



Reflections on Oldbury's Weather, February 2024

	
<i>Nandina, Skimmia</i>	<i>Helleborus Niger</i> [aka Christmas Roses]

I concluded that December 2023 had been certainly wet and was getting wetter into 2024, but there has not been much winter cold – that was to change in the New Year!

The news tells us that it is the wettest February, Peter certainly agrees that in his corner of the Oldbury, it is by far the wettest since his recordings started in 2001.

Rainfall:

February is on average our ninth wettest month since 2001 – but how will it rank in 2024? In 2024 these are February rankings: 10 years above average – 15 years below average, including a mere 6mm in 2023.

Years above average	February	Below Average	
		2010	50.0
2024	113	2021	50
2014	96.0	2009	49.0
2020	92	2011	45.0
2007	88.0	2015	38
2002	87.0	2017	37
2001	74.0	2005	35.0
2022	66	2019	34
2013	61.0	2006	28.0
2000	60.0	2008	25.0
2016	56	2004	24.0
		2012	22.0
		2018	21
		2003	16.0
		2023	6

Average 50.9

There was rain on **13/29** days with the **highest of 29 mm on 8 February**. The wet end of 2023 continued to a climax of **12mm on Tuesday 2 January** – that was half the rainfall for a wet December. Flooding took place after c4-5 January, following 3 days of rain.

[At least these people living in Abbey Terrace suffered: Mr and Mrs **Adrian Shelley**, Mr and Mrs **W O'Leary** as did our committee member, **Hannah**. We send our best wishes in the hope that the Environment Agency

devise a long-term scheme to protect them henceforth. There is anecdotal opinion that the EA had a plan which disappeared in the period of the pandemic – **that needs to be followed up.**] I then recorded “*Apart from 2 days, the rain stopped but then the ‘bleak midwinter winter’ descended*”. It turned into February’s “*sodden mid-winter*”.

Temperature: Both morning and afternoon temperatures were **above normal, respectively 111% & 108% respectively.** There were **only 9/29 mornings of freezing point and below with the coldest temperature being 25°F on the 24th** in the midst of a cool spell of a week. Peter did describe 15 days on variants of sunny, but some days were windy or showery. January had ended with “*the winter then ended less bleak with a high of 44°F [6.7°C] but it was “dull”.*” Thus, with the exception on 9 days, it carried on – *warm and wet* which is how we characterised Mediterranean climes when at school.

Conclusion:

The BBC¹ concluded that **England and Wales had their warmest February on record this year, the Met Office said on Friday.**

The average temperature for England was 7.5°C, with an average of 6.9C in Wales - 45°F and 44°F and 44.3°F here. The UK as a whole saw its second warmest recorded February – the Oldbury agreed in 2024, 2022 and 2019 which was similar to 2012.

Month	February	
	7 a.m.	3 p.m.
2019	32.5	44.6
2012	35.7	44.5
2024	37.2	44.3
2022	36.4	43.2
2023	33.9	42.2
2017	34.9	41.1
2020	35.3	41.0
2016	32.7	40.9
2014	34.7	40.4
2021	33.0	39.6
2015	30.4	38.4
2013	30.7	37.1
2018	29.1	36.8
Average	33.6	41.1

The BBC “*Farmers say they are losing crops to floods while less frost hurts the growth of trees like apples and pears.*” – *we certainly had the floods, but will we benefit from the 9 cold days?* **The last cold winters seem to be 2015, 2013 & 2018 and mornings in 2019.**

The BBC: “*The provisional statistics are in line with long-term projections of warmer, wetter winters due to climate change.*” That’s still below February 1998’s figure of 6.8C. But in a clear indicator of the recent impact of climate change, four of the UK’s 10 warmest Februarys since 1884 have all come in the last six years - **2024, 2023, 2022 and 2019.** **I think we can hesitantly agree?**

We did however find two drier days in that week to be able to cut the very long lawns and start to restock the compost bins. We also are delighted, as was Peter, with the cheer brought by late [2023] or early [2024] flowering **Christmas Roses.**

John Dixon

¹ By Kate Stephens & Ben Rich BBC Climate & Science and BBC Weather