

Advance prediction Winter 2024 (December to March)



Photo credit due to Trevor Eldridge

Species of the Season: The Robin

*“When it snows, you have two choices:
shovel or make snow angels.”
Unknown*

Welcome to the Winter 2024 website entry.

Here at the Indigenous UK Weather Towers, we differ from the accepted definitions of the seasons of the year to better reflect the reality of the actual weather. As such our Winter runs from about November 20th and is divided into two parts. Early winter from November 20th lasting until around January 19th, during which any frosts that do occur seldom last more than a week and are usually briefer with stormy periods becoming increasingly frequent. We then go into late winter and early spring, which starts around January 20th and lasts until the end of March. Long spells of one type of weather or another are established during this late winter period, but they are of such widely differing types that sometimes this is the main period of winter, and in other years, this period is in nature more like early spring!

I will add here that whilst nearly totally ignored by all the weather bureaux here in the UK, the knowledge of the predominant wind direction on quarter/ wind days plays a huge part of the UK weather, whatever the season! On September 29th, Michaelmas, the wind for the majority of the UK was South Easterly. As such by December 21st (the next such wind day), or even by November 11th (St Martin's), the wind will have veered round to an Easterly direction – a far more potent wind direction.

For the Southwest, and South Wales generally, then the wind will be coming from a South Westerly direction – a wetter and milder wind.

From North Wales northwards, a Westerly wind, and as one approaches the lakes and hills of Cumbria, and Western Scotland – a North Westerly wind that will bring somewhat wet, and colder weather with snowfalls.

For the Eastern side, from Corfe Castle Eastwards, around the Southeast and up to East Anglia an Easterly cold, dry wind – getting progressively colder too.

Lincolnshire northwards to Northumberland, an Easterly wind with frost and snow showers.

From the borders to the tip of Scotland, Easterly/ North Easterly/ Northerly winds at times, cold and getting colder. Snow showers and more persistent snow is inevitable.

Northern Ireland and Eire, wet, windy, and colder than normal too. In some parts cold enough for a scattering of snow too.

For all readers everywhere: watch the weather on November 11th and confirm your wind direction and weather through to end of March at least. Look too at the November data sheet, look at the notes about the oak tree and acorns as this is a most reliable weather forecasting tool – nature knows best and is never wrong.

Another word of warning for everyone: With an Easterly segment predominating wind on the Eastern side of the UK on September 29th, this indicates strong, cold, winds, with snow for sure for many, coming from the near continent across the North Sea. However, should these cold winds collide with the warmer, wetter winds to the West of the UK, then not only will snow fall across Salisbury Plain, but on Exmoor, Dartmoor and Bodmin too. A few years ago, Lizard Peninsular had severe snowfalls – do not be surprised if there is a repeat this winter. Last winter was extremely mild and kind. This coming winter will be severe and cruel. There will be snow for most, likely all...

If it offers any consolidation, the methodology here shows Christmas day will be a dry cold day, sunshine for some – not all. Many too will have frozen snow underfoot from earlier snowfalls so very festive indeed! Not necessarily practical though as of course this means slippery roads, which may cause chaos for those travelling to see family – do take care. For the very vast majority of the UK, it will not be a white Christmas – no new snow will fall on Christmas day (although given the Met Office's new definition of a white Christmas

being a single snowflake falling somewhere in the UK then of course some areas will have a white Christmas on a technicality). Overnight frosts will be expected for all at this time.

To offer further consolation, with much the same conditions expected for New Years Eve/ Day, there will be no grass growing on January 1st which ensures a lot of grass and two hay harvests next year, so farmers can clap their hands.

If you would like to hear it from the man himself, Dave and I spent some time filming Episode 2 of Country Signs together on September 30th. This is now available for viewing on YouTube via the following link: <https://youtube.com/@indigeniousukweather>

Winter in the UK is a season that brings a unique charm, offering a blend of natural beauty and atmospheric moods that make it truly special. From frost covered landscapes in the countryside to the crisp, fresh air that sharpens the senses, winter creates a time for reflection and coziness. It's a season where ancient traditions like Yule and modern festivities like Christmas intertwine, adding a sense of warmth and community amidst the cold. The ever-changing weather – whether it's a covering of snow, a dramatic frost, or a crisp blue-sky day keeps nature interesting, offering a deeper connection to the great outdoors.

Wishing you a winter full of love, laughter, and happiness.

Lesley

Urgent Call for Reinstating Winter Fuel Payments Amid Forecasted Harsh UK Winter

Concerns are mounting over the impact of the government's decision to end winter fuel payments for all but the poorest of pensioners. For many vulnerable households, these payments have been a crucial lifeline during the coldest months. With energy prices still elevated and the removal of key support measures, the coming winter could be especially punishing for those pensioners already struggling with the cost-of-living crisis.

The methodology here suggests the UK is going to be facing one of its harshest winters in recent years. As temperatures are expected to drop dramatically, it is not just the chill in the air that will affect millions—but the strain on their finances as heating costs are predicted to soar. Without winter fuel payments, many households may be forced to choose between keeping their homes warm or covering other essential expenses.

The government's recent decision to limit winter fuel payments has been met with widespread criticism. Not only has it disproportionately affected elderly citizens, many of whom rely on these payments to offset rising energy bills, but it has also deepened the anxiety many feel as the winter months approach. Pensioners' groups and local community leaders have voiced their dismay, warning that this could lead to increased cold-related illnesses and a potential rise in excess winter deaths.

This policy shift comes at a time when fuel poverty is already a significant concern in the UK. According to recent estimates, millions of households are struggling with energy costs, and the removal of these payments will only exacerbate the problem. The Energy and Utilities Alliance has projected that, without sufficient support, more people will fall into severe fuel poverty this winter, particularly in regions with historically colder climates like Scotland and Northern England.

As someone deeply invested in weather lore and its predictive capabilities, I cannot stress enough how concerning the signs are for this coming winter. This is not simply a matter of personal opinion but is based on David's longstanding methodology that has reliably forecasted harsh winters in the past. Given these dire predictions, I do hope the government will reconsider its decision and reinstate winter fuel payments for the vulnerable people in society who depend upon them.

It is vital that the government prioritises the welfare of its citizens during this critical period. The health and safety of countless households depend on swift action. Ensuring that people have the resources they need to stay warm this winter should not be a matter of political debate but one of moral responsibility.

For further reading on this issue:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd6q7qxl9g8o>

<https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/winter-fuel-cut-payment-slump-support-starmer-labour-3309426>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-58090533>

Notes from Nature

Spring was early this year, following a persistent W/ SW wind. The volume of spring flowers the oak was bearing back in Spring was the first noticeable indication of what was ahead. Back in May we called out that there would be a bumper crop of acorns this year which has indeed proved to be true. The conker and cone trees too were clearly full to the brim. All fruits produced early blossoms, and cherries were forming on the trees in great numbers, pears, plums, apples, and green gages too. Nuts of every description were forming early on, and the seed bearing plants such as the hogweed were taller by the middle of June than they were fully grown the previous year.

In May we also commented that the Rowan, elder, spindle, hawthorn, blackthorn, holly and sorbus family all flowered early and were going to go on to produce masses of berries and fruits (which indeed they did). That was nature giving 180 days' notice of harder, colder times to come in late October/ and definitely by November. We also noticed insects burrowing into the underside of sessile oak leaves, as well as the early development of willow galls. By July we had noticed galls of every variety too. Galls are a sure banker of a hard winter, and weren't we truly blessed with their abundance this year? I have never seen such displays.

It was always going to be a damp summer with spells of sunshine. It was clear it was never going to be a prolonged BBQ summer. The hot days at the end of June were worth taking note of seeing as they correlate to the coldest days in February (also the month of lowest evaporation), as were the number of fogs we had in August (which later correlate to winter frosts). I am also now tracking all October fogs which will later correlate to snowfalls. By September, the summer was a long distant memory when the weather became wet and cooler. Nature in its wisdom ensured everything was running around a month ahead this year, due to the early cold winter that is ahead.

Squirrels have been working their socks off this year and were seen building secondary drays earlier in the year, and now are extremely busy gathering and storing acorns and nuts. The sheep are all wearing extra thick winter coats this year. During the first and second week of September David, myself, and many readers noticed Robins staking territory in their back gardens. We also noticed the dead nettles in the lanes/ hedgerows with white flower growths which contain and indeed protect the eggs of the tortoiseshell butterfly. The skins of English onions too are thick, strong, and hard.

On Michaelmas the wind direction for the vast majority of the UK was South Easterly. We also noticed during the marble gall collection for dissecting that there were still hundreds of marble galls on the trees (all of which ripened early). Everything points towards a hard winter with much snow before Christmas.

When looking at the moon phases, there are 29 moons from October to the end of April – the whole winter – of which 17 are snow or frost moons. The first snow moon is October 17th, so north of the Humber may well have their first snowfall around this date (everyone south of the Humber will still be cold rain at this point).

A large part of what we do is give advance warnings to farmers, growers, horticulturalists, and those that need to know what the weather is going to be doing for their occupation. You would be quite amazed at some of the people/ departments that get in touch with David for advance data, but for privacy reasons I cannot disclose this information. The point I am trying to make is that David has been doing this now for longer than the computer age, and his methodology is proven and trusted. Therefore, if he and me warn of problems ahead, we work as a team, it is no idle chatter. It is based on sound solid factual data that is a trusted source for many in high places.

We do not do daily forecasts, and if this is the type of information you seek, I suggest the Met Office who will do a far superior job. We are however excellent at providing weather trends 90 – 180 days in advance for those who require this data, essential users.

Sometimes, as this year, nature provides a bountiful supply of nuts, hips, haws, berries, seeds, fruits, and the like months ahead, for humans and the bird and animal kingdoms, then such instances should be noted, for nature is never wrong. The trees this year were weighed down with such gifts. Alas the squirrels and jays 'recycled/harvested most of the hazel nuts well before St Filberts picking day - yet another nature sign of a hard winter. We have also seen the recent explosion in spindle fruits. The signs are writ loud and clear.

THE WINTER SYNOPSIS

For those on the eastern side - from around Corfe Castle, coming east round Dover, up to the east coast of Scotland, by November 11th we will have an easterly wind. This wind is a strong, bitterly cold, dry wind that will be delivered from the continent. The first places to experience this cold will be Lincolnshire followed by Yorkshire, up to Northumberland and then the borders. Once we get over the borders the wind will change to the northeast who will bring in their cold air from Scandinavia.

On the west coast, from Corfe Castle running along the west country, up through south Wales to mid Wales the wind will be a west to southwest wind by November 11th and as such the wind will therefore be damper and warmer. From mid Wales up through Liverpool, Cheshire and to the lakes, again a westerly wind but at times the wind will come from a north-westerly direction which originates in Greenland and Iceland. A cold and wet wind which will deliver snowfalls at times. The extreme north of Scotland will get their cold wind from the Arctic.

When the easterly wind from the east, extends across Salisbury Plain, Exmoor, Dartmoor and Bodmin it will collide with the warmer, damper air in the southwest. This will create copious snow. David has called out the Lizard Peninsular, south Wales, the Brecon Beacons, and north Wales in particular at being at risk from copious snowfalls this winter.

We will all get snow this winter, with this winter starting around October 17th for those North of the Humber and will not end until the end of March.

I am expecting an early December storm to deliver a relative respite in cold during the first two weeks of December, before returning to a colder and frostier set up in time for Christmas. The last two weeks of December will be cold and frosty. Christmas day will be a dry, cold day, sunshine for some – not all. Some may have frozen snow underfoot from earlier snowfalls so very festive indeed! It is unlikely that we will see a white Christmas, although under the met office's new definition of a white Christmas being "a single snowflake falling somewhere in the UK", then of course yes somewhere will have a white Christmas on a technicality.

January will be a dry, calm, but cold month. The first two weeks we may even have a fair bit of sunshine, but it will be cold and frosty. It will get colder and colder until the ground is frozen. Around January 21st it will snow, the snow on the eastern side of the country will be dry powdery grains that form massive snowdrifts, for others it will be large flaked cold snow. All this snow will be falling on freezing cold, dry ground. It will lay and it will cause massive travel problems. I know the government always assure everyone they are prepared for hard winters, but honestly, they are barely prepared for heavy rain! Frozen ice will likely lay on overhead cables which has the potential to cause havoc with power supplies. Unfortunately, this is going to also give root farmers massive problems, and indeed cattle will need extra care. Once the snow is down, it will lay and freeze, then getting topped up by any subsequent falls.

February starts with a 'cold rain' moon, but I believe there is every chance this will simply be more snowfall. The cold conditions will certainly be established across the country at this stage, so this is likely to be another snow event.

If I am incorrect in my interpretation and 'cold rain' is delivered this will cause further issues as freezing rain is an extremely dangerous phenomenon, in which once the rain makes contact with the surface, it instantly freezes creating a sheet of ice and truly treacherous conditions. Do not underestimate how dangerous the roads will be if this scenario does arrive. It will for sure be best to stay home if you can whilst these conditions are at play. Honestly even walking is dangerous when freezing rain is part of the equation.

There will be yet more snowfalls around February 12th, after which February will remain very frosty and cold. It is also worth remembering we had some extremely hot days from 24th – 27th June, which will correlate to the coldest days in February. Given that we also end February with a frost moon it is reasonable to conclude that February will end on a truly bitter note, and of course it is the month of lowest evaporation.

We won't see much change in conditions until March 14th which brings a 'stormy moon', however when such cold conditions are already in place, as the warm air collides with the already established cold air, my interpretation of this would most likely be snowstorms and blizzards. The UK will become a 'battleground' between the cold air and the warmer air, and the colder air will initially win this battle. Cold weather and high winds (more blizzards) will be with us until well into March which is why I have included March as part of the winter website entry.

Cold rain will win the battle by April 5th, and indeed April will stay wet and cold, but the snow and frost will be behind us.

The sensible/safe/ and likely synopsis for me to forecast is that we are looking at a 'Beast from the East' type winter containing significant cold snaps, but this is not my interpretation this year. I believe we are more likely to see something akin to 1962/63. This doesn't mean day after day of snowfalls. I think there will likely be long stretches of time without any meaningful snowy spells in between, but due to the bitter cold when snow does fall it will stay, lay and freeze. I cannot see much opportunity for the snow to thaw until April. As such, it will feel like a very long, cold and hard winter indeed.

This is not only based on mine and David's observations, but also our many readers who have taken the time to e-mail us with their own observations. The consensus is for sure is that nature's preparations are indeed far more this year, than they were ahead of 'Beast from the East'.

A late, cold spring awaits. I paint a bleak picture, but nature has prepared for this, and David and I have warned for months. We are also well overdue a long, hard, cold winter.

Indeed, this is just our interpretation, and we can only ever have 90% confidence in our forecasts because variables come into the mix and cock things up from time to time. I do trust the methodology though; I prepare for the worst and hope for the best.

To summarise the winter 2024/25 will be very cold with snow and ice for most, nearly all, I fear. Detail for each month below:

DECEMBER 2024

The expert collated notes for December read as follows: "December starts with a relatively warmer period from the 3rd - 14th, as discovered by Alexander Buchan the Victorian meteorologist. Certainly, in the south of England this claim has some justification producing much warmer weather than between mid-December and Christmas, but the difference is not marked. About a week of cold, relatively dry - though somewhat still and foggy weather does tend to develop just before Christmas and this makes the second half of the month colder than the first in most years. The average duration of this cold dry period is 18-24th December, with a peak around 19-21st. Night frosts are widespread during this period. Around 25th commences one of the most definite of all our weather spells. It has been called the 'post-Christmas storm,' occurring most years it lasts about a week from 25th to the 1st January with peak around the 28th December. Structural damage from such storms is generally considerable. December starts mild, but, as the month progresses it gets colder before the end of the month with widespread snow often following the mild start in Scotland and northern England. This snow may reach East Anglia and the Midlands in some years, but seldom the southern and western areas to any great extent, where floods are more frequent at this time than blizzards."

To summarise: December will start with an early storm delivering a brief respite in cold during the first two weeks, before returning to a colder and frostier set up in time for Christmas. The last two weeks of December will be cold and frosty. Christmas day we be a dry, cold day with some sunshine. Some will have snow underfoot from earlier snowfalls so a very festive feel indeed. Not a white Christmas for the very vast majority of us.

DECEMBER 2024

New Moon = 1st @ 06:21 = Stormy

1st Quarter Moon = 8th @ 15:26 = Fair & Mild

Full Moon = 15th @ 09:01 = Cold Rain

Last Quarter Moon = 22nd @ 22:18 = Fair & Frosty

New Moon = 30th @ 22:26 = Fair & Frosty

DoP: 21st St Thomas + Quarter Day (Vital Wind Day)/ Winter Equinox

Highest Spring Tides: 15th to 17th

APOGEE: 24th @ 07:24 PERIGEE: 12th @ 13:20

Geminids Meteor Shower: 13th & 14th/ Ursids Meteor Shower: 21st & 22nd/ Black Moon: 30th

Met Office Notes: 1st – 13th – Stormy Period/ 15th – 21st – Quiet Period/ 25th – 31st – Stormy Period

BUCHAN NOTES: 3rd – 14th: Warm Period

FULL MOON THIS MONTH IS KNOWN AS HUNTING MOON/ COLD MOON

JANUARY 2025

The expert collated notes for January read as follows: "January is on average the coldest month of the year in Britain. The coldest day is traditionally associated with 13th January – St Hilary, and in fact the three days 12-14th January do tend to bring cold temperatures to London, the Home Counties and SE England. Early January is a continuation of the December stormy weather after a break of a few days after the New Year, from 5-17th, in some years taking all this period. A cold spell often develops in mid-January, with a rapid decrease in storms. This is associated with a considerable rise in barometric pressure over central Europe, and, to a lesser extent over northern Europe. It is quite common over much of Britain and results in remarkable frost during some seasons. Towards the end of January barometric pressure generally begins to fall again, normally quite considerably too over most of Europe, leading in many years to quite stormy periods. On the average such times last about nine days from 24th January to the 1st February – even if there are one or two fine days in the middle. Typical weather is dull, mild, and wet, but not particularly cold. Many will recall the North Sea floods of 1953 that brought flooding, deaths, and destruction to much of the North Sea coastline, include the east of England, during this late January period."

To summarise: January will be a dry, calm, but cold month. The first two weeks will be cold and frosty with sunny spells at times. It will get colder and colder and until the ground is frozen. Around January 21st we will have our first snowfall of the year and the snow will settle and freeze. Any further snowfalls will top up snow already laying on the ground. A further snow event will take place around January 29th. Travel disruption is to be expected as well as problems for root farmers. In addition, cattle will require extra care.

JANUARY 2025

1st Quarter Moon = 6th @ 23:56 = Fair & Frosty

Full Moon = 13th @ 22:26 = Fair & Frosty

Last Quarter Moon = 21st @ 20:30 = Snow if cold enough, else rain

New Moon = 29th @ 12:35 = Snow if cold enough, else rain

DoP: St Paul – 25th

Highest Spring Tides: 29th – 31st

APOGEE: 21st @ 04:54 PERIGEE: 8th @ 00:01

Quadrantids Meteor Shower: 2nd & 3rd

Met Office Notes: 5th – 17th – Stormy Period/ 18th – 24th – Quiet Period/ 25th – 31st: Stormy Period

BUCHAN NOTES: None

FULL MOON THIS MONTH IS KNOWN AS WOLF OR OLDMOON/ MOON AFTER YULE

FEBRUARY 2025

The expert collated notes for February read as follows: "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/ice 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.

To summarise: February may start with cold rain, but I believe it is even more likely to be snowfall. If cold rain does materialise this will almost certainly create a treacherous condition known as 'freezing rain' and if this condition does materialise then it is highly recommended to stay home if possible. There will likely be further snowfalls around February 12th, after which the conditions will remain very cold and frosty with a particularly bitter cold months end.

FEBRUARY 2025

1st Quarter Moon = 5th @ 08:02 = Cold Rain

Full Moon = 12th @ 13:53 = Snow if cold enough, else rain

Last Quarter Moon = 20th @ 17:32 = Fair

New Moon = 28th @ 00:44 = Frost

DoP = 2nd = Candlemass (this 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: 1st – 3rd AND 26th – 28th

APOGEE: 18th @ 01:10 PERIGEE: 2nd @ 02:47

Met Office Notes: 24th – 28th – Stormy Period

BUCHAN NOTES: Cold Period: 7th – 14th

FULL MOON THIS MONTH IS KNOWN AS SNOW OR ICE MOON/ HUNGER MOON

MARCH 2025

The expert collated notes for March read as follows: "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 1st - 2nd and 6th - 9th March, with Scotland and northern parts of Britain receiving stronger winds than districts further south. By contrast, 12th - 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 17th - 25th March is the driest part of the year for the London area. There is a tradition of the equinoctial gales beginning on or near the 21st March. In fact, they do not normally affect Britain before 24th - 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 temperatures 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.

To summarise: The beginning of March through to March 14th will be bitterly cold, frosty, and dry with some sunny spells. Around March 14th we will bring in a storm which will likely bring copious snowfalls and blizzard conditions with it, particularly in the southwest. Bitter cold and strong winds are likely to continue well into March, potentially causing further snowdrifts and travel chaos. By April 5th the freezing cold and snowy conditions will be behind us (however it will still be cold and wet).

MARCH 2025

1st Quarter Moon = 6th @ 16:31 = Fair

Full Moon = 14th @ 06:54 = Stormy

Last Quarter Moon = 22nd @ 11:29 = Cold & High Winds

New Moon = 29th @ 10:57 = Cold & High Winds

March Equinox = 20th

St Benedict & Quarter Day = 21st

Highest Spring Tides: 29th – 31st

APOGEE: 17th @ 16:36 PERIGEE: 1st @ 21:21 PERIGEE: 30th @ 06:25

BST Begins: 30th

Met Office Notes: None BUCHAN NOTES: None

FULL MOON THIS MONTH IS KNOWN AS FULL WORM MOON OR SAP MOON OR SUGARING MOON OR CROW MOON OR STORM MOON.