

FEBRUARY 2025

PREAMBLE



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

Flower of The Month: Primrose

Tree of The Month: The Rowan up to 17th, then the Ash

Full Moon this Month: Snow Moon

"Late February days; and now, at last, might you have thought that winter's woe was past; so fair the sky was and so soft the air."

William Morris

February 2025

A Warm Welcome to February's Website Entry!

January certainly made an impression, bringing a significant cold spell across the United Kingdom. Temperatures plunged well below freezing, and many regions saw substantial snowfall. On January 5th, heavy snow caused widespread disruption, and by January 10th, the UK had recorded its coldest January night in fifteen years. This extreme cold led to school closures, hazardous travel conditions, and increased health risks.

A huge thank you to everyone who took the time to send in their photos, I've included as many as possible on the following pages!

The UK Health Security Agency extended an amber health alert across England, emphasizing the dangers for vulnerable populations. We have been warning about this winter since June 2024, and in our October 2024 winter website entry, we specifically cautioned against the removal of winter fuel payments. Sadly, our concerns fell on deaf ears, and countless vulnerable pensioners have had to endure punishing conditions. This underscores the UK's vulnerability to extreme winter weather and highlights the urgent need for better preparedness.

Although the final half of January was milder, the mean Central England Temperature for January 2025 will still close out over a degree colder than the 1991 - 2020 average, a testament to just how bitter the first half of the month truly was. In fact, it is looking as though we will even close out the month around half a degree below the 1961 – 1990 average which is quite remarkable when you think about it. Dave too has collated his own local figures, and even in the 'balmy Southeast' (Edenbridge), they have experienced the coldest mean January temperature in 12 years, and the 7th coldest since 1985 at just 3.7c! It would be easy to think that winter has since whimpered out like a lamb, but there's more to that story later in this update!

Exciting January News!

January also marked a personal milestone for me. I finally 'manned up' and did my first radio interview! Naturally, Dave was by my side. A huge thank you to Radio Wimborne for having us, it was important to me that my first radio interview was with my local radio station, and it was a brilliant first experience for me. You can listen to the interview from January 9th here: podcast.canstream.co.uk/wimborne/audio/wimborne_09-01-25_4-12_1736424001.mp3

We also recorded our latest edition of 'Country Signs', which you can find here: <https://youtu.be/NxQ9xoPd9CY?si=pCk1zGuCsCpWMS4v>

In other exciting news, our first Book Club Meeting is happening tomorrow (January 31st) and we're so excited to see you all there!

A New Chapter for Dave and Me

As many of you know, Dave announced his retirement at the end of 2023, and I stepped in as his apprentice. Over the past year, we've spoken almost daily, walked together monthly, and become not just colleagues, but great friends too! In fact, Dave even joined me and my extended family for Boxing Day 2024, which was so lovely.

I've learned more from Dave in one year than I have in my entire life, and I'll be forever grateful. This journey has been truly life-changing, and I couldn't imagine doing it alone. However, as I approached the one-year mark, I realized something: I was only scratching the surface of Dave's vast knowledge, and I was only doing half of the work.

Dave's looming retirement and the thought of continuing this alone filled me with dread. So, after some honest conversations (first with myself, then my husband, and finally with Dave), we reached the best possible outcome:

We are now officially working together as a team!

You may have noticed small changes on the website to reflect this new arrangement. I'm best suited to admin, social media, and bringing this to a younger audience, while Dave excels at hard-hitting journalism, deep research, and maintaining our weather data. He's also a natural media man with that rustic charm of his!

So, I hope you'll all join me in thanking Dave for his unwavering commitment. We're in this together, and my hopes for this project have grown tenfold.

A Passion, Not a Business

The commitment required for a website like this is huge, but we do it because we love it. This isn't a business – it's a hobby, a passion, and a project we care deeply about. We don't advertise, sell services, or try to make money from this in anyway. There's no hidden agenda – just a genuine love for weather, nature, and traditional forecasting methods.

Dave built this forecasting methodology, and I built the website and social media channels. We both pour our heart and soul into this because it's important to us, and seeing this wonderful community grow is reward enough. The community is what makes this website truly special – so, as always, thank you for all of your input. We hope that as a collective, we can all do our bit in helping our younger generations fall back in love with the spectacular world around us. By doing so, we ensure the future of planet is protected, while also showing our peer generations that technology, and hundreds of millions of pounds per annum are simply not required for giving accurate, advanced forecasts – nature is far cleverer than any technology the experts have ever managed to create!

Social Media & Community Updates

After using these platforms for about eight weeks now, I have made some decisions.

Instagram, I have found to be perfect for photos, videos, and behind-the-scenes moments from my walks and weather adventures. You can follow us [here](#).

YouTube, I have found to be excellent for in-depth weather insights, nature forecasting, and educational content. You can subscribe [here](#)!

Our Facebook Group, the true heart of our community! We chat about weather, nature, and forecasting, and I absolutely adore this group. If you'd like to join, email: indigenusukweather@outlook.com

Our Facebook Page, however, I've struggled to find its purpose or value. As such I will keep it live as a signpost but won't be active on it anymore. If you want to engage, please join us in the places we love the most!

We're so close to our final winning formula! Haha! Thank you for your patience whilst we have been working out the details.

February's Photographers of the Month

I couldn't choose between two stunning photos this month, so we have two winners!

Jim Bishop from Somerset captured an incredible shot of a Sparrowhawk. Truly breathtaking!

Judy Woodward from London submitted a gorgeous photo of a fox equally deserving of the title.

Thank you both! These images are amazing, and I know our readers will love them as much as I do.

Looking Ahead to February

Dave has been a busy bee and put together a great selection of articles for you this month. Don't miss them on the following pages!

Additionally, I'm excited to introduce you to my friend Jim. Jim and I worked together 20 years ago and have stayed in touch ever since. His work in butterfly conservation is truly inspiring, and I wanted to highlight some of his contributions in this month's update. Even better, Jim has agreed to provide further updates throughout the year, which I'm sure you'll all enjoy!

As always, this is a community platform, so if you or someone you know is doing important work worth highlighting get in touch!

Final Thoughts

As February unfolds, we find ourselves caught between winters lingering grip and the first whispers of spring. While the cold will still bite, and more snow is on the way, nature is stirring, the buds on trees like black poplars are swelling, the birds are singing a little louder, and the days are stretching that bit longer.

February may challenge us with frost, snow and yet more cold, but let the stirrings of spring remind us that change is always on the horizon. Wrap up warm, keep watching the skies, and embrace the season.

And of course, don't forget your warm cup of tea and Vitamin D supplements!

Best wishes,

Lesley & Dave

Photographers of the Month – Jim Bishop
“Hawkward Stare”.



Jim managed to capture this incredible image of a Sparrowhawk in his garden, he is a regular visitor! Thanks so much for sending in this photo Jim, it is amazing!

Photographers of the Month – Judy Woodward

“Leaf Me Alone, I’m Hiding”.



Judy managed to capture this absolutely beautiful photo of a gorgeous fox in London. What a shot!! Well done Judy, this is absolutely brilliant and I know the fans will love it 😊.

HOW TO ESTABLISH THE WEATHER FOR YOUR LOCATION

There are several new readers to the website, and doubtless more from the recent interview on Radio Wimborne, and as such may wish to know how they can obtain a reasonable accurate advance weather forecast.

So, at the risk of raising the subject again, and asking for patience from regular readers, I re-iterate the process.

The methodology is tried, tested, and proven over several years development, and provided the details are accurately recorded (vital) then the expectation is to be able to get the weather predicting at a minimum of 90% working 90-180 days ahead.

So, first comes paper and pencil. On computer enter www.timeanddate.com. In the box provided enter your location, if this is not recognised then the nearest larger venue and press enter. A new page appears with all the details of your location. Along the top line press the sun, moon, and space heading. A new page appears with much local data including all the moon phases for your location for the current year. (If you wish to find such detail for, say, 2026, then, in the box provided, enter 2026 and such detail will appear and so on).

Now, with great care, note all the details of the four moons, an incorrect digit will render all your calculations wrong. So, having weather printed out or noted down this data is complete.

Now take this data to the attached moon lore, phases, and weather listing.

As an example: if the first quarter moon phase is 2356hrs then refer to the attached moon lore chart for the 2356hrs entry; this is in the 2200-2400hrs segment, and the weather indicated is fair and frosty. Therefore, for the duration of this moon this will be the weather until the next phase which will be the full moon at 2226hrs. Again, search the chart and find this time, again within the 2200-2400hrs segment and again the next moon phases is fair and frosty.

So, with great accuracy one can see in advance the weather for your location with great confidence and accuracy.

There is one major caveat here: we live on an island surrounded by water, and, as such, at times, completely unannounced and unpredictable 'quirky/freak,' weather occurs, this is unavoidable, but as soon as this ceases, then the prescribed weather chart data resumes.

MOON LORE, PHASES AND WEATHER

If, the new moon, First Quarter, Full moon, or Last quarter occur between the following hours, the weather here stated below is said to occur.

I determine, after many years' experiences and understanding, summer to be from 14th April to the 30th September. Winter commences on 1st October through to the 13th April.

In summer the definition of weather conditions is Fair = Dry, bright, sunny, warm and no wind. Cold & Showers = Just that, at any place and at any time. Changeable = Anything and everything. Rain = at any time and at any place but more persistent than showers.

In winter: Fair and mild = dry, calm, sunny and bright. Fair & frosty = cold frosty nights but cold dry sunny calm days. Snow, if cold enough, else rain = if cold enough - snow, otherwise cold rain.

IN SUMMER:

0000-0200hrs fair	0200-0400hrs = cold and showers
0400-0600hrs = rain	0600-0800hrs = wind and rain
0800-1000hrs = Changeable	1000-1200hrs = frequent showers
1200-1400hrs = very rainy	1400-1600hrs = changeable
1600-1800hrs = rain	1800-2000hrs = fair
2000-2200hrs = rainy	2200-2400hrs = fair.

IN WINTER:

0000-0200hrs = frost	0200-0400hrs = snow & stormy if cold enough, else rain
0400-0600hrs = rain	0600-0800hrs = stormy
0800-1000hrs = cold rain if wind north westerly	1000-1200hrs = cold and high winds
1200-1400hrs = snow if cold enough else cold rain	1400-1600hrs = fair and mild
1600-1800hrs = fair	1800-2000hrs = fair and frosty
2000-2200hrs = snow if cold enough else cold rain	2200-2400hrs = fair and frosty.

@David King

Edenbridge

10th January 2025

UK FARMER and GROWERS AND THE EFFECT OF ANY IMPORTATION OF MEAT FROM THE USA.

This website has a stated aim of supporting UK farmers and growers, and to this end, will continue to do so.

Having said that there is a problem looming by the day concerning trade between the USA and the rest of the world. The President elect, Mr Trump, has made it perfectly clear that he will, if necessary, raise tariffs across the board for every country wishing to export to the USA.

Included in such deals, will be negotiations concerning products produced here in the UK and widely exported to the USA. A classic example being the Scotch whisky industry, where any tariffs will prove both costly and diminish the work force even further (even without the unhelpful taxes imposed by the current UK government). The last Trump presidency resulted in the closure of some twenty such distilleries in Scotland. There are now some 180 and rising, small whisky distilleries across the north American continent, as such, a disincentive, unless one appreciates superb quality, to importing Scotch whisky.

Such deals as applicable to the UK might well include a deal on the importation of USA meat products, beef, chicken and pig meat as starters.

Let me make it perfectly clear that such importation would decimate at best, and possible destroy, much of the UK farming industry. This is no idle empty threat. Farmers here (despite the oft quoted sentence, when did you last see a poor farmer?) are in deep trouble, from a multitude of reasons. A government that backs the 'greening,' of valuable farming land, where in places it is financially better to grow flower meadows (inedible) than proper edible food. Where planting trees, again on valuable production land, where building on green belt of, again, valuable farmland, for houses, is now the priority, plus too the horrendous costs (ever escalating) of the HS2 rail line. The weather does not help with flooding, droughts and other disasters becoming more common. New taxes of many kinds too, about to be enacting by a non-rural government just about cap the plight of so many such farmers, growers and producers.

We also have a Prime Minister who says that importing such foods from the USA will not affect our relationship (with our largest market- despite Brexit) with the EU at all, and he sees no such problems.

I am not a political person, and avoid, where possible any such political comment; however, sometimes one must speak up and disagree with such comments as the last paragraph.

I start with the 'easiest' comment. If we import US meat products to the UK, then in an instant, the EU will impose their own sanctions on our excellent UK meat industry, and, as such a massive market across the EU will be lost, for ever.

The reason is very simple, but equally very important. The EU imposes strict hygiene, safety, production and welfare regulations on its producers, and the UK abides by such principles too.

These EU regulations are incompatible with US regulations, since the US has better weather, more land, more producers, but less stringent regulatory procedures, that in turn bring a lower standard of welfare, production, hygiene and safety from the production cycle.

Meat production in the US differs from UK and EU in many ways. However, in beef, the use of hormones, to stimulate growth, is common practice. This is strictly banned here and, in the EU, since it carries risks to consumers

(yourhealthyprostate.com/hormone-treated-beef-a-controversial-practice-in-meat-production/). Therefore, unacceptable to consumers here in the UK. How, if imported here, do consumers in the EU differentiate between UK bred and US hormone treated beef?

Chickens: Chickens in the US are washed in Chlorine, it is claimed that such a process removes much of the bacteria (like salmonella and other nasties) from the carcass. It does not however stop cases of such chicken borne cases arising in the USA. Such a practice is not practiced either here or in the EU. Some 98% of chicken here eaten in the UK is UK produced, and a small proportion arrives from the EU, all conforming to EU/UK regulations. (<https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2019/jun/03/the-truth-about-chlorinated-chicken-review-an-instant-appetite-ruiner>) It is suggested that most UK outlets that use UK chickens will continue to do.

Finally, I turn to the pig meat/pork industry in the US. Again, the regulations here in the UK/EU maintain the same strict regulations applicable to all farm animals. Hormones and drugs are not permitted across the board. Sadly such addition of drugs/hormones to pig/pork meat is permitted in the USA (<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/nov/22/growth-hormones-gestation-crates-bacon-us-trade-deal>)

As is seen from the above, we have a different, more stringent attitude to meat production here in the EU and here in the UK, than that pursued in the USA. From all the available evidence it is my opinion that to import such produce as above from the USA will not be the best interests of, we, the UK consumer.

We must make every effort to support our beleaguered farming institutions, they sorely need our help.

@David King

Edenbridge

January 2025

Lesley Coyle

Dorset

30th January 2025

SO MUCH ABOUT FINE WORDS FROM THE GOVERNMENT CONCERNING THE WATER UTILITIES.

Rhetoric and promises are cheap, they cost nothing. To some, they soothe, to others, they promise, to others, it is yet more bullshit, to others, it is kicking the can down the road. The government might think they have, for the moment, placated the concerned public with 'government action.'

In other words, empty words of no consequence, just news headlines for the day, and what many might describe as a sop, to water utility executives. (you might think so, I could not possibly comment).

Harsh words? Not really. For the Wessex Water consumers in the Poole area, first no water, an explanation, of sorts, of a broken supply pipe, and then, from the tap comes coloured murky water. Where is the regulator on such matters? There are leaks in some parts that have been there since October 2024 and still not repaired.

Southeast Water, in north Kent, days of broken supply with broken infra-structure and no water, in mid-January still on going. In Canterbury, the cold weather arrives, and guess what – the supply pipes freeze and again customers with water, now into day three. If it were not so serious then it would make the script for a comedy show.

Affinity water. water from broken pipes got into the gas supply system in North London, and gas engineers had to visit very property to ensure the systems were clear of water and safe to use the gas. In the meantime, householders and businesses had no gas supply..

The above are just from what I have seen in the southeast. I have no doubt that such incidents are everyday fare across the whole of the UK, so common that they go generally unreported in the national press or media. Sewage is continuously tipped into Lake Windemere. Do these utilities care for the customer, does the regulator, the government has proclaimed another 'mission,' therefore all is well?

IT IS WINTER, AS SUCH, IT IS LIKELY TO BE COLD.

This website back in June forewarned (you saw it here first) that the coming winter would be long hard and very cold; this warning was amplified in subsequent monthly websites, highlighted in considerable detail in the winter website entry, and just to re-iterate, physical evidence was displayed on our videos. Nature warned all its kingdom and made the necessary arrangements. Nature is never wrong. The moon phases too, all gave ample warning of severe cold to come, and finally, the wind direction on the wind days of September, November, and December, all came from the very cold northerly direction. What other proven, reliable, guaranteed, evidence does one need to be told that a long hard cold winter was nigh? All these signs independent, visible to see and verifiable.

Yet, despite all this evidence, we learn that the national gas supplies are now very low, down to the last week's supply, but not to worry, we can import more (at a higher

cost, resulting in even higher fuel bills), there is plenty of gas out there, it will just cost thee and me more to keep warm. Doubtless too bigger profits for the gas distributors.

It is appreciated that this website has not the standing of the national bureaux that provide the daily weather. However, the methodology here is tried, tested, proven and works, the caveat is that working 90-180 days ahead the minimum accuracy is 90%, this allows for a couple of days grace. This website is based on the highly successful forerunner, therefore not a 'Johnny come lately,' upstart. It is an established and respected, by many, as a reliable weather website.

So, how is it that with all the means available to established bureaux, and the national utilities, this cold hard winter could not be anticipated?

The problems however multiply in other directions too. With no wind, then the wind powered propellers cannot produce the electricity anticipated. When the sun does not shine, then the solar panel arrays also fail to produce the electricity expected; this means that gas must be used to provide the power to make electricity. Yet this government is hell-bent on producing fossil free power. The cost of this exercise is estimated as £billions. If it were not so serious, again it would make a script for a comedy show. If, however, the wind blows too hard (sometimes the equipment breaks too) but over production cannot be handled and the producers last year were recompensed more than £1 billion to close the production down.

Finally, the mean, penny pinching, ill-advised removal of winter heating allowance from older recipients (surely a very under-researched and knee jerk decision), during the coldest winter since 2010 at least, will for sure, cause many avoidable deaths from cold amongst this group, and other disabled and chronically ill persons too. How sad, and some say, despicable. So much then, for the promises to be a kind, compassionate, administration.

The authors of this website gave plenty of warning of this most severe winter (already), with still more to come, for the last six months at no cost. Therefore, it gives much angst that such warnings are ignored. It is not a case of 'blowing our own trumpet,' but a distinct failure of those designated to forewarn/predict our weather. If here, it can be done for next to nothing, literally on the kitchen table, then where is the ratepayer's money to sustain these bodies being spent?

@David King

Edenbridge

January 2025

JANUARY 2025 COLD SNAP

January 2025 brought a cold snap that had most of the country shivering. From record-breaking lows to Arctic blasts, frozen roads to storm-whipped power cuts, the start of the year was one to remember!

A Nation in the Deep Freeze

The first week of January started with a bang, heavy snow blanketed much of England and Wales, with a rare amber weather warning issued for the Midlands, Wales, and the North from January 4th-6th. The Pennines were particularly hard-hit, while the inevitable thaw that followed led to flooding in parts of the North and Midlands.

But just as some in the South thought they had escaped the worst; winter tightened its icy grip. By the night of January 8th-9th, temperatures plunged, with Tulloch Bridge in the Highlands recording a bone-chilling -12.4°C . Shap in Cumbria saw -11°C , and Sennybridge in Powys hit -7.8°C . The real shocker, though, came at Altnaharra in Scotland, where the mercury plummeted to -18.9°C on January 10th-11th, the coldest January night in the UK in 15 years! Even daytime temperatures were brutal, with Altnaharra struggling to reach just -10.8°C at its warmest on the 10th.

Disruptions, Delays, and Deep Snow

With such extreme conditions, daily life across Britain was thrown into chaos. Schools shut their doors, roads became treacherous ice rinks, and rail services were hit with delays and cancellations. Airports struggled with icy runways, forcing flight disruptions and cancellations, while emergency services worked overtime to help stranded motorists and those affected by the freeze.

Running on Fumes: The Energy Crisis

The Arctic blast didn't just chill the bones, it also put massive pressure on the UK's energy supplies. With temperatures well below the seasonal average (which usually hovers around 0.3°C in Scotland and 1.5°C in England), gas usage skyrocketed. Worryingly, Centrica (the owner of British Gas) warned that gas reserves were 26% lower than the previous year, leaving Britain with less than a week's worth of storage at one point. The situation was worsened by the recent halt of Russian gas

supplies through Ukraine and soaring global energy prices, making replenishment difficult.

Health Warnings and Community Spirit

The UK Health Security Agency took the cold snap seriously, extending an amber cold weather health alert for all of England. The elderly, young children, and those with pre-existing conditions were particularly at risk, and officials urged people to stay indoors, heat their homes, and check on vulnerable neighbours.

But amidst the freezing temperatures, the British spirit shone through. Communities banded together, offering warm shelters, delivering supplies to those in need, and helping dig out driveways and paths. From snow-covered streets to frozen canals, it was a winter wonderland if you could ignore the frostbite!

The Storm Strikes: Enter Eowyn

Just as the country started to thaw, the weather had one final trick up its sleeve. On January 24th, Storm Eowyn barrelled into the British Isles, developing into a full-blown weather bomb as a frigid American air mass clashed with warm Gulf air. The result? Winds that howled like wolves, leaving thousands without power, and sending anything not nailed down flying.

Galway clocked the strongest gust in the Republic of Ireland at a whopping 114 mph, while Scotland saw a rare red warning for wind. Drumalbin (South Lanarkshire) recorded 100 mph, and the Queensferry Crossing near Edinburgh hit 99.1 mph. England and Wales weren't spared either as Brizlee Wood (Northumberland) registered 96 mph, and Gwynedd in Wales hit 93 mph.

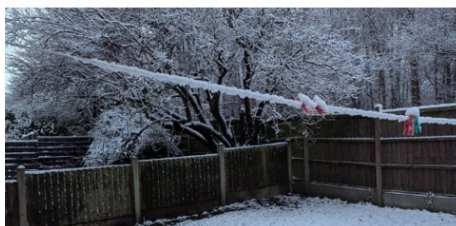
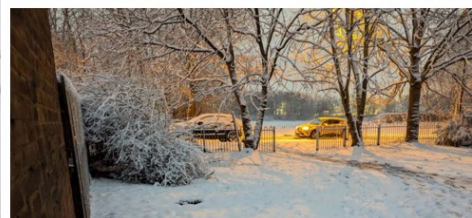
A January to Remember

By mid-January, milder air finally started creeping in from the west, easing the deep freeze. But the January 2025 cold snap will be remembered by many as one of the most dramatic in recent years, one that tested the country's resilience, highlighted energy concerns, and proved, once again, that when the weather turns wild, Britain is never prepared, but certainly pulls together!

Thank you so much to everyone for sending in your photos! Many people in London and the Southeast were snow starved from this particular spell of cold weather, and so no doubt will enjoy looking at your photos very much!

Below you will find a random selection of photos that have been sent into us throughout the January cold spell. I have tried to include as many as possible.

Enjoy 😊



February's Spotlight: Jim Bishop - A Man Who Inspires Change

Some people cross our paths and leave footprints on our lives forever. This month, I want to shine a light on someone who has done exactly that, my old friend, Jim Bishop.

Jim and I worked together over 20 years ago, first at a site in Chertsey, Surrey, and later at RAF Halton. Back then, I was a quiet and somewhat reserved 20-year-old, struggling with confidence. I vividly remember Jim encouraging me to step outside my comfort zone, suggesting I do something crazy to push my boundaries, perhaps even jump out of a plane.

So, I did.

When I returned from my travels, I told Jim that I had taken his advice quite literally. I had completed a 14,000ft skydive. His response? "You lunatic! I didn't actually expect you to do it!" Haha!

That moment sums up Jim perfectly. Warm, encouraging, and always up for a laugh. Though our careers took us in different directions, thanks to the magic of social media, we've remained in touch. And over the years, I have watched in awe as Jim has built something truly remarkable. An inspiring legacy of conservation, education, and passion for the natural world.

A Love for Nature, Born on a Falklands Beach

Jim has always been drawn to nature. His love for photography began in the mid-90s when he was stationed briefly with the RAF in the Falklands. Sitting just feet away from inquisitive penguins and (thankfully) a little further from elephant seals, he was captivated by the wild beauty surrounding him. That moment sparked a lifelong passion for documenting the natural world.

Years later, when his son and the children in his primary school class started asking questions about butterflies, Jim realised his knowledge was lacking. He could just about distinguish a Cabbage White from a Peacock - or was it a Red Admiral? But beyond that, he had a lot to learn.

With his camera, an ID book, and the support of online nature groups, Jim threw himself into the world of butterflies. What began as a curiosity soon turned into an expertise, and by the time the 2020 lockdown arrived, Jim was not only identifying butterflies but actively recording their movements and habits.

From Lockdown Walks to Published Author

The first lockdown brought an unexpected silver lining, glorious weather. As Jim explored the hidden corners of his village, he discovered an astonishing variety of butterflies right on his doorstep. He began sharing his findings with his local Facebook group and even created a blog for his Year 3 pupils, who followed along with fascination.

As the second lockdown rolled in, longer, darker, and far less bearable, Jim decided to channel his passion into something productive. What started as a simple article for his village magazine soon became a fully-fledged project. With support from local businesses, he secured funding to print 200 copies of a 20-page booklet, featuring a stunning hand-painted cover by a talented school mum.

'The Butterflies of Lympsham' was born.

Priced at just £3, the booklet flew off the shelves, all 200 copies sold and over £600 raised for the school. But beyond the numbers, something even more remarkable happened. Jim's book inspired both children and adults to embark on their own journeys of discovery. And to Jim, that was the greatest reward of all.

If you'd like to support Jim's work and grab a copy, you can find it here:

[The Butterflies of Lympsham eBook : Bishop, Jim, Dean, Kate Spinks: Amazon.co.uk: Books](#)

Butterflies, Conservation, and the Fight Against Insect Decline

Jim's dedication to conservation has only deepened. He is now a volunteer recorder for the National Trust and actively supports the Butterfly Conservation charity, which has declared a butterfly emergency. With headlines screaming about the 'Insect Apocalypse', Jim is determined to answer an urgent question: Is it really that bad? And if so, what can we do to help?

Understanding the Butterfly Life Cycle

Butterflies have different survival strategies to endure winter, but all face significant challenges:

- Hibernators (Peacock, Comma, Brimstone, Small Tortoiseshell) tuck themselves into leaf litter or crevices, waiting for spring warmth.
- Chrysalis Survivors (Holly Blue, Large and Small Whites) transform silently, hidden among grasses and walls.
- Winter Caterpillars (Common Blue, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper) rely on food plants that persist through the cold months.
- Egg Layers (Skippers, Hairstreaks) attach their future generations to twigs and leaves, poised for warmer days.

But survival isn't easy. Persistent wet weather, flooding, and habitat destruction are pushing many species to the brink. And unfortunately, human activity, tidying up gardens, removing weeds, and overusing chemicals is making things worse.

How We Can Help

The good news? Butterflies are resilient. With the right conditions, they can rebound in huge numbers. And that's where we come in.

Simple actions, like creating a Wild Space in your garden, can make a world of difference.

- Let a patch of nettles grow. Did you know nettles are the only food source for Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Red Admiral, and Painted Lady butterflies?
- Ditch the chemicals. Pesticides and herbicides harm more than just pests.
- Leave leaf litter alone. It provides essential winter shelter for insects.
- Plant native wildflowers. These provide vital nectar sources.
- Build a bug hotel or log pile. Give insects a safe haven.

A Wild Space for the Next Generation

Jim didn't just share this knowledge, he brought it to life. With funding from the Butterfly Conservation, support from Ali Miles at Purn Landscapes, and the hard work of the now-

legendary 'Dad's Army' (a group of dedicated fathers from the school), the children at Lympsham Academy created their own Wild Space.

This magical area now boasts:

- A Wildflower Meadow with Nettle Nurseries
- A Spectacular Bug Hotel & Hibernaculum
- A Veg Planter for Growing Their Own Snacks
- A Beautiful Bench for Outdoor Learning

Every child played a role in its creation, and now they get to witness nature's magic unfold right before their eyes.

A Friend Who Inspires

Jim has always been a top bloke, kind-hearted, full of laughter, and always ready with a word of encouragement. But seeing the impact of his work, the way he has inspired children and adults alike to reconnect with the natural world, takes my admiration to a whole new level.

Jim, I couldn't be prouder of you. Thank you for allowing me to spotlight you this month. You are making a real, tangible difference in the world.

And, to everyone reading this, keep an eye out! Jim will be contributing regular butterfly updates to the website, sharing his wealth of knowledge with us all which I am super excited about! In addition, if you know someone working hard for nature, or inspiring others let us know! We will spotlight them 😊

Now, if only I could find an old photo of the two of us from back in the day, what a laugh that would be! Instead, I'll leave you with a terrifying snapshot of me mid-skydive (thanks, Jim!) and a well-earned photo of the man himself. Here's to you Jim!



Magic Sightings waiting to happen in February are:

- Badgers
- Bitterns
- Brown Hares
- Crocuses
- Dippers
- Fieldfare
- Frog & Toad Spawn
- Frosted Spiderwebs
- Golden Plovers
- Goshawks
- Great Crested Grebes
- Lapwing
- Mistletoe
- Otters
- Pink Footed Geese
- Red Squirrels
- Redwing
- Robins
- Snipe
- Snowdrops
- Snowmen
- Starling Murmurations



Redwing – Photo credit to Jim Bishop

February is a great time to start growing chillies indoors.

Chillies need a long growing season, and by sowing seeds now, you'll give them plenty of time to establish before they're ready to be moved outdoors in late spring/ early summer.

Since they thrive in warmth, a sunny windowsill or warm greenhouse is ideal.

If you want a homegrown ingredient to spice up your meals, February is the perfect time ensuring a strong and productive plant throughout the year!

- Black Mustard.
- Three Cornered Leek

Please do not forage mushrooms/ fungi unless you are with a qualified professional.

IF YOU ARE
UNSURE OF
IDENTITY DO NOT
EAT. WE HAVE A
SURPRISING
NUMBER OF
POISONOUS
SPECIES IN UK.

THE SKIES: FEBRUARY 2025

- February Full Moon: Snow Moon
- 1st February: You may be able to see Venus, Saturn and Neptune between 17:30 – 20:00
- 7th: You may be able to see Jupiter and Venus between 18:00 – 03:00
- 9th: You may be able to see Mars from 18:00 onwards
- 25th February – May be able to see Mercury at around 18:00



1Q Moon:
5th February @ 08:02
Cold Rain



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



3Q Moon:
20th February @ 17:32
Fair



New Moon:
28th February @ 00:44
Frost



PERIGEE @ 02:47 ON 2nd FEBRUARY

APOGEE @ 01:10 ON 18th FEBRUARY

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.

My Notes:

January Review:

Overall, I was pretty chuffed with my January forecast. The first two weeks of the month were cold, dry, and calm for many with sunny spells at times. For many others those first two weeks were cold and extremely snowy with sunny spells at time. Having recorded the lowest minimum temperature in Scotland since 2010, and the CET for the UK coming out a degree below the modern average for January I feel that overall, this forecast has delivered. My only bug bear is that I expected the last two weeks of January to be a continuation of this weather, when in fact we reverted to milder temperatures (although still pretty chilly at times it was mild compared to what I had expected). None the less, the cold weather and snow delivered for many, so I will take that as a win. I do not pretend to get the weather correct to the exact date (the Met Office do a far superior job of that). I am good at giving advance notice of the conditions to come, and that is indeed what I did. Storm Eowyn arrived within a Met Office Stormy period, so it was to be expected, although I had envisaged it to be more of a snowstorm if I am honest. Not a perfect forecast, but I am happy enough.

February Forecast:

February will start to cool off dramatically within the first week, and we may start with cold rain, but there is still a chance this could be snowfall, particularly to the North and East of the country. If cold rain does materialise this could well create a treacherous condition known as 'freezing rain' in those areas, and if this condition does come about then it is highly recommended to stay home if possible.

I am expecting heavy snowfalls around February 12th, after which the conditions will remain very cold and frosty with a particularly bitter cold months end (the end of June was extremely hot). I am expecting February to be an extremely cold month, progressing in bitterness as the month goes on, and indeed if anything falls from the sky from February 12th onwards, I am expecting it to be snowfall. It could shape up to be a historic month, with London and the Southeast finally seeing some proper snow action. I would expect everyone across the UK to see snow by the end of February.

This is the beginning of true winter, which will I believe will be a prolonged cold spell lasting well into March, and for those North of the Humber, possibly going into April too.

January 2025

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 = February 2nd – 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:

1st – 3rd

&

26th – 28th

APOGEE: 18th @ 01:10

PERIGEE: 2nd @ 02:47

Full Moon is known as SNOW or ICE MOON/ HUNGER MOON

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

BUCHAN NOTES: Cold Period: 7th – 14th

Monthly Notes & Comments

1st	St Brigid	If white, very ditch full
2 nd	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 Perigee @ 02:47
6 th	St Dorothea	Gives the most snow
12 th	St Eulalie's	If sun today, then good for apples and cider. 12th to 14th see below.
14 th	St Valentine	Crocus blossom time
18 th	Apogee	Apogee @ 01:10
22 nd	St Peter	If cold will last longer - the night gives 40 days weather
24 th	St Matthias	St Mattee send sap up tree (usually indicates an early spring). If freezing today so for a month.
28 th	St Romanus	Bright and clear, indicates a good year

Wildflower of the Month – Snowdrop (blossoms around 2nd), then crocus (blossoms around 14th)

Flower of The Month: Primrose

Tree of The Month: The Rowan up to 17th, then the Ash

Full Moon this Month: Snow Moon

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

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 (not in February this year but kept for reference)

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 14th, 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	S				St Brigid							Highest Tides	
2	S			Candlemas				Perigee @ 02:47				Highest Tides	Snow Drop blossom day.
3	M											Highest Tides	
4	T												
5	W	1Q @ 08.02	Cold rain										
6	T				St Dorothea								
7	F									Cold Period			
8	S									Cold Period			
9	S									Cold Period			
10	M									Cold Period			
11	T									Cold Period			
12	W	Full @ 13.53	Snow if cold enough, else rain		St Eulalie's					Cold Period			
13	T									Cold Period			
14	F									Cold Period			Crocus blossom time
15	S												
16	S												
17	M												
18	T							Apogee @ 01:10					
19	W												
20	T	3Q @ 17.32	Fair										
21	F												
22	S				St Peter								
23	S												
24	M				St Matthias				Stormy period				
25	T								Stormy period				
26	W								Stormy period			Highest Tides	
27	T								Stormy period			Highest Tides	
28	F	New @ 00.44	Frost		St Romanus				Stormy period			Highest Tides	