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FEBRUARY

PREAMBLE



TREE OF THE MONTH ROWAN 27/1 TO 17/2

Christmas Day prediction was 100% correct and Storm Declan arrived a couple of days early, the flooding problems did occur, but Storm Eleanor was spot on. Sadly the snow predicted for the 2nd January did not, in many parts materialise, in others it did; in the SE had the rains from the start of January to the 5th fallen as snow then nearly two feet of snow would have laid - maybe a time to be thankful for small mercies. Every now and then nature throws a curler, and I am only human.

However the benign period 10th January materialised and the massive storm with winds for everyone on the 17th with snow for many and rain for the rest. Once again north of the Birmingham > Norwich line had the worst weather. The fact that the temperature south of that line was not cold enough does not invalidate the methodology.

I therefore stick with the winter prediction as already given.

The Spring 2018 entry should now be on the website too - sadly very wet and cold, but for reasons I have given.

The challenge heard by those on BBC Radio Leeds in December I think has been vindicated.



THE scourge of the countryside.

THE greatest vandalism in the countryside - the flail tractor that slashes, mutilates and destroys hedges and habitat. After the flail has done its worst sheer wanton mutilation is the result. I appreciate that such hedges have to be trimmed and the days of 'the hook and stick' in the hands of a true expert are long gone. But what is done is just pure vandalism - albeit official vandalism - but still vandalism.

But such hedges should be trimmed in an 'A' shape, giving cover to birds and assisting growth, sadly the current vogue to square the tops at right angles. Progress??

Continuing from last month on trees and woodlands, I see that China will be planting from 2016/20, 6.66 million hectares of new forests/trees - an area the size of Ireland.

This puts to shame the Government promise here to plant 11 million trees by 2020 - here in the UK, currently the latest UK figures are just 1.7 million since 2015. An official report here from the Audit Commission tells the government it is sadly failing in its duties and promises.

Again from the water shortage warning of last month, I read that Affinity Water (formerly Thames Water) has warned Britain that it needs 'significant above average rainfall,' in January, February and March, to avoid water restrictions later in the year. Ground water sources in the Affinity area are significantly below average and these need to be recharged between October and March. So far some aquifers are below 24% of the long term average due to below average rainfall in 2017. Maybe the losses of 173million litres of water leaked from their pipes a day could be curtailed to alleviate the problem?

Still on the water supply subject, as I remarked last month, here in the SE we also have acute problems and the local water authorities have applied for emergency abstraction licences to take river water to replenish near empty reservoirs.

I work twelve months ahead, it gives excellent foresight as to what is to come, and also explains current weather. I see that April, May and June are shown as near continuously wet and July not much better, and despite recent January rains the reservoir problem still increases. Maybe nature has already seen this problem, hence the really wet Spring and early summer?

It is with great sadness I report the sad death in January of Philip Eden, the acclaimed meteorologist, author, writer, broadcaster and fountain of all weather knowledge, who died in January after a long debilitating illness. Many will have read his many books, many others will remember his daily reports on Independent radio for many years. I well remember his mellifluous but authoritative reports and his knowledge and education spurred me to get further interested in weather. Thank you Philip for your years of knowledge and devotion, I and many others will miss you. You will always be remembered as The Voice of weather. Amen.

**DATING A HEDGE:** Several requests for the formula for dating a hedge. This is known as 'Hooper's Law' from Dr Max Hooper whom published his original formula in his book 'Hedges in 1974. Hedges are now given official protection under The Hedgerows Regulations 1997; (No. 1160) of the Department of Environment based on age and other factors.. You take a hedgerow, then count the number of woody plant species and multiply by 100. There are some who say that a better calculation is a 30 yard length of hedgerow and then apply the formula of how many woody plants x 110. I have used both formulae and find the second to be more accurate.

**NEW WEATHER SATELLITE LAUNCHED;** On 17th November 2017, NASA launched a NOAA weather satellite to improve forecasts. NASA launched the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) the first of a series of four highly advanced polar-orbiting satellites, equipped with the next generation technology and designed to improve the accuracy of US weather forecasts out to seven days.

The designation of this satellite is currently JPSS-1; this however will be renamed NOAA-20 when it reaches its final orbit. Following a three month checkout and validation of the five advanced instruments, the satellite will become operational.

The satellite will provide meteorologists with observations of atmospheric temperature and moisture, clouds, seas-surface temperature, ocean colour, sea ice cover, volcanic ash and fire detection. The data will also improve weather forecasting, such as predicting a hurricane's track, and will help agencies involved in post-storm recovery, analysing storm damage and the extent of power outages.

The cost of this project for all four satellites is estimated as in the region of \$18 Billion!

To learn more about the above visit: <http://www.jpss.noaa.gov> and

<https://www.nesdis.noaa.gov/jpss-1>

[Editor's note: this is a most interesting project and reading the above is quite fascinating too - well worth the effort.]

**COINCIDENCES:** The January website was launched on Friday 17th December; up to this date the Met Office prediction for January was 'mild and benign,' (those who heard the Paul Hudson Weather show on the weekend of the 9/10th December will have heard the presenter's comments on this!). However, despite being quite dogmatic on this for some weeks on Saturday 18th December their prognosis changed to 'Stormy, colder and with snow in the North.' Coincidence then?

However, for the week prior to this I kept a close watch on eleven 'weather station/experts' opinions of what Christmas day weather would bring. These varied from deep snow to very mild, but did not offer BBQ weather, but windy was only mentioned once. The weekend newspapers however gave headlines of storms- severe storms, rain and other such headlines, therefore a gale force Christmas day, markedly, no snow. Another coincidence??

Christmas day 2016 was also windy but there was sunshine, which gave us the good fruit and grain crops. There is a Met Office stormy period 26th to the 31st December, and it always stormy from Boxing day onwards - a proven fact. What interests me as 'The Edenbridge weather prat,' is why two coincidences came within hours of the January website being published.

Google provide some brilliant software that tells you exactly who, when, how and what they extract from the website. Such analysis makes interesting reading indeed.

**SUMMER SEASONAL FORECASTING:** An interesting newspaper and media headline on 19th December concerning making the summer seasonal weather forecasting more accurate. This came from Research by the National Centre for Atmospheric Science based at Reading University.

A team of climate scientists found that the springtime sea temperatures in the North Atlantic can be used to predict rainfall in July and August much more accurately than seasonal forecast methods. The research, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, shows the technique could lead to much more useful seasonal summer forecasts for Western Europe, including the UK and Ireland. The research was led by Dr Albert Osso and co-authored by Prof. Rowan Sutton.

It is suggested that with such predictions "farmers could potentially make more informed decisions on planning and harvesting. Shops could have more information to plan their stocks of sun-creams or wellies. Forecasters still won't be able to tell you in May if an August bank holiday barbeque is a good idea or not, but they may be able to say if summer is likely to be wetter or drier than average, with much more accuracy."

Regular readers of this website will immediately seem some gaps and omissions in the above quote. Without wishing to be churlish concerning the research by the learned scientists, I offer a couple of comments; our forefathers 1000 years ago managed quite easily to tell, much earlier than May, what the weather at the end of August (Bank Holiday time) was more likely to be. They also, as I did for 2017, tell in January if the year was not going to be a BBQ year. The 1000 year old technology, in 2017 predicted the early warmest ever spring, a damp warm but not a BBQ summer, a damp stormy mild autumn and a damp mild stormy Christmas day, additionally all the named storms for 2017 were identified six months ahead. For farmers, as a rule, my experience is that they need to know 180 days ahead for forward planning. Therefore on 1st January they need to know the weather six months ahead for the hay, pea, beet, fruit and grain harvests - with such vital data they are then able to forward plan with confidence.

This same technology is what appears here on this website month in month out for the last few years.

Having made the above comments, and since the learned scientists are venturing at the periphery of what I do, I sent an e-mail suggesting that maybe the methodology here can be used by them for deeper scientific research with the aim of improving, where possible, advance predicting. Any developments will be reported here. Sadly as of 18th January nothing has been heard from my tentative offer.

SHIPPING FORECASTS - areas, inshore reports give better detail. For those up early, the shipping forecast on BBC Radio 4 at 5.20am issued by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency is a true cornucopia of detailed local weather - especially if you live adjacent one of the forecast areas. There is an excellent explanatory article contained with Wikipedia too explain the history and nomenclature of this forecast. Well worth a read - and a listen too.

Despite the lack of snow south of the Birmingham - Norwich line, the methodology is still very good, it does not need to get much colder for snow to fall. February is the month with least evaporation and always feels damp and cold, combine this with the warmest days from June 2017 (13th to the 23rd), when the identical dates in February provide the coldest days of the month, it could indeed be a very cold month.

With the absence of snow so far, I took two long 8 mile rambles locally, over different routes to identify any signs of spring in this last week. Before Christmas with the mild weather, I photographed, primroses, ox-eye daisies, cranesbill, white melitot, yellow corydalis, daisies, dandelions, rhododendrons, azalea, oxlips, cowslips all in full flower plus wild cherry trees in full bloom - all spring flowers, plus daffodils, crocus and spring snowflakes all showing good growth. Both walks this week showed no such flowers, a sole clump of 4 snowdrops and a clump of spring snowflake was all I could find. No colour at all. However, interestingly, another growth of ivy, holly and yew berries progressing well with literally thousands of hazel catkins too. Since nature tells me 90 days ahead what the weather will be, then it is fair to say that up to the end of March there will not be too much evidence of spring, since nature is re-stocking the larder for the birds again - and everything well up off the ground. It is such small changes that are all important and that give the evidence.

Thank you all for your interest and your comments, rude and otherwise, I reply to them all. Keep dry warm safe and healthy.

## FEBRUARY 2018

NEW MOON = 15th @ 2106hrs = Snow/rain  
1st QUARTER MOON = 23rd @ 0809hrs = Cold rain.  
LAST QUARTER MOON 7th @ 1555hrs = Fair & mild.  
NO FULL MOON THIS MONTH AND IS KNOWN AS A BLACK MONTH.

15th = PARTIAL SOLAR ECLIPSE (not Europe)

DoP = 2nd = Candlemass

Highest Spring Tides 2nd to the 5th

Perigee 27<sup>th</sup> @ 1450hrs; Apogee 11<sup>th</sup> @ 1417hrs

MET OFFICE NOTES: 24th to 28th stormy.

BUCHAN NOTES: 7th to 14th cold period.

1st	St Brigid	If white every ditch full.
2nd	Candlemass	aka as Purification Day of BVM. Day of Prediction. Cold weather at Candlemass means colder weather after the feast than before. Snow drop blossom day.
6th	St Dorothea	Gives most snow.
11 <sup>th</sup>		Apogee @ 1417hrs
12th	St Eulalies	If sun today, then good for apples and cider. 12th to 14th see below.
13th	Shrove Tuesday	So as the sun shines on Pancake Tuesday, the like will shine every day in Lent. Thunder on Shrove Tuesday foretelleth wind, store of fruit and plenty. When the sun is shining on Shrovetide day it is meant well for peas and rye.
14th	Ash Wednesday St Valentine	Where the wind lies today it will remain for all Lent. A dry Lent spells a fertile year. Crocus blossom time.
18th	1st in Lent	
22nd	St Peter	If cold will last longer - the night gives 40 days weather.
24th	St Mathias	St Mattee send sap up tree (usually indicates an early spring). If freezing today so for a month.

25th 2nd in Lent

27<sup>th</sup> Perigee 1450hrs

28th St Romanus Bright and clear indicates a good year.

The full moon this month is known as the Snow moon.

Rowan is tree of the month up to the 17th, thereafter the Ash.

### General Notes and Comments

*The warmest days in the preceding June give the coldest days on the identical dates the following February. The warmest June days in 2017 in the SE were from the 13th to the 26th June inclusive. Therefore expect some really cold days on then identical dates this month.*

*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 winter's 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 sever 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 Februir.*

*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  
miserable month.*

*See reference to St Catherine - 25th November.  
[At St Catherine, foul or fair, so 'twill be next Februir.]*

*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.*

*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.*

#### MONTHLY AVERAGES FOR EDENBRIDGE (USING 1981-2010 FIGURES)

Mean Max:	8.7C	Mean Min:	0.2C	Mean Avg:	4.45C
Rainfall:	54.1mm	Sunshine:	87.9hrs	(day = 3.14hrs)	

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, taken at the beginning and again at the end of the month.

1 <sup>st</sup>	5.7C	5.2C
29th	7.6C	8.8C

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

Stormy  
24th Jan - 3rd Feb Gales + rain or snow

8th - 16th Anti-cyclonic  
8th - 13th Anti-cyclonic. Fog probable  
peak day

7th -14th  
cold  
period

21st - 25th Cold spell  
peak day

26th - 9th March Stormy  
26th - 9th March Stormy

24th - 28th  
stormy  
period

20/1 - 29/3  
late winter  
20/1 - 29/3  
late winter

Feb-18 Date	Day	Moon	Weather	DoP	Saint/Holy Day	Other Day	Apogee Perigee	Equinox Eclipse	Met Office	Buchan	Super- moon	Highest tides
01/02/2018	T	(Full) (	(frost)			St Brigid						
02/02/2018	F			YES		Candlemass						2nd to 5th
03/02/2018	S											
04/02/2018	S											
05/02/2018	M											
06/02/2018	T					St Dorothea						
07/02/2018	W	LQ	Fair &							Cold period 7th to 14th		
08/02/2018	T		mild									
09/02/2018	F											
10/02/2018	S											
11/02/2018	S						Apogee					
12/02/2018	M					St Eulalies	1417 hrs					
13/02/2018	T				Shrove Tuesda'							
14/02/2018	W				Ash Wednesda	St Valentine						
15/02/2018	T	NEW	Snowy &									
16/02/2018	F		rain									
17/02/2018	S											
18/02/2018	S					1st in Lent						
19/02/2018	M											
20/02/2018	T											
21/02/2018	W											
22/02/2018	T					St Peter						
23/02/2018	F	1st Q	Cold rain									
24/02/2018	S					St Mathias						
25/02/2018	S					2nd in Lent						
26/02/2018	M											
27/02/2018	T						Perigee					
28/02/2018	W					St Romanus	1450 hrs					