

FEBRUARY 2024

PREAMBLE



*Photo credit: The Wildlife Trusts*

Wildflower of the Month – Snowdrop (blossoms around 2<sup>nd</sup>), then Crocus (flowers around 14<sup>th</sup>).

Flower of The Month: Primrose.

Tree of The Month: The Rowan up to 17<sup>th</sup>, then Ash.

Full Moon this Month: Snow Moon.

"Fundamentalism (of any kind) troubles me. The world is too big and too intricate to conform to our ideas of what it should be like. In my experience I've found that most fundamentalists aren't so much attached to their professional ideologies as they are to the way in which these ideologies try to make sense of a confusing world. But the world is confusing, and just because we invent myths and theories to explain away the chaos were still going to live in a world that's older and more complicated than we'll ever understand". Moby

## February 2024

Welcome to the February 2024 website entry. Thank you so much to all those who have reached out to me with your well wishes, advice and questions. It has been an immense pleasure to speak with so many of you, and I am thrilled that you are all enjoying the new website. Rest assured I have indeed listened to all the feedback, and this Spring will be taking my website from 'pilot' mode into 'final' mode. Thank you for your input and patience. I am also thrilled that so many of our Nature Detectives and Weather Wizards have enjoyed making their rain gauges over January and look forward to seeing their 'cloud/ bird spy frames' this month.

### Now the collated expert notes on February:

FEBRUARY - tends overall to be a fairly quiet, dry, and moderately cold month. The term 'Filldyke' applied to February (from February filldyke saying) is an exhortation, not a reference to its excessive rainfall. When the late January and early February storms have finished, that may not be until 4th February, the weather becomes gradually colder. Buchan places his first cold period of the year at 7 – 14th February and in Europe, the spell 7 -13th has been called 'after winter.' Over a 100-year average at Greenwich Observatory, the 11th produces the month's coldest day and 11 -12th produces the coldest night. Severe freezing/icing is not unknown either. Such cold spells however do not occur with the regularity of the stormy periods with a percentage regularity of some 60%, though in most years the North of England & Scotland usually gets some heavy falls of snow around the middle of the month. There is usually a short period of mild unsettled weather around 16 – 20th February, followed by a short return to colder conditions during 21 -25th February, though this is seldom unduly severe. Finally, the last few days of the month return to mild but mainly stormy weather. February is a damp month with the least natural evaporation of the whole year too.

The wind direction for the UK on 21<sup>st</sup> December (St Thomas'/quarter day/equinox/shortest day of the year) was affected by Storm Pia. Therefore, we had to wait for 24 hours before assessing again – a small but vital caveat in the methodology. Much to my surprise we determined the wind to be coming from a SW direction as it was on November 11<sup>th</sup> (I was expecting an E/ESE wind). Therefore, the predominant wind direction for most of the UK will be SW up to the next wind day on March 21<sup>st</sup> (St Benedict) the exception being the far north who were under the influence of a NW air flow (as it was on November 11<sup>th</sup>). The SW wind brings warmer wetter air from the Atlantic, and indeed December and the first six days of January were ridiculously warm. A classic "quirky" spell of UK weather. We saw an enormous amount of rain, and as such I extend my deepest sympathies to all who have been affected by the recent flooding. My grandmother's house was liable to flooding, and I fully understand the misery, stress and struggle such flooding brings.

January 7<sup>th</sup> onwards the dry, cold, bright and frosty weather began as predicted (albeit running 7 days late). This will continue throughout the rest of January and happily, February 2024 is set to be mainly dry, with a continuation of January's bright, clear and frosty weather.

## My Notes:

### January review:

I predicted New Years Day would be dry, cold and frosty. As noted above, the dry, cold and frosty weather was running 7 days late but indeed did arrive here, and by January 8<sup>th</sup> we had an afternoon and evening of light snow in Dorset. I was thrilled to see the cold and frosty weather arrive; it is brilliant news for livestock owners since it ensures two good hay harvests this year. I see the weather bureaux are now forecasting further snowfall and bitter cold in the usual Northern regions this week (w/c: 15<sup>th</sup> January). This snowfall and bitter cold North of the Humber were predicted and published live on my website in November 2023. Further proof that David's methodology continues to be ahead of the curve. For the rest of us - as predicted the odd smattering of snow could crop up almost anywhere (as indeed it already has for us in Dorset on January 8<sup>th</sup>), but there will be nothing significant south of the Humber. The East of Anglia and the tip of Thanet in Kent may see something more significant, but in the main – no snow, certainly not enough to worry about.

### February:

We will enjoy more clear, bright, frosty days throughout February, and if cold enough snow around February 24<sup>th</sup> for the usual northern regions. As above, south of the Humber there will be nothing of significance, although a smattering of snow could pop up almost anywhere. The main theme of February 2024 will be cold, frosty and fair. How lovely.

From February 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> we do have the potentially dangerous combination of a super moon, perigee and highest tides. For far Northern regions we also know that both recent wind days (November 11<sup>th</sup> and December 21<sup>st</sup>) a NW wind was recorded on both occasions. All the elements are in place for a natural disaster of some kind. Forewarned is forearmed, it is no good waiting for the weather bureaux telling you a problem may arrive a few days before the event. This is your warning – it is not there to frighten you, but to help you be prepared for any possible problems that could arise.

So in summary, a bright, cold and frosty month, with the possibility of snow around February 24<sup>th</sup> in the usual northern regions, and possible smatterings for almost all of us around then. Nothing significant south of the Humber is expected. Overall, a dry month too - a welcome relief for all, I am sure.

The methodology and the data sheets, when working a whole year ahead will tell near enough to the day when bitter cold, and or snow will arrive. Our forefathers were very clever and capable. They observed and noted every small detail that nature, and the moon provided them with and as such were able to plan for all weathers. David spent a further 40 years perfecting this methodology and it has a proven track record of delivering a minimum of 90% accuracy. As I sit here on January 14<sup>th</sup>, with all the weather bureaux predicting 'snow bombs' and 'big freezes' for almost all of us, I must put my faith in the methodology – I trust it to deliver.

Waxwings irrupted into the UK in huge numbers this year and have been spotted virtually all over (the first sighting in Dorset this morning (15/01) too! The last major irruption took place in winter 2012/13. If you are keen on seeing these beautiful birds for yourself, you can look at reported sightings here:

[www.birdguides.com/sightings](http://www.birdguides.com/sightings) to inform your birdwatching locations. For those of you that haven't managed to see any waxwings, neither have I! Instead, we can enjoy the beautiful photo below, taken by my dad.

When waxwings arrive here in great numbers, snow tends to follow them. Interesting. It makes sense when I recall March 2013.



*Photo Credit: Trevor Eldridge (my dad) 😊*

Ivy has caught my interest no end so far this year! Ivy leaves are waterproof and windproof. On a windy day put your hand behind the branches and see how still and protected it is. The Ivy is a perfect winter hotel for smaller birds (sparrow, wren, dunnock, tits, finches, and robins). Being the sole nectar bearing plant over winter ivy also hosts insects, therefore meaning the birds have warmth, cover, water from the moisture on leaves, and food in the form of small black berries (and the live insects). Ivy will replenish its fruit at least twice, and more during hard winters. Today I captured the below photo illustrating all generations of this winter's Ivy fruits, hence the inclusion on this month's website entry.



## Met Office

2023: It's officially a white Christmas/ 2023: The warmest year on record globally

<https://news.sky.com/story/its-a-warm-christmas-but-snow-is-falling-for-some-13037495>

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/press-office/news/weather-and-climate/2024/2023-the-warmest-year-on-record-globally>

The Met Office now classify a white Christmas as “one snowflake to be observed falling in the 24 hours of 25th December somewhere in the UK”. How ridiculous. Temperatures did not fall below 12.4c at both Exeter Airport and East Malling in Kent between 09:00am on Christmas Eve and the same time on Christmas day. The temperature hit 13.6c at Exeter Airport later in the day. However, 2023 was officially a ‘white Christmas’ after Tulloch Bridge and Aviemore in Scotland recorded a mixture of rain and snow on Monday afternoon.

The Met Office has announced 2023 was the warmest year on record globally. When looking at the UK in isolation, 2023 wasn't the hottest year on record. 2022, followed by 2014 were the hottest years for us when analysing records dating back to 2000.

The Met Office go on to say that “2024 temperature forecasts shows this year has strong potential to be another record-breaking year”.

Just to alleviate any concerns, there is nothing in the methodology to suggest a baking hot, dry, wildfire type summer. Initial evidence suggests we will get a wet spring, at least four decent summer weeks and an extremely cold, long and hard winter.

### CUT THE CRAP!!!

Nearly 100 beaches along England's South coast have been hit with a deluge of sewage after Storm Henk hit the region. Coastal waters off popular tourist spots including Hove, Folkstone and Newquay were among those affected. Real time data provided by water companies shows that sewage has been dumped into the sea for days at a time, making the waters unsafe for swimmers. Similarly, Thames Water dumped sewage into rivers at over 270 separate locations during Storm Henk.

Most of Britain relies on a "combined sewage system" which is basically antique and dates all the way back to the Victorian era. During times of exceptional rainfall, water companies are permitted to discharge untreated sewage into bodies of water through points known as combined sewer overflows (CSOs). One of the longest ongoing discharges included a 154 hour session (an over six day release) from a CSO off the coast of Southwick near Brighton.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/south-coast-beaches-sewage-storm-henk-2837659>

<https://inews.co.uk/news/criminal-probe-catastrophic-sewage-pipe-discharge-2841550>

All this whilst Shareholders of these water companies received their share of £965 million in dividends and even worse, the real sewage scoundrels (the CEO'S) took home a combined total of £16.5 million during financial year 2021/2022. CUT THE CRAP!!! The current state of the water quality in the UK stinks, but the tide is turning. With a general election coming up we have the power to insist on seeing the end of sewage pollution at the top of the agenda.

<https://waterquality.sas.org.uk/>

## **NOTES FROM DAVID KING FROM WEATHER WITHOUT TECHNOLOGY**

I have spent another lovely day with David and my family again today, and he has very kindly put together the below notes for your perusal. Thank you, David! The website wouldn't be the same without your voice.

### **FLOODING**

The latest report on flooding by Environment Agency (EA) inspectors reveals that the proportion of critical assets in disrepair since 2018 has trebled leaving thousands of homes and businesses more vulnerable to storms. Critical assets are defined as where there is a high risk, to life and property if they fail. The east of England from Suffolk, Bedfordshire to Essex, has the highest proportion of rundown defences, some 850 are considered poor or very poor. In the east Midlands, ravaged recently by Storm Babet, the defences in the worst condition have doubled in the last five years. The North West together with the East of England are so damaged as to be considered useless, more than 815 such defences, up from 1 in 16 to 1 in 11 in 2022. In the West Midlands it has risen from 1 in 44 to 1 in 14 since 2018. Experts say that the situation will get worse since funding and budget short falls has forced the EA to axe a quarter of the projects. It is described by some as a 'grim and desperate picture'. A National Audit Office report in December 2023 stated that the EA pledged to protect 336000 properties from the risk of flooding by 2027; this has now been reduced to 200000. Furthermore the EA remove 500 of the new 2000 flood and coastal erosion projects included in its recent six year plan.

*EXTRACT TAKEN FROM THE GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER 01/01/2024.*

So, not a happy new year for so many.

Almost all of the UK'S waterways are polluted. In 2022, a House of Commons Committee report on the state of the UK rivers concluded that no river in England was free from chemical contamination. Only 14% of UK rivers had a "good" ecological status.

Both agricultural runoff and the release of untreated sewage are leading causes of river pollution in the UK. In 2021, untreated sewage was discharged into English waterways for more than 2.5 million hours.

The discharge of sewage has happened for several different reasons. A lack of investment in dated infrastructure means the capacity of many sewage pipes is regularly exceeded. So, to avoid sewage backing up and flooding public spaces and peoples homes, water companies often release sewage elsewhere through the combined [combined sewer overflow network](#).

Thames water have told customers that they are 'mending their ways', but it will take many years, interestingly too they have taken on another £2 million debt. More dividend payouts for shareholders then!

United Utilities downgraded 90% of their major outfall spills to low level, despite seriously polluting Lake Windermere, such reduction by the utility then did not warrant inspection by the DoE. This despite the CEO getting a handsome £ million bonus for excellent results.

The DoE in a recent parliamentary report only attended 9% of reported major outfall spills warranting their attendance in 2022. That left them failing to visit the other 90%. So, no progress and a regression on previous visits, It gets worse by the month, truly disgraceful indeed, if one were cynical (as if)!, one might hint at a conspiracy to downgrade the UK water supply by those empowered to inspect and control it.

Pollock fishing in the Southwest is in severe doubt, due to the species being downgraded and in need of conservation. Such a ban will cripple many fishing communities in the Southwest whose livelihood depends on such fish, plus too the small charter boats that go recreational fishing for these fish. What is the problem here in the UK that such fishers are penalised or is it a sign of the times?

Farmers, the rain, shortages and rising prices.

2023 for many UK farmers has been a very poor year indeed, yes, we always hear of farmers complaining of their lot, but this year truly not good. Sadly, too it affects us all with ever rising prices, shortages and more importantly many farmers calling it a day and withdrawing from the sector. We do not have enough younger farmers coming forward to replace these older vulnerable farmers who are leaving the industry, who die, retire, and sadly those who take their own lives. Who will husband our countryside, who will produce our vegetables, milk, grain, meat when they are gone? Can we consumers afford to pay ever escalating process for food, because here we cannot produce enough, and therefore have to import from across the world? Are we by importing such food, taking vital food from the mouths of those who produce it, who have even greater problems than we have here?

I start with potatoes last year we produced some six million tonnes of potatoes, this year just four million tonnes, a massive shortfall. A combination of high fertiliser prices, higher energy prices and higher wages and wet weather has reduced the staff and tonnage. The rain waterlogs fields, and the crop just rots in the field a complete loss to the grower.

We now have to import from such places as Egypt to help make up the shortfall, and that is very expensive, hence the rise of process in the shops, 10% in November alone, shortages inevitable too.

Brassicas too, cauliflowers have similar problems and lack of pickers, rain waterlogs the fields making it impossible for machinery to get working, again higher prices, and shortages.

Carrots and parsnips, so far, unaffected by the inclement weather, but come the real cold, when the ground freeze (as in February) it becomes impossible to raise the product from the soil, higher prices and shortages.

The milk and dairy industry are on knife-edge, how such stalwart farmers keep going is amazing. At one time a pint of milk and a bottle of beer were nearly the same. Now a litre of milk in supermarkets costs us 72 pence. Many willingly pay £5 for a pint of beer but bemoan £1.50 for a 2 litre carton of milk. Disgraceful.

Finally, to arable and grain. A bad year for these producers, again rain and then the dryness at the wrong times affected their crop volumes, both in quantity and quality. Now the winter wheat crop has been flooded, waterlogged and a complete loss. The prices of spring wheat are sky high too, therefore more shortages, and inevitably the price of everything that contains flour will rise.

I raise the above points to indicate that weather affects us all in the pocket. As we produce less then we must import more, but we also eat less vegetables due to such prices. There is no such thing as a free meal.

## February 2024

New Moon 9<sup>th</sup> @ 22:59 = Fair & Frosty  
1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Moon 16<sup>th</sup> @ 15:00 = Fair & Mild  
Full Moon 24<sup>th</sup> @ 12:30 = Snow if cold enough, else rain  
Last Quarter Moon 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 23:18 = Fair & Frosty

DoP = February 2<sup>nd</sup> – Candlemass (the name is derived from the ceremony when all the candles for use in the church for the year are taken to be blessed).

HIGHEST SPRING TIDES 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup>

Apogee 25<sup>th</sup> @ 14:59  
Perigee 10<sup>th</sup> @ 18:52

Full Moon is known as SNOW MOON

MET OFFICE NOTES: 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> Stormy

BUCHAN NOTES: 7<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> Cold Period

### Monthly Notes & Comments

1 <sup>st</sup>	St Bridgit	If white every ditch full
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Candlemass	aka as Purification Day of BVM. Day of Prediction. Cold weather at Candlemass means colder weather after the feast than before. Snowdrop blossom day
6 <sup>th</sup>	St Dorothea	Gives most snow
10 <sup>th</sup>		Perigee @ 18:52
12 <sup>th</sup>	St Eulalie's	If sun today, then good for apples and cider. 12 <sup>th</sup> to 14 <sup>th</sup> see below.
13 <sup>th</sup>	Shrove Tuesday	So as the sun shines on Pancake Tuesday, the like will shine every day in lent. Thunder on shrove Tuesday foretelleth wind, store of fruit and plenty. When the sun is shining on shrovetide day it is meant well for peas and rye.
14 <sup>th</sup>	St Valentine/ Ash Wednesday	Crocus blossom time Where the wind lies today, it will remain for all of lent. A dry lent spells a fertile year.
18 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent	Weather before noon foretells October, weather after noon that of September.
22 <sup>nd</sup>	St Peter	If cold will last longer - the night gives 40 days weather.
24 <sup>th</sup>	St Mathias	St Mattee send sap up tree (usually indicates an early spring). If freezing today so for a month.
25 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent	Apogee @ 14:59
28 <sup>th</sup>	St Romanus	Bright and clear, indicates a good year.

### General Notes and Comments

February was introduced into the Roman calendar by Numa Pompilius when the calendar was extended for ten to twelve. The month comes from the word februs – which means cleansing or purification, and reflects the rituals undertaken before spring.

Candlemass was the name given to the day when all the candles in the church were collected and blessed; some say it was also protection from plague and famine.

The snowdrop, in purest white array, first rears her head on candlemass day.

The warmest days in the preceding June give the coldest days on the identical dates the following February.

Shortest and worst of all months.

If Candlemass Day be clear and bright, winter will have another flight.  
But if it be dark with clouds and rain, winter has gone and will not come again.  
If Candlemass be mild and gay, go saddle your horse and buy them hay as half the winters to come this year. This day is a very reliable day for wind up to the end of May. This Quarter Day is not however a true 90 day span as are the other three such Quarter days. Therefore as a Quarter Day it requires more caution.  
Where-ever the wind on Candlemass Day, there 'twill stay to the end of May.

A snow cover in February protects the land from the worst excesses of frost and snow, and a slow thaw gently releases the water into the ground. A sudden thaw accompanied by heavy rain is one of the most damaging of weather combinations. [causing at times severe flooding]

February always brings the rain and the thaws the frozen lakes again.

Much February snow, April summer doth show. [yes 4/5 times true]

A month with snow means spring will be fine.

If freezing on the 24th - will continue for a month, St Mathias breaks the ice, if none, he breaks it.

A sunny February brings wet and stormy summer.

February filldyke, be it black or be it white, but if it be white, 'tis better to like.  
[regardless of snow or rain, the ditches will usually fill during February.]

In February if thou hearest thunder, thou shalt see a summer wonder.

Dry February, dry summer.

A warm day in February is a dream of summer.  
February spring ain't worth a pin.

On Candlemass Day if thorns be a-drop you can be sure of a good pea crop.  
[peas are picked in June which implies a good period]

When drops hang on the fence at Candlemass, icicles will hang on 25th March.

When the wind's in the east, it will stay to the 2nd of May.  
If a storm then spring is near, but if bright and clear then spring is late.

If Candlemass Day do bluster and blow, winter is over, as all do know.

All the months of the year curse a fair Februar.

If February brings no rain, 'tis neither good for grass or grain.

February makes a bridge (of ice) and March breaks it.

As the days lengthen so the cold strengthens.

Warm February gives light hay crop, cold February gives heavy hay crop.

Snow in February puts wheat in the granary.

February snow burns the corn.

If the last 18 days of February are wet and the first 10 days of March are mainly rainy, then spring quarter and summer too, will prove wet too. If dry then watch out for drought conditions in the summer.

AND

From local figures of the above February and march dates if the combined rainfall is less than 100mms, then the drought possibility is much higher, A refined calculation.

There will be a deficiency of rain up to Midsummer day.

Fogs in February means frosts in May.

There will be as many frosts in June as fogs in February.

February is a damp month, not because of high rainfall, but because of low evaporation rate.

Often a month of intense cold, as the thermometer falls and the crimson sun sits in an open sky.

A time of burst pipes, and, in a good year, of skating.

So, if you are to have a good summer, alas, February will need to be a cold wet miserable month.

See reference to St Catherine - 25th November.  
[At St Catherine, foul or fair, so 'twill be next Februir.]

When hottest in June - coldest in the following February.[check June readings]

In August, so next February. [check August readings - but what relevance?]

Warm October - cold February. [check readings]

If late October and early November be warm and rainy, then January and February will be frosty and cold. [ check previous readings.]

With every thunder with rain in February, there will be a cold spell in May.

Isolated fine days in February are considered as certain to be followed by a storm.

A dry Lent spells a fertile year.

THE FULL MOON THIS MONTH IS KNOWN AS THE SNOW MOON.

ROWAN is the tree of the month up to 17th. Then ASH takes over.

SNOWDROP is the wildflower of the month up to 14<sup>th</sup>, then CROCUS takes over.

PRIMROSE is the flower of the month.

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 T				St Brigid								
2 F	3Q @ 23.18	Fair & Frosty	DoP		Candlemass							Snow Drop blossom day.
3 S												
4 S												
5 M												
6 T				St Dorothea								
7 W									Cold period			
8 T									Cold period			
9 F	New Moon @ 22.59	Fair & Frosty							Cold period	Super Moon		Natural disaster potential
10 S							Perigee: 18:52		Cold period			Natural disaster potential
11 S									Cold period		Highest	Natural disaster potential
12 M				St Eulalies					Cold period		Tides	
13 T				Shrove Tuesday					Cold period		11th - 13th	
14 W				Ash Wednesday	St Valentine				Cold period			Crocus blossom time
15 T												
16 F	1Q @ 15.00	Fair & Mild										
17 S												
18 S				1st Sunday of Lent								
19 M												
20 T												
21 W												
22 T				St Peter								
23 F												
24 S	Full Moon @ 12.30	Snow & Rain		St Mathias				Stormy		Micro Moon		
25 S				2nd Sunday of Lent			Apogee - 14:59	Stormy				
26 M								Stormy				
27 T								Stormy				
28 W				St Romanus				Stormy				
29 T												