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ADVANCE PREDICTIONS WINTER 2017/8 - DECEMBER 2016, JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2018 (plus March 2018).

2017 was never ever going to be a brilliant year, and so it has proved.

The methodology pointed to an early and warm spring following a cold winter, which resulted in the earliest and warmest spring for several years. The summer was always going to be damp, warmer in some places than others, but never like the 2003, 1988/90 or even 1976.

Nature in its wisdom organised an early warm spring that brought everything on and as a result everything ran some 20 days or so ahead of the norm. This had the effect of an early summer which passed by about the 13th July when the summer birds started to depart and the damsel flies disappeared - followed by some cold wet miserable weather that effectively put paid to a lot of insect life - prior to that the baked hard ground in the SE prohibited the smaller ground birds from feeding and the invertebrates from the soil breaking the surface. The extreme heat in July being the result of a heat wave over Alsace in northern France that pushed hot dry air eastwards to the SE - that terminated around the 15th and hence the SW winds took over.

Working some twelve months ahead as I do I saw the reason for the early spring and the rest of the summer, I also foresaw the autumn would too be early and cold. It is no good just working a couple of weeks ahead, working so far ahead as I do I can see why current weather is as it is and also what is to come.

I am pleased that the predicted warm period 5th -15th August, though late did in fact materialise and carried on for a few days afterwards too - I hope that grain farmers managed to salvage something from the year.

A large part of what I do is to give advance warning to farmers, growers horticulturalists, those that need weather for their occupation and other essential users, I have been doing this now for longer than the computer age, the methodology is now proven, therefore if I warn of problems ahead, it is no idle chatter, it is based on sound solid factual data. Then if after being warned that some extreme weather with danger attached is about to befall a region, it is for the recipients to make their own decisions; it is always better to spend and be prepared than to economise and hope 'that it will pass us by.' That is head in the sand ideology.

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 Lord will provide and the Lord doth provide,' comes to mind. The trees this year are weighed down with such gifts. Alas the squirrels and jays 'recycled/harvested most of the hazel nuts well before St Filberts picking day on the 18th August - yet another nature sign of a hard winter.

Now to a contentious subject (for some); I fear I am about to ruffle a few feathers, but that has never stopped me before, I am not about to change either. Every 15 years we get a cycle of bad winters. Combine this with a tried and tested saying 'a bad winter followed by a poor summer, is followed by an even harder winter,' and slowly the pieces start to fall into place. Such really cold 15 year winters have a habit of following very hot summers 15 years ago. (1976 = 1991) being the best recent example.

2003 was a really hot dry summer, add 15 to this and 2018 appears. Such winters normally start in early January (though 1962/63 commenced on Boxing day 1962 and was still there at Easter 1963). Even a cursory glance at the moons and weather for January will raise some concerns; however ally this to February and then into early March and a pattern arises. To this add the tried tested and proven saying from June 'the hottest days in June provide on the same dates in February the coldest days,' which were 13th to the 26th, then we have too a really cold February, and February too is the month with the lowest evaporation of the year. Slowly, as the pieces of the jigsaw fall into place a definite pattern arises for a long hard cold winter commencing early January to the middle of March.

For December an extra problem, a potentially dangerous problem, ignore it at your peril. The dreaded triumvirate of Perigee, Full Moon and highest spring tides, plus in this case the absolute certainty of a N/NE wind for the east coast and a N/NW wind for the west coast and all the elements are there in place for problems, a natural disaster of some sort, flooding come to mind. There is a full moon on the 3rd. The highest tides are the 2nd to the 6th and there is a perigee on the 4th, plus the above winds. All the elements are therefore in place for some serious flooding in those parts that suffer such problems. A side note here, when a problem is likely to arise away from my region here in the SE I try to get local independent 'feet on the ground' reports. The above period could well affect Cumbria and York, I hope not, but the methodology here is rarely wrong. I wrote to local newspaper editors in Carlisle and York ask for current ground conditions, in order for me to insert this into the methodology and see what arises; to me a prudent and reasonable request. Sadly not a peep of a reply - maybe my earlier comments on the lowering of journalistic standards has reached a new nadir?

Flood hit houses take ions to dry out, bring misery, stress and untold problems for months ahead, bearing in mind that the coldest winter for many year is ahead it would be more than foolish to be unprepared for such problems. I can only forewarn, it is for the recipient to make the decision.

If however the above fails to materialise then January will be a repeat performance, the dreaded triumvirate strikes again, a massive high tide on the 2nd - one of the highest for many a year, full moon on the 2nd, Perigee on the 1st with cold frosty conditions too, following rain in the last week of December and the N/NE wind or N/NW wind, dependant on location too.

Please, please refer back to the autumn 2017 advance predictions to see the identical warnings for both October and November, they are not there to frighten or scare, they are there to forewarn and inform.

It is no good waiting for other weather forecasters to tell you a few days before the event that problems may arise, that is too late.

To summarise the winter 2017/8, very cold with snow and ice for most, nearly all I fear, with additional weather problems as indicated above for some in the NE and NW.

Each month in detail now follows:

DECEMBER 2017

NEW MOON = 18th @ 0630hrs = Stormy
1st QUARTER MOON = 26th @ 0920hrs = Cold rain.
FULL MOON = 3rd @ 1546hrs = Fair & mild.
LAST QUARTER MOON 10th @ 0751hrs = Stormy.

DoP = 21st St Thomas's

Solstice 21st @ 1628hrs

Highest spring tides 2nd to 6th

APOGEE 19th @ 0556hrs: PERIGEE 4th @ 0843hrs
**DANGER WARNING: FULL MOON + PERIGEE + HIGHEST SPRING TIDES
2nd to 6th. EXPECT SEVERE WEATHER PROBLEMS.**

The first point to note is there is no snow or frost, therefore a mildish month, albeit stormy, so as Christmas day 2016 maybe stormy, precious little sunshine.

Then the massive problem for those prone to tidal and high water situations, this could be a stressful time, in that as above in **RED** the three most dangerous situations arrive within the same period, backed also for certain by N/NE winds - which may well give rise to a surge situation. The methodology here is tried tested and proven, please trust it, it is therefore inform, forewarn and educate.

The important wind day is the 21st (shortest day of the year) when the wind will be N/NE on that day, and this will be the cause of the cold weather to come, bringing in bitter easterly air from the N/NE. I add a caveat here, for those in the NW and westerly parts of Scotland, plus Northern Ireland (word slowly spreads) then NW winds will predominate, cold from the arctic and Greenland. The N/NE will experience winds from Scandinavia and Russia. The extreme SW may just have SW winds.

The mitigating factors for the month are that the 3rd to the 14th is a Buchan Warm Period - a period of calm warmer than average weather, but that from the 10th the Met Office stormy period carried over from November may come into play, so windy and I do not think any rain; but there is also a Met Office Quiet Period 15th to the 21st.

There is however a Met Office Stormy Period 25th to the end of the month; the more astute may notice that the moon situations more or less correspond with these Met Office and Buchan periods.

To Summarise December : Windy, for the greater part mild and mainly dry. Not a white Christmas.

JANUARY 2018

NEW MOON 17th @ 0218hrs = Snowy & stormy + MICRO NEW MOON
1st QUARTER MOON = 24th @ 2220hrs = Fair & frosty
FULL MOON 2nd @ 0225hrs = Snowy & stormy + SUPERMOON AND
31st @ 13.27hrs = Frost + SUPERMOON +BLUE MOON
LAST QUARTER MOON 8th @ 2226hrs = Fair & frosty

31st = TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE (not Europe)

DoP = 25th St Paul.

HIGHEST SPRING TIDES 1st to 4th. **MASSIVE ON 2nd.**
14th to 18th AND 29th to 3rd February

Apogee 15th @ 0211 hrs.. Perigee 1st @ 2156hrs AND
30th @ 0955hrs.

January starts with problems, a full moon, highest spring tides, Perigee, stormy conditions, NE wind and again the possibility of a North Sea surge - or in the case of those in the NW, an Irish sea surge.

The predominant feature for January is cold, snow with storms = blizzards to start the month; then frost which will freeze the snow, followed by more snow (on top of frozen snow and ice); with another freezing session of ice to solidify the ground. Finally more frost to end the month. Maybe now you are able to see why nature provided bounteous fruits and seeds earlier in the previous year.

Two full moons in the month too, never a good sign, always indicates a wet month - in this case the wet falling as snow, the first moon on the 2nd is a Supermoon (much brighter and larger than normal), and is also known as a Blue Moon. Once again the moons fall pretty well into the Met Office parameters.

There are no Buchan periods this month. The Met Office has a stormy period 5th to the 17th and again from the 25th to the end of the month. There is a quiet period 18th to the 24th.

TO SUMMARISE: A bitterly cold snowbound frosty month with blizzards too - the warnings of a long hard cold winter are now here for all to see. The conditions akin to January 1991 are near identical.

FEBRUARY 2018

NEW MOON = 15th @ 2106hrs = Snow/rain
1st QUARTER MOON = 23rd @ 0809hrs = Cold rain.
LAST QUARTER MOON 7th @ 1555hrs = Fair & mild.

15th = PARTIAL SOLAR ECLIPSE (not Europe)

DoP = 2nd = Candlemass

Highest Spring Tides 1st to 3rd AND 10th to 16th; AND 27th to 4th March.

Perigee 27th @ 1450hrs; Apogee 11th @ 1417hrs

Sadly the conditions do not improve at all in February. The coldest days in June preceding given the coldest days in the following February = February 13th to 26th will be the coldest such days.

The month starts cold with the last moon in January being frosty - but no further snow, just plain cold, the second moon may just, I say may, since February being the month with the lowest evaporation and generally coldest month of the year, mild is relative; mild might even mean the temperature rises to zero! bear in mind that all January is very close to, or below zero and the ground is frozen, do not expect miracles.

The more snow for the from the 15th, combined with the coldest days from June, and to end the month, some cold rain to fall on top of possible frozen packed ice and snow. Indeed a long hard cold winter.

There is a Buchan cold period 7th to the 14th, when the temperature drops below the mean average, so even colder. The month ends with a Met Office stormy period 24th to the 28th.

I see no problems from highest tides or perigee this month.

Unusually too there is no full moon this month either.

TO SUMMARISE: A really cold frosty month for certain with frozen ground and in all probability snow covered too. For the sheep farmers with early lambs some real problems too.

Unusually, since March is considered the first month of spring I will give that month here too, since it shows that the winter will continue well into March.

March 2018

NEW MOON = 17th @ 1314hrs = Snow/rain
1st QUARTER MOON = 24th @ 1535hrs = Fair & mild
FULL MOON 2nd @ 0052hrs = Frost. AND
31st @ 1437 hrs = Fair & mild + BLUE MOON
LAST QUARTER MOON 9th @ 1122hrs = Cold and high winds

MARCH/VERNAL EQUINOX 20th @ 1615hrs

DoP = 21st St Benedict AND Quarter Day 21st

BST Starts 25th March 2018 @ 0100 hrs.

Highest spring tides 1st to 4th

Perigee 26^h @ 1819hrs: Apogee 11th @ 0915hrs

March is the first month of the meteorological spring, however, a glance at the above will indicate some most un-spring like weather, with frost and snow for the first two moons; it is for that reason that I have extended this winter forecast.

I would like to say with some certainty that by the 21st March, the Quarter Day, snow will be gone for most of us, but for the exposed parts of the NW/NE and Scotland quite possibly still lingering and the wind on this day will change from the previous N/NE to S/SW, sadly the wind may well stay E/NE and a cold spring will follow - as in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Easter Sunday is the 1st April - as you can see from above this indicates a dry sunny day., but his is predictable since Christmas day will be wet and windy.

TO SUMMARISE: The first two weeks continue with the cold winter weather, however by the 21st hopefully, the warmer more spring-like weather, with a wind change from N/NE to S/SW on that day, but I have grave doubts for this to occur, might herald the arrival of spring - at least south of the line mid-Wales > Birmingham > Norwich - above that line, especially on the snow prone and higher regions, snow may well lay for a while yet. Hedging the bets, the cold may well stay well into June.

For those that grow fruit and other horticultural products the May frosts, especially if the wind direction does change on the 21st March, will be present this year from the 11th to the 15th May.