13	W										11th - 13th	Cheltenham Races
14	T											Cheltenham Races
15	F											Cheltenham Races
16	S			St Piran								Cornish Festival
17	S	1Q @ 04.10	Rain	5th Sunday of Lent. St Patrick.								
18	M											
19	T			St Joseph of Nazareth								
20	W				Spring Equinox							
21	T		DoP			Quarter day						
22	F											
23	S						Apogee - 15:45					
24	S			Palm Sunday								
25	M	Full Moon @ 07.00	Stormy		Lady Day					Micro Moon		Penumbral Lunar Eclipse
26	T											
27	W											
28	T			Maundy Thursday								
29	F			Good Friday								
30	S											
31	S			Easter Sunday								BST BEGINS