

# Indigenous UK Weather is born!

To David's ever faithful readership,

Please be assured, this new situation is extremely weird for me too. A genuine mix of utter sorrow that David will eventually be stepping away from the website, mixed with total excitement and joy that David has entrusted me with taking the methodology forward (it is the honour of a lifetime which I am extremely aware of). Throw in a side dish of fear that I can never live up to David's extraordinarily high standards - that's where I am currently! We do have to start somewhere though, so let's make a start...

I am Lesley, and I am here to ensure David's life's work isn't left to 'wither on the vine'. I am an indigenous weather enthusiast, and David's biggest fan. David's new editor/ assistant is the best description really. The methodology is and will always be David's. The methodology/ data and forecasts will continue to be free for all. Like David, I have no objection to anyone using data from this website, but I will ask that if any such data is used then you name the source in full. Thank you so much.

Looking back, my passion for nature all began with my dad. Whilst growing up I watched my dad 'vibing with nature', bird watching and enjoying life's simple pleasures with complete admiration. My dad didn't have it easy, but in a manic world he found a quiet space to enjoy. Both of my grandparents were also both huge nature enthusiasts. They would spend hours showing me endless photos of flowers and plants they had captured on camera, and my Grandad Fred was a very well thought of Horticultural Judge. Nature was always a constant in my life from the get-go.

In 2008 I was lucky enough to go on a once in a lifetime backpacking adventure with my husband. We were walking through an ancient rainforest in Australia, and the tour guide explained that the purpose of wildfires was in fact nature's way of regenerating an eco-system by killing insects and diseases that damage the forests. In addition, wildfires trigger new growth, therefore keeping the forests strong and healthy. I was blown away by the idea that everything in nature had a purpose, and that each event had a consequence that would trigger another series of events – absolutely everything is cyclical. After four months of exploring Australia, a wildlife lover was born. Me!

In 2010, 'the December to Remember', I drove to my mum's house in a blizzard to celebrate her 50th birthday (a 30-minute journey took 5 hours), I had the time of my life. All cards on the table – I LOVE snow! I will not be snow biased when forecasting, I will stick to the methodology no matter what, but it is out there – snow is my favourite of all the weathers! Alas all too rare in my neck of the woods (I live in East Dorset, and for your information, will always refer to everything East of Corfe Castle as the Southeast)!

From December 2010 onwards I started following the Met Office and 'Gav's Weather Vids'. My obsession with snow continued, and it all ultimately led me to Weather Without Technology. By chance I saw David on This Morning, and that day was clearly fated because look where we are! The 'Beast from the East' arrived right on schedule as David had

forecasted, and my obsession with snow was soon replaced for an obsession with indigenous weather. I have followed David's work ever since, I have read both books, a lot of his recommended reading and every website entry.

I grew up just outside London, and so would walk the river Thames every day, taking photos which, I would sometimes send to David (particularly if I had found extra tall hog weeds in June – or any other obvious hard winter indicators). David would always email me back with interesting content. I used to get so excited when I received David's emails and would try and explain to my husband it was to me the equivalent of David Ginola emailing him about the latest Tottenham game! Walking in nature fast became a vital part of my day, which I thoroughly needed and would crave to set me up for the day ahead.

In May 2023 I took the plunge and moved to Dorset. Not an easy decision to take, but easily the best decision we have ever made. Now we get to walk in beautiful heathland and countryside. I am also a regular visitor of the New Forest and the beach (weekly at minimum) and feel truly blessed every single day. I absolutely LOVE where we live.

The first time I saw a badger my heart skipped a beat, and then later that week I saw a seal! These were both firsts for me, and a great week it was too until I read David's October website entry! Of course, I emailed David right away to express my sincere sorrow that the website would be no more. Where would I go now to continue my learning? Who would be there to inspire my children? Of course, David received 1000s of e-mails of this nature, so much so that for the first time ever David had to create a 'template reply' to work from. This might have been a surprise to David, but it was no surprise to me – David is a national treasure.

Being the true gentlemen that he is, David agreed to support me should I wish to start a website of my own, for of course he too liked the idea of his life's work not being left to 'wither'. We spoke, shared information, and then arranged to meet. Since we have walked, talked, and shared meals together (with my family also). I have learnt so much and made a friend for life. David is even more kind than he is clever, which says a lot as the man is a genius! David brought books for my children (who adore him), brought round an entire library for me which he referred to as 'light reading' (ha)! David has taught me more than I could have ever learnt if I had studied at PHD level! He is truly a gentleman, and my heart will be forever grateful to him. He changed my life for this Londoner became a country girl thanks to his work, and my life is all the fuller for it. Additionally, my children get to grow up enjoying a life of outdoors adventures. To me this is priceless. Since working closely with David on the website transition, no one has ever been kinder, or more generous with their time than David has been to me and my family. He has been an incredible mentor to me, and words could never truly express how very grateful I am for everything he has done for me. Thank you, David. My gratitude is eternal, and I will spend the rest of my working life trying to make you proud. One day in the future when I am ready to retire, I will repay the same kindness you have shown to me and in turn this website will be passed on to the worthiest candidate. Maybe it will be one of our 'Little Oaks Nature Detectives' thirty years from now?

Speaking of which, I am a mum to two beautiful children (8 & 11) and am a kinship carer to my niece (14). As such my life revolves around them, and they are very much part of all the walks I take each day. With David's permission I have added a new section to the website called 'Little Oaks Nature Detectives'. All my favourite family times happen out in nature, and I hope to inspire a few of you to take your little ones out on your explorations. Nature is so amazing for both children's mental and physical wellbeing. Nature provides endless opportunities for playing and learning, and best of all it is free which helps no end given the current cost of living crisis.

I am a member of Dorset Wildlife Trust and Surfers Against Sewage. I am an indigenous weather enthusiast, not an expert like David, nor do I have 40 years' experience (just five years hobby experience). I will make mistakes; I will learn as I go. Bear with me, be patient with me. Thank you. On the plus side David will support me for as long as he can, so I won't be putting out total 'mumbo jumbo'.

I will begin forecasting in January 2024, after David's last website entry is complete, as I have no reason to upload anything whilst an expert is still at work. From then on, I will upload quarterly and monthly forecasts in the same way that David did, forecasting weather 90 days in advance and giving guidelines for up to 180 days in advance where possible.

The three greatest people I ever met told me "Life's what you make it". Let's make it fun, happy and interesting then! I am so excited to continue learning with you.

Best wishes  
Lesley



"A SOCIETY GROWS GREAT WHEN OLD MEN PLANT TREES WHOSE SHADE THEY KNOW THEY SHALL NEVER SIT IN"  
Greek Proverb