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JULY 2018

PREAMBLE



TREE OF THE MONTH

10/6 - 7/7 OAK thereafter to HOLLY to 4th August

Welcome to the July 2018 website entry. Summer is now with us until the end of August, but I fear not the gloriously hot dry summer prophesised in some national newspapers with great headlines.

Despite the heat of the May bank holiday and the heat in the middle of May, there is no settled weather ahead for the summer, therefore the damp and warm prediction with odd few days here and there; by this I indicate three to four day bursts of heat and sunshine that appear from nowhere, and normally are predicted just a couple of days ahead, and as suddenly as they appear they disappear, invariably in a thunderstorm with cooler and more unsettled weather following.

This may appear to be at odds with the weather consensus, but whilst some of us have near drought conditions and high temperatures, others have had double their normal rainfall, some in Scotland with a very rare June storm, Hector, and snow on the A9; so indeed a very mixed bag. I have to go with the methodology, for those that carp on 'you got it well wrong,' then I ask who else predicted such a combination of diverse weather in June?? The weather here in the UK is weather, not a climate, it is also very fickle. I make no excuses; it did not turn out in June as predicted.

There are several sayings that are tried tested and proven on the May website; most agree that to have a good summer, then May must be cold and wet. The current May is neither cold nor wet, it is warm and sunny, with in places precious little rain, the persistent E/NE wind that blows for the eastern side of the UK at this time of the year also dries the ground, but keeps the air temperature, before 9am and after 8pm noticeably cooler too.

Therefore the top soil dries quickly, such plants in the ground tolerate some warmth, but not direct hot heat, especially when there is no rain to assist growth, therefore new plants get stunted; growth is erratic at best, grass used by cattle becomes very dry and sparse and loses goodness, no meadow plants grow in the hay meadows, not good news at all for farmers and growers.

So, whilst the sun-seekers seek the sun at the seaside and are happy for the experience, others are not so happy – especially so early in the year and after such a long hard cold winter. All in all it is a fact of nature that such dry hot weather in May is neither good for man nor beast.

I warned of the possibility of late May frosts with a suggestion to defer planting out of bedding plants until the 24th May – and the cold nights of the 18th to the 21st justified such a warning.

Spring is some four to five weeks late this year, and this can be seen everywhere with late flowering plants and late leaf production on trees. However there is an upside to this lateness; the cold of March held the fruit buds in dormant mode, and I am told there were more than some years. There were no May frosts either to kill the blossoms, indeed most blossoms had been and gone before the arrival of the May frosts; the result being an abundance of fruit to come later this year, cherries hang in massive bunches, pears and apples too; some plums have suffered but for the greater part no massive problems. The May saying of frost on the 1st May gives a good fruit harvest – as once again has been proven.

The hazel, walnut and beech trees look in fine fettle too for the nut harvest later; the bramble (not to be confused with the stone bramble) that produces blackberries, is late this year, the first crop (with another two crops to follow) started to flower around the 20th May; which giving the 90 day growing cycle means fruits around mid-July for most, earlier for some, and blackberries too well into late September this year – all signs of a warmish benign autumn.

So whilst winter may have been hard and long, nature in its wisdom will compensate in the autumn with a bountiful harvest; a true Indian summer too in mid-October.

And before you ask, the autumn advance prediction will be on the website mid-July at the latest.

Since nature has made real preparation (as in 2017/18) for a long hard winter, whilst there may be some frosts 2018/9, I do not envisage any major snow problems, in general, for the coming winter.

The Royal Wedding – lots of comment on why I said it was 50/50 chance of rain – when in fact it was hot dry and sunny. On This Morning on 5th March I was asked for the weather. I hedged my bets for I did not have the most vital piece of information I needed. If I had been asked on the 22nd March I would said dry sunny in the day with a cold, maybe frosty night before.

The reason is very simple; I did not have the wind direction for the 19th May. March 21st gave the wind direction, which was WNW, a cold wind from Iceland – which gave the snow and cold for the Easter weekend on the western side of the UK, and also some cold periods since. Such WNW winds hardly ever reach the SE corner; here E/NE winds dominate in May and June. Bearing this E/NE wind direction in mind that gave me the dry bit of the 50/50 choice; had the wind on 21st March been W/SW then a different story for rain may well have been the better prognosis – the other half of the 50/50. But nature gave WNW wind on the 21st which more or less guaranteed E/NE winds for the wedding, which as happened was the case, dry sunny day but cold night.

I have mentioned this simple but true fact before – which was another reason for the 50/50 choice – rain in the SW travels for the greater part along the M4 corridor, Windsor is in that corridor, hence the caution.

Birds arriving from Africa tell us much of the weather to come; some arrive earlier than normal (Cuckoo) and depart earlier (since bad weather would hamper their normal departure). The first swallows arrived with the cuckoo, but a gap before being joined by others. Mid- May and no fly catchers, house martins, precious few song birds as yet. People in Cornwall have yet to see a swallow – but I have made some enquiries about that – see below. The fly-catchers and martins have just arrived too - 4 weeks later than normal.

The blackbird starts its dawn chorus, followed half an hour later by the robin – but whilst does an evensong before that, it does not start the dawn chorus until the last of the frosts has gone – and insect life starts to awaken – that answers why the blackbird was so late (in many places) this year – it was too cold. Back the swallows in the SW. I am given to understand that the preponderance of wind turbines on that peninsula is upsetting the normal run of nature. Turbine blades both kill and maim, birds, duck and geese, swans too, are not stupid, they learn of such dangers, and avoid them; which of course upsets the balance of nature, I find this argument quite logical; man once again has interfered without due regard to the unforeseen consequences.

However back to birds again; the damsel-flies, hover flies and other such insects are now multiplying, therefore food abounds, hopefully the migratory birds will start to re-appear –but again they too will be late; therefore their nesting will also be late and chicks late too, do not therefore expect a double brood this year. Birds need insects in droves, wet weather does not help, and it is not conducive to insect production.

On insects – one for the older readers; do you remember the motoring days without windscreen washers, when we had to stop regularly to clean the windscreen from dead flies etc: the summer of 1976 and all those ladybirds everywhere? I mention this as I have recently done two 600 mile drives, one to SW and one the midlands and the total count of dead flies on the front of the car was less than 12 in all.

That again is man with insecticides upsetting the natural world, in many ways a sad reflection of modern life – or a sign I am getting old and crotchety.....ha ha. Is it any wonder birds have problems finding insect food if the car cannot harvest any on the paintwork!

I often repeat the fact that when there is real heat in Alsace in NE France, then that warmer air blows this way and gives the east coast good weather. Extreme heat in Alsace Spring Bank Holiday weekend, resulted in a hot dry sunny day on the eastern side – for most – I appreciate har (mist or thick fog over water) affected some, but for the greater part it proves the theory.

Another old saw (mumbo-jumbo as The Experts call it) concerns Ascension day (10th May) – the weather this day 29 times out of 30 will accurately reflect the weather for autumn. The 10th was dry sunny and pleasant – that more or less is what the other data I have here for autumn predicts too. Mumbo-jumbo or not, the saying is 900 years old – it worked then and it works now; slowly but surely the pieces of the jig-saw fall into place – this one is about the 180 day mark in advance.

Some questions on why the hay harvest will be very late this, when, a cursory glance shows green grassy fields and signs of plenty; sadly, a cursory glance is not good enough, to have a good hay meadow you need a lot of underlying growth. Currently, buttercups, dandelions, the odd poppy here and there all visible, the odd ox-eye daisy too, but the grass is only about a foot or so tall, it is very thin with no body - and look deeper and there is precious little wild flower growth below, no black medic (small yellow flower) no vetch (pea type plants,) very little speedwell (small blue flowers), no scarlet pimpernel (small red flowers) no cranesbill (small pink flowers,) there is no colour in the meadow, no white clover, some red clover, but precious little. These plants bulk out the hay crop and provide nutriment in the hay, it will be a few weeks for the grass to high and thick enough for the hay to be cut – hopefully by then some of the above flowers will be present. Silage however is well advanced and is being cut and harvested in many places.

This May heat and lack of rain whilst good for the sun worshippers, is bad for crops, the heat and dry N/NE winds dry and damage the crops, then burn them with the result that huge swathes of crops die leaving brown gaps in the fields – hence the reason for a cool wet May being the best for man and crops.

How depressing to lose your winter wheat due to cold and wet, then find that the replacement crop of broad beans suffers from excessive heat and no rain – and that is lost too!

For the sky watchers this month around the 13th 15th, apart from a Buchan warm period. A new moon, called a super new moon on the 13th with a partial solar eclipse too. For those resident on or near tidal waters, or affected by such, a massive high tide on the 13th too, with the highest tides being the 13th to the 16th.

There is also at the end of the month a total lunar eclipse on the 27th July – but this is also a micro full moon. A micro-moon is a full moon at Apogee – furthest away from earth.

The severe thunder and electrical storms of the 26th/27th May that caused damage and flooding for some, caused me to research the Holmfirth, Yorkshire, severe storm and flash flooding of 29th May 1944 that caused death and destruction. It was however ‘hushed up,’ being wartime, and was not generally know about outside the immediate area. Once again that was the result of unusually warm hot weather (as currently) – to be followed a week later with the severe storms that caused the postponement of the Normandy landings in early June.

The severe thunderstorms that affected the West Midlands during the spring bank holiday weekend, moved south to Kent on the 29th causing flooding and much damage – direct result of warm air from the near continent.

However in the Bordeaux and Cognac regions of France such storms caused a wipe-out of some 6% of the vines especially to the Atlantic side of the vineyards to west of Bordeaux and in the cognac regions – hail stones as big pigeons eggs were reported for the 15 minutes duration of the storm .

Lots of reports here of either the lack of swallows this year or when they arrive no particular hurry to build nests, reports here indicate this from Ireland, the west country and across to East Anglia. I would suspect lack of sufficient food as a primary reason for this. Here Jays have for the last week been raiding the peanut feeders (that feed the tits) in my garden; for jays to do that shows they are indeed hungry, and any food is better than no food.

A slight change of direction, you will see why as you read. I mention that the hay meadows currently are quite empty of meadow flowers and the grass is thin. Go into any meadow and look, the grass is not that tall and is quite thin – doubtless many buttercups ** in situ too, but look on the ground, where are small flowers, hop trefoil, trefoil, pimpernels, medic, vetch family, cranesbill flowers, poppies and daisies – currently precious few, these small flowers that give the substance to the way, when cut and harvest provide the nutrients for winter feeding in the hay.

**Buttercups; the fields this year are full with yellow buttercups of all varieties too – however such plants are poisonous to cattle, sheep and goats – which is why you quite will see that farmers have sprayed such fields to eliminate this plant. Buttercups (the creeping variety in particular) contain an acrid, volatile alkaloid-amerol, strong enough to blister the skin and also cause inflammation of the intestinal tract; cattle and goats thus poisoned produce bitter milk of a reddish colour. There is also good evidence that this same plant causes lameness in new lambs. When cut, in hay, it is harmless. Therefore whilst the fields may look a beautiful yellow there are hidden dangers – the same sort of problem occurs too later in the year with ragwort plant for cattle.

The seasonal newspaper reports of the dangers of the sap from the hemlock plant are doing the rounds again. Why anyone should want to break the stem of a hemlock plant is beyond me, but if you disturb nature, then sometimes nasty surprises arise. If you do not know about a plant leave it alone is the best advice.

For those with an interest in such plants that can and do cause harm a superb website entry is;
www.omfra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/dairyfacts/87-016

There are line sketches there too with causes and symptoms – and all the plants there are found in the UK too.

Why do I include ‘Tree of the month’ at the top of the preamble? In the years of research I went everywhere to get data and balance. Amongst such research I found the Celtic/Druid tree chart, which I researched, as I do with all the website content; and having found it reliable, and to also include as much data that both encompasses and broadens the content, this now goes at the head of the preamble. Research over the year will show many local sayings from across other religions/sects and followings; if they are pertinent to the subject and proven, then they are on the website.

For those that listen, in the north, to BBC Radio Leeds and the syndicated Paul Hudson Weather Show, the show on the weekend of the 10th June contained the challenge (from many established expert sources) that 2018 would be a blisteringly hot summer, maybe according to some, akin to the summer of 1976 (wall to wall sun and precious little rainfall June until August bank Holiday Monday- the summer of the ladybirds). The methodology here does not show that – well, I once again going against the grain then??? Plus la change. As recent weather (early June) has shown, this relatively hot weather is not

settled, and the methodology here gives a damp and warm summer, with the odd few days here and there, of hotter weather. I will compare the results in the autumn; blisteringly hot dry summers is unsustainable in any case, for one there is insufficient water, and ask farmers and growers if they welcome such a summer? Once more nature will decide and has adjudicated – not computer modelling.

I was quite adamant too when the same question was put on ITV This Morning Show early June, a damp and warm summer, plus of course, which is of huge amusement to the presenters 'spits and farts' of hot spells. Back again the same show in September too – when the good autumn and Christmas 2019 weather will be revealed – advance warning too – a couple of storms ahead in November and maybe December too.

Taken Directly from Daily Telegraph 11th June 2018.

The UK is set for a hotter and drier than average summer, forecasts show, however families may want to hold off before splashing out on expensive barbecues and garden furniture.

According to the Met Office's three month weather outlook for June, July and August, Britain is "moderately" likely to enjoy warmer and drier than average conditions.

It is also moderately likely that there will be less rain than average over the period.

However despite the positive prediction, there could still be daily and weekly changes throughout June, July and August, the forecasting service said.

This forecast is based on information from observations, several numerical models and expert judgement. The Met Office releases the long-range outlooks as a risk assessment to allow contingency planning for potential emergency weather conditions.

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The same day there was also an article in the Times by the respected Paul Symons whose contribution was similar to the damp and warm, with the odd warmer period every now and then, but no firm dates (spits and farts then) predicted here months ago on this website.

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I will leave the reader to draw their own conclusions, other than to say that the same Met Office advance prediction for the winter just gone was mild than average!

In April, the cuckoo arrived earlier than usual, indicating that due to a wet colder late June early July it would depart earlier. The cuckoo here departed on 9th June – indeed earlier than usual – and across the UK 5 tracked cuckoos had also departed back to Africa about the same time; another centuries old saying proving quite accurate – so far. This may also discount the above newspaper headlines of a long hot dry summer.

June 2018 the month the weather went haywire: Storm Hector, snow in Scotland, floods, and drought – it just shows that the weather here in the UK is fickle and regardless of skills, knowledge or system it fools everyone some of the time. No excuses at all.

Finally, 19th July is known as 'flying ant day,' (do you remember when such creatures stopped play at Wimbledon tennis last year – albeit a few days early?); this is the day when in the morning (before noon) all the female of the specie alights from slumber into the air; afternoon sees the arrival of all the males and copulation, in a frenzy occurs. Enjoy your July.

JULY 2018

NEW MOON = 13th @ 0347hrs = Rain showers + SUPER NEW MOON
1st QUARTER MOON = 19th @ 2153hrs = Rainy
FULL MOON 27th @ 2120hrs = Rainy + MICRO FULL MOON
LAST QUARTER MOON 6th @ 0850hrs = Changeable.

13th July = Partial solar eclipse (not Europe)
27th July = Total Lunar Eclipse - visible all over Europe + Micro moon
28th + 29th July = Delta Aquarids meteor Shower

DoP = 15th St Swithun

Highest Spring Tides 12th to 16th (**MASSIVE ON 13th**)

APOGEE 27th @ 0645hrs: PERIGEE 13th @ 0930hrs

MET OFFICE NOTES: None .

BUCHAN NOTES: 12th -15th Warm period, 29th June to 4th July cool period.

1st If the first week of July be rainy weather -'twill rain more or less for a full four weeks. It always rains on the first Friday in July.

2nd St Mary If it rains today it will rain for 4 weeks.

3rd St Thomas Rain today, rain for seven weeks. Commencement of Dog Days (to 28/8) - hottest part of the year.

4th to 16th If fine and summery, the rest of the summer is likely to be fine.

10th Celtic Knut the Reaper with hay cutting scythe worshipped. (hay making period).

13th Perigeee @ 0930hrs

14th St Processus & St Martinian If it rains today it suffocates the corn,
Statistically the day with the highest average temperature.

15th St Swithun DoP. Said to mark the weather for 40 days. Lily flowering day.

16th Lavender Day Gather bunches of lavender to hang in wardrobes
for perfume and to repel insects.

19th Flying Ant Day The day the flying ants copulate in their thousands.

- 20th St Margaret If rain, then talk of Margaret's flood - see below. Poppy flowering day.
- 22nd St Mary Magdalene Alluding to the wet, usually prevalent about the middle of July, the saying is 'St Mary is washing her handkerchief to go to her cousin's st James's, fair (25th). Rose flowering day.
- 25th St James 'Til St James be come and gone, you may have hops and you may have none.
- 27th Apogee @ 0645hrs
- 29th -31st Can be very hot days.

Full moon this month is called Buck Moon.

Tree of the month up to 7th is the Oak, thereafter Holly is the tree.

General Notes and Comments

The 'meadow month' or 'hay month' - traditional labour of month being hay-making.

July should be, and quite often is, a month of blazing sunshine and soaring temperatures.

Hay making and harvesting in full swing.

Dog-Days - the moist sultry days in a period of 20 days before and 20 days after the rising of the Dog-Star Sirius. If we are to have a summer at all, this is the most likely time.

Roughly from mid-July to the end of August, or, corn harvest time. Sirius is the brightest star in the heavens,

and is one of those in the southern constellation Canis Major.

As the Dog-days commence so they end. Bright and clear indicate a happy year, but accompanied by rain, for better times our hopes are vain.

*St Swithuns Day (15th) if thou dost rain, full forty days it will remain.
[this saying never comes true]*

*If on St Swithuns feast the welkin lours, and ever pent house streams with nasty showers,
twice twenty days shall clouds their fleeces drain, and wash the pavements with incessant rain.*

[not really acceptable as continuous rain, but acceptable as showers/showery with bright intervals might be acceptable]

St Swithun's day is normally a 'bit of both' day, half sunny & half wet. 'Sunny intervals and showers.' Despite the 40 days rain tag, it is more accurate to say 'sunny intervals and showers.'

If it rains on St Swithun's Day. the saint is christening the apples, and they will be sweet and plentiful.

Watch the weather from the 4th to 16th July. If it is fine and summery, the rest of summer is likely to be fine. [this is quite possibly true]

If about St Swithun's (15th) a change of weather takes place, we likely to have a spell of fine or wet weather.

When the sun enters Leo, the greatest heat then arise.

In July, shear your rye.

When the Goats-Beard (wild flower) closes its flowers before mid-day, then there is rain in the air. If it stays late with its petals open, the atmosphere is dry and the weather set fair.

When the clover leaves are shut (even with clear sky and rising glass) and reaching for the sky, reach for your broolly. [very reliable]

St Margaret (20th) - so much rain often falls this day that people speak of Margarets Flood.

A shower in July when the corn begins to fill, is worth a plough of oxen, and that that belongs theretill.

Much thunder in July injures wheat and barley.

In July cut your rye.

What is to thrive in September must be baked in July. [grapes are a perfect example]

When the months of July, August and September are exceptionally hot, January will be the coldest month. [can be confirmed- but not always]

The first Friday in July is invariably wet. [4/5]

*Fog in March -Thunder in July. [check previous readings]
A poor forecast for wheat indicates wet weather in July and August.*

A swarm of bees is not worth a fly.

*FULL MOON THIS MONTH IS CALLED BUCK MOON.
Tree of the month up-to 7th is Oak. Thereafter Holly is the tree.*

MONTHLY AVERAGES FOR EDENBRIDGE (USING 1981-2010 FIGURES)

Mean Max: 24C Mean Min: 12.1C Mean Avg: 18.5C
Rainfall: 66.6mm Sunshine: 220.3hrs (day = 7.11hrs)

Whilst I appreciate the above are local figures, it will be an indication of what the averages are, and, of course there will be local variations. Such variations can be found by trawling the various weather websites, or by using the superb data found in the Climatologists Observers Link website.

DATE	Chandler & Gregory Barry & Perry	Brooks	Lamb	Buchan	Met Office	Season
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