

January 2013

Weather Wisdom

Weather-wise January is usually an unpleasant month and this year is no exception.

'As the days lengthen, does the cold strengthen?'

Weather

After the second wettest year on record for the United Kingdom the New Year started fine and dry. Fog was a problem during the second week and it was very very cold. Then on 18th January came the snow and even lower temperatures. These conditions lasted until the 26th when a thaw set in.

Nature Notes

Murmurations of Starlings roosting at Sawbridge Osier beds. The Starlings seem to be settling at various points round the village and then going down to Sawbridge at night.

At 8 am on January 18th I saw a fox walking leisurely down Woolscott Road in the freshly fallen snow. He stopped at our gate, put his head through the bars and had a leisurely look around. Then he slowly walked away.

Other nature sightings: -

Jay

Redwings

Fieldfares

Long-tailed Tits

Goldcrests

Bullfinches

Goldfinches

Nature Notes February 2013

Weather Wisdom

*Much February snow
April summer doth show*

The UK is in the grip of unusually cold weather with snow, sharp frosts and freezing winds. Arctic conditions prevail and temperatures are much colder than normal for this time of year. The winter weather is causing much travel disruption on roads, railways and airports. The freezing conditions are being caused by a blocking pattern of high pressure bringing cold winds from Scandinavia.

Nature Notes

The murmurations of Starlings roosting at Sawbridge Osier beds have come to an end. The crows have seen them off.

Bird food is much demand during this awful weather. The bird table is very busy.

Snowdrops are coming through. A welcome sight.

Daffodils are trying to put in an appearance but the awful weather is damaging them.

Two dead foxes found on the verge in Woolscott Road. They lay side by side and had apparently been shot.

March 2013

Weather Wisdom

“A dry March and a rainy April makes a beautiful May”

It is now officially spring and we have put the clocks forward one hour. The weather however does not know this and our Arctic winter continues.

March 2012 was one of the hottest ever.

Now the UK is in the grip of the coldest March since 1962. Once again snow, sleet and Arctic winds prevail. Storms are causing power cuts and snow drifts are forming high ground.

Weather men say the very cold weather is expected to continue into April.

Once again it is the Jet Stream giving us this cold weather. It has shifted a little south and caused a block of high pressure bringing us cold easterly winds from Siberia.

Nature Notes

- Sighting of what possibly could be a Blackcap
- A pair of Red-legged Partridges, seen several times in Woolscott Rd..
- Five foxes, including the two seen in February, have been shot in Willoughby.
- A hedgehog in village garden.
- The laying of the hedge at Haywood Lodge Nature Reserve has made a great improvement.

April 2013

Weather Wisdom

*'When April Blows his Horn
'Tis good for hay and corn.*

The first twelve days of the month were cold and miserable. We still had the easterly winds that have dominated much of our winter weather.

However, weeks of freezing conditions and snow suddenly gave way to almost balmy temperatures. The Jet Stream, which had been far further south than normal, had returned to a more typical position. The cold air had been pushed north bringing us much milder conditions.

Unfortunately this warm spell was short lived and changeable weather returned..

With this change in temperature signs of spring began appearing.

Nature Sitings

- Blackcap definitely identified and seen again in Willoughby.
- Barn Owl spotted in Longdown Lane.
- A pair of Red-Legged Partridge again seen in Woolscott Road.
- The Swallows are back in the village.
- Hare seen in village garden.
- Red Kite spotted.
- Baby hedgehog.
- Parakeet in Woolscott Road
- Brimstone butterfly in Woolscott Road

The signs of a late spring have begun. Bumblebees and a few butterflies are putting in an appearance. Spring flowers and trees are at last coming into bloom. Birds are busy nest building.

May 2013

Weather Wisdom

'Who doffs his coat on a winter's day, will gladly put it on in May'

May began with sunshine and some very welcome warmer weather.

The Bank Holiday arrived and much to our surprise the weather was lovely. It was the hottest day of the year so far.

The weather is gradually improving.

May has been clement, however the month is reported as being the coldest since 1996.

Nature Notes

- A hare spotted in Pye Court garden.
- A deer seen on the A45 between the Onley and Willoughby turn.
- Bullfinch in Woolscott Road.
- The cuckoo was heard on 18 May by Mrs Dorothy Ogle.
- Bees busy in Willoughby gardens.
- A display of bees in Mr Richard Jackson's garden was both seen and heard. The bees were attracted to the flowers on their Chestnut Tree. The tree looks most attractive in May when white flowers appear. They are held in erect clusters, rather like candles. Especially spectacular was the number of bees seen.

Butterflies are emerging weeks later than usual due to the cold spring. This is not necessarily a bad thing as the flowering plants butterflies depend on also have been delayed. Villagers report seeing the following species in their gardens :-

Orange Tip, Brimstone, Small Blue.

June 2013

Weather

'A swarm of bees in June is worth a silver spoon'

June 1st arrives and we celebrate the arrival of summertime. After such a cold spring perhaps we can hope for some decent weather.

June 2013 has been rather dry, in stark contrast to June 2012 which was the wettest June on record. We still have had to put up with cool winds which kept us with below average temperatures.

We did have one summer day when temperatures reached a dizzy 80 degrees but then the weather turned wet and windy again.

Nature Notes

1. Not a lot to report probably because members were enjoying the Willoughby Society Annual Dinner at the Shoulder of Mutton, Grandborough.
2. The Skylark was heard twice singing high up over Woolscott Road.
3. Bats flying in Woolscott Road.
4. A pair of wrens successfully reared their family in a bush by our back door. They didn't seem to mind our comings and goings and flew on 23 June.

July 2013

No Willoughby Society Meeting this month.

Weather

15th July St Swithun's Day

St Swithun's Day if thou dost rain,
Full forty days it will remain.
St Swithun's Day, if thou art fair
Full forty days, 'twill rain nae mair

The first week in July saw the Jet Stream moving back to its normal position and summertime began.

Maybe the fine weather is due to St Swithun and his meteorological miracles. It was fine on July 15th and after that, there were forty fine days. St Swithun the meteorological Saint, died on 2 June 863 and was buried in front of Old Minster, Winchester Cathedral.

Now we are enjoying a lovely summer. (13 July was the hottest day of the year so far.(28 degrees centigrade in Willoughby) We are trying to forget the wet memories of last year. We have enjoyed one of the longest heat waves in a decade and the weathermen are expecting the hot, dry weather to continue into August.

Nature Notes

- On the 3rd July Mr Richard Jackson spotted a female Great Spotted Woodpecker and juvenile in his garden.
- On the 4th July an adult Green Woodpecker and juvenile, were also seen in his garden.
- Bat spotted flying at dusk, at the Leys Woolscott Road.
- Skylark singing. A real treat.

AUGUST 2013

No Willoughby Society meeting this month.

Weather Wisdom

What is not cooked in August will be spoiled in September.

Weather

The hot weather continues. It has been very welcome after last year when we had the wettest summer in a century.

The good weather is expected to continue.

September 2013

Weather Wisdom

To Autumn

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness
Close bosom friend of the maturing sun
Conspire with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch - eves run.

John Keats

Weather

The weather continues to be pleasantly warm although morning mists give a hint of Autumn. At the end of the month cooler weather and lower temperatures prevailed. More typical for the month of September.

Nature Notes

The following species were sighted in Willoughby.

The Speckled Wood butterfly was spotted in Woolscott Road. A dark brown butterfly with creamy white patches on the wings. They are found in woodland, gardens and hedgerows. Are of medium size and come out regularly when there is sunshine.

Buzzard

Red Kite

Parakeet

Swallows

Hedgehogs

Goldcrest

Juvenile Green Woodpecker

October 2013

Weather Wisdom

*'If in October the leaves still hold,
The coming winter will be cold.*

Weather

The warm and dry September has been replaced with more typical October weather. No frosts yet but I think we have said goodbye to summer.

The month began with wind and rain and the leaves began to fall.

On 28 October we experienced the worst storm in a decade. Hurricane winds left homes and businesses without power. Rail passengers left stranded. It caused chaos through southern England and Wales. Here in the Midlands we had gale force winds but they were not as severe.

It has been called the St Jude's Day storm after the patron saint of lost causes.

Nature Notes

The following species have been seen in the village:-

Grey Wagtail
Sparrow Hawk
Hedgehog

November 2013

Weather Wisdom

When the wind blows on Martinmas Eve, (10th November)

there twill be for the rest of the winter.

Weather

Temperatures have dropped considerably and we had the first Willoughby frost on November 15th. However we have all enjoyed the mild autumn.

Winter does not officially start until 1st December. Hope the winter will be kind.

Nature Notes

Green Woodpecker spotted in Woolscott Road.

Grey Wagtail

Sparrow Hawk

Hedgehog

The Parakeet that has been living in Willoughby for some time has died.

December 2013

The best piece of advice about this month is given in an old saying dating from the 18th century.

'In December, keep yourself warm and sleep'.

Weather

The month began with relatively settled weather. From 5th December onwards we have had torrential rain and gale force winds and there seems to be no end to this wild weather. Storms brought winds of up to 90 mph and more than a week's rainfall in 24 hours. It was a miserable Christmas for thousands of families who were evacuated from their homes and had no electricity because of the floods.

It seems that the Jet Stream is to blame again as the weather men say it is further south than it should be this at this time of year.

As we go into the New Year the newspaper headlines are saying:-

No respite from the heavy rains and floods. Coastal areas, major roads and rail lines struggle to cope with the torrential rain.