

PREAMBLE

AUGUST 2018



TREE OF THE MONTH 8/7 TO 4/8 IS THE HOLLY, THEREAFTER THE HAZEL (ABOVE).

Welcome to the August 2018 website entry. I start with a grovelling apology concerning the June 2018 weather. I offer no excuses, but I have an explanation, and due to human error, I misread what nature told in me April, and, as a result to use an expression that maybe un PC, but everyone understands, “ I cocked it up,” So big sorry.”

The cuckoo arrived 8 days early in April, which in 35 years doing this normally would expect it to leave early; such early departure indicates a wet cold end of June into July (Buchan cold period too), and therefore precious little insect life and food. I therefore assumed that this would be the case in 2018. Further to this there was no prior indication of any drought ahead (by this I indicate that the aggregate rainfall late February into early March was 100% normal) – with no indication of a drought in 2019 – by looking at February data sheet you can find the reference.

The cuckoo departed here on the 8th June, slightly earlier than I anticipated, and all the ringed cuckoos in the UK were on their way back to Africa by the 10th June. As such the early arrival indicating an early departure was 100% correct. This 10th was the start of the really hot dry weather. All the UK ringed cuckoos back in west Africa by the 16th July too.

However as June progressed, the weather stayed dry and hot and officially a drought too in many parts; this made me explore why I had got the warm and damp conditions so

wrong. The flycatchers and martins were very late arriving back from Africa, and many of the song-birds even later. Why?

It did not take long to answer this question; quite simply the hot dry weather got hotter and dryer, and, as a result a marked absence of flies, insects, bugs and butterflies ensued, towards the end of the month, bees and very few butterflies were the sole insects around – except, as in 2017 many hornets – a complete absence of wasps or ants. No flowers means no blossom and no nectar, therefore no insects and no insect food; I walk every day across fields camera at the ready for plants, flowers, birds and insects; alas an absence of any insects and a lower bird count too. So the early arrival of the cuckoo indicated not a cold wet period, but a hot dry extended period, and an absence of bugs, worms and insects. In fact so dry and bereft of insects that I have had jays in the garden taking peanuts for the bird feeders – again a very rare occurrence in June.

I made the dangerous mistake of assuming – I assumed it would be cold and wet; how wrong I was too. Looking further into this the long hard winter, it kept the fruit buds dormant on the fruit trees and as a result a larger fruit bud explosion; this too an indicator I missed, extra buds mean more fruit, but with extra heat and no water, the trees shed fruit first, then leaves, as they get stressed, therefore the extra buds would produce extra fruit – and these will get shed as the heat persists. Therefore once again nature provided the clues, however subtle, and I missed them. The learning curve therefore continues.

In mitigation all I can say is that I am sorry, but also, how many other weather people even suggested that June would be (for the greater part) continuously hot dry and sunny?

I exclude the newspaper weather prophets from this equation; but the Met Office blog did suggest maybe a little warmer than average, with, maybe some warmer spells too; I included such 'warmer spells' in the spits and farts quotation too. I think it fair to say that everyone missed a long hot very dry June 2018.

If I 'cock-up' then I find out why, put my hands up and say sorry. It was human error, nature told me in April (90 days ahead again) I missed – I just be getting more senile.

OK, now chastened and repentant I come to brighter things.

Having said the above, whilst the sun maybe fantastic for the sun-worshippers, for farmers and growers, in places disastrous; the end result will show itself later in the year, with reports coming in here of lowered grain harvest, in places by 50%, but also some superb early barley, plus too some big problems in places with black grass (google it); massive problems due to heat with the beet and potato crops, shortages of water, plus infestations on the pea harvest too, plus other crops too, for there so many more with damage done by no water in the vital growing month of June; plus too the massive extra costs of water guns, water and electricity to water the crops; and also of drying the crops too when harvested. Onions due to late planting will be affected too. So, expect increased prices later in the year, plus an acute shortage too of winter fodder already.

A noticeable feature in the dryer parts of the UK, the lack of insects, bear in mind that some of the smaller birds must eat their body weight in insects per day, it is no wonder that they are not to be seen in the gardens, as normally one might expect. However the larger birds, blackbirds, jays in particular, coming and eating – in summer too – from the

peanut feeders in the garden, all due to lack of insect food. I have noticed less birds too, the migrant birds arrived, albeit late, in reasonable numbers, but by mid-July hardly any fly-catchers or swallows around. Have they gone home or have they died through lack of food??

Another interesting feature I have noticed is that birds are already eating winter foods geulder rose already being eaten (staple blackbird food for the winter), and fruit trees being the subject of extra attention too this year being very noticeable. Having said that, nature in its wisdom has produced a really early crop of holly, yew and variegated laurel fruits to help compensate.

The tall hogweed plants too have died off during the drought and heat, so less winter seeds for the birds, though the burdock and teasel are in abundance, as too the cones and acorns on the trees. A fantastic year for sloes and elder berries too, the hawthorn suffering through lack of water though; blackberries very late, and again suffering from lack of water, but other berries, bryony, bittersweet, nightshade etc in great numbers plus massive spindle tree crop too.

Also some really unusual results too, the medlar fruits, I have never seen so many, the quince too in great numbers, bullace also, as the sloes, festoon the branches, so not all bad news.

For those that advocate another hard long cold winter, just go and look to see what food reserves nature has stored for such an eventuality; bear in mind that nature prepares at least 90 days ahead, therefore for such a long hard winter forecast there should be, by now, real visible evidence of such vital food stores; there are none out there at all; and since nature is never wrong, it gives the information of not such a hard long or cold winter as the winter just gone.

The very hot dry weather here in the UK, unseasonably so too, is not confined here in the UK, parts of Canada have had seriously hot weather with many deaths resulting, and the other extremes are the massive rains and landslides in Japan, with more rain than usual in that part of the world, including snow in Australia. But I here no real comment for the global warming prophets – it was similar during the cold winter, they were very quiet.

My own comment – for what it is worth, is that if you chop down 85% of the world's trees, then there are consequences –but of course big business and many governments make huge profits from such exploitation and activities, so complaint falls on deaf ears.

Now the drought hopefully is past us, nature will restore the natural balance; the late spring was soon made good, albeit at a price, but most growers and farmers have now caught up – again at a price. I expect therefore that the methodology will return to its normal reliable self.

The advance autumn forecast will published more or less with this monthly bulletin, no real surprises either, the odd stormy period highlighted, but nothing to be overly concerned about, except an acute shortage of water.....

Below is the filbert variation of the hazel tree – both the hazel and the filbert are due to be harvested around the 18th August – St Filbert’s day – if the squirrels have not got there first!



FILBERT VARIATION OF THE HAZEL TREE

Finally but not least, the dry parched ground is now like a tinder box, therefore extreme care when walking please on open ground; as a result of the heat and lack of rain, the price of hay and straw fodder is already at a premium, with farmers and animal keepers having to feed stock in July! on hay since there is no grass. A look at the Autumn 2018 advance weather will aggravate this situation. It does not help that water companies decide to shut the door and ban hoses pipes, only when the water stocks are falling rapidly, too little too later, and once again the consumer pays and suffers.

Enjoy your August, but also take care.

David King

Edenbridge

July 2018

AUGUST 2018

NEW MOON = 11th @ 1057hrs = Frequent showers + SUPER NEW MOON
1st QUARTER MOON = 18th @ 0848hrs = Changeable.
FULL MOON 26th @ 1256hrs = Rainy
LAST QUARTER MOON 4th @ 1917hrs = Fair.

11th August = Partial Solar Eclipse (extreme northern Europe)
12th + 13th August = Perseids Meteor Shower

DoP = 6th Transfiguration Day(maybe??) AND 24th St Bartholomew.

Highest spring tides 11th to 15th

PERIGEE 10th @ 1906hrs: APOGEE 23rd @ 1225hrs

MET OFFICE NOTES: none.

BUCHAN NOTES: 6th to 11th cool period. 12th to 15th warm period (can be very hot)

- 1st Lammas (loafmass) - after Lammas the crop ripens as much by night as by day. First grain harvest of the year. Camomile flowering day.
- 6th Transfiguration Day ?DoP. As the weather this day of Transfiguration, so it will be for the rest of the year. This over-ambitious at best, unreliable, but of sequence, and as far as I am concerned cannot seriously be considered as a DoP.
- 10th St Lawrence If sunshine and fine, good autumn and much wine. Virgins bower flowering day. Perigee @ 1906hrs.
- 12th St Clare
- 15th Assumption Day If sunshine, much and good wine.
- 18th St Filbert Harvest day for cob-nuts.
- 23rd Apogee @ 1225hrs
- 24th St Bartholomew DoP. 1st day of Autumn. Maybe, on experience, 5th September is a better day of prediction. Sunflower flowering day.
- 28th End of Dog days.

Full moon for this month is called Sturgeon/Corn Moon.

Tree of the month up to 4th is Holly, thereafter is Hazel

General Notes and Comments

The harvest month.

Statistically, August, in this area, is the wettest month of the year.

If two full moons then sure to be wet

A cold August after a warm July is said to signify the approach of a hard dry winter.

When a hot dry August follows a hot dry July it portends an early and cold winter.

Can also be a 'Disaster' month. Lynmouth Flooding 1952 (15-16th). Fastnet Yacht Race Storm (1979). Folkestone Flooding 1996 (12th). East Devon Floods 1997 (8th).
Boscastle Flooding (2004) 17th.
Quite cold and sunless 2007

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.

Observe on what day the first heavy fog occurs, and expect a hard frost on the same day in October.

A fog in August also indicates a severe winter and plenty of snow. [very reliable and proven]

As August. so next February.

So many August fogs, so many winter mists.

In the first week of August is unusually warm, the winter will be white and long.
[reliable and proven]

All the tears that St Swithun (15th July) can cry St Bartelmys (24th) mantle WILL dry up.

[be warned however that this can be out by as much as +/- 3 days]

If St Swithuns is dry:- If Bartholomews be fine and clear, then hope for a prosperous Autumn that year. [after this day expect dull or fine weather, but not, as a rule, much rain]

August fills the barn and September the loft.

Dry August and warm does the farmer no harm.

A wet rainy August makes hard bread crust.

St Bartholomew's Day - a most important day. Brings cold dew (campers beware). The day to start collecting honey, and the day delicate flowers should be brought indoors. If the weather is settled this day, a fine Autumn is promised. If however it rains this day, then it will rain for 40 days thereafter (to 3rd October). If misty and a morning hoar frost, the cold weather will come soon with a hard winter too.

There is however a distinct possibility that 5th September will be a better Day of Prediction than 24th August, and, by experience is a better predilicter.

A warm dry August surely means a snowy winter.

August thunder promises fat grapes and fine vintages. [fairly shaky for hail will damage the grapes]

Late August, when 3 kestrels fly - 'twill be dry. [reliable]

Too much August sun disappoints the maid, the priest and the host, for it scorches up the vegetables.

A warm Autumn is usually followed by a long winter.

A poor forecast for wheat indicates wet weather in July and August.

A heavy apple crop points to a fine August and September.

When the dew is heavy in August, the weather generally remains fair. Thunderstorms in the beginning of August will generally be followed by others all the month.

Thunderstorms after the 24th are generally violent.

FULL MOON FOR THIS MONTH IS CALLED STURGEON/CORN MOON.

Tree of the month up-to 4th is Holly. Thereafter is Hazel.

MONTHLY AVERAGES FOR EDENBRIDGE (USING 1981-2010 FIGURES)

Mean Max:	24C	Mean Min:	12.1C	Mean Avg:	18.15C
Rainfall:	66.1mm	Sunshine:	198.2hrs	(day = 6.39hrs)	

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.

The following figures are for the average temperature at 12 noon and again at 4pm

DATE	Chandler & Gregory Barry & Perry	Brooks	Lamb	Buchan	Met Office	Season
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August 01
 August 02
 August 03
 August 04
 August 05
 August 06
 August 07
 August 08
 August 09
 August 10
 August 11
 August 12
 August 13
 August 14
 August 15
 August 16
 August 17
 August 18
 August 19
 August 20
 August 21
 August 22
 August 23
 August 24
 August 25
 August 26
 August 27
 August 28
 August 29
 August 30
 August 31

13th July - 7th August
 high risk period
 for
 high mean temperatures

10th - 15th highest mean
 temperature
 period

20th - 30th stormy

 peak day

30th July - 6th August
 Thundery
 cyclonic
 weather

16th - 30th First storms
 of autumn
 though
 anti-cyclonic
 may
 persist
 in
 south

6th - 11th
 cool period

 12th - 15th
 warm
 period

NONE

18/6 - 9/9
 high
 summer

