

NUMBER 2.

"Sayings and Predictions about the Weather."

BYGONE SILEBY



CASSINGTON ROAD SILEBY

A SERIES OF BOOKLETS CONTAINING
HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT THE VILLAGE

SAYINGS AND PREDICTIONS

ABOUT THE WEATHER

It is not surprising that the most popular topic of conversation in Great Britain is the weather, as we live in a region where it is possible to experience the seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter all in the same day!

Although the Soar Valley does not usually suffer from the extreme conditions of weather, it often had more than its fair share of water, which has made it a most fertile region, with an abundance of meadowland. After a day of continuous rain, Sileby always had a flood, and during a wet season, it used to be said, "Sileby is nowt but mud."

Although many who lived in Sileby in Victorian times were employed in the hosiery and footwear factories, the village was still rural in its outlook, and a significant number of men still earned a living on the land. Thus, there was a real interest in weather conditions. In bygone Sileby, rain was a serious problem for the farm labourer in an age when no work meant no pay. An old lady who was a member of a large family, remembered how her father looked anxiously out of the window each night to estimate the weather prospects for the next day. She said, "When it rained, theer wor no wuk f'mi Dad, cos the farmer sent 'im 'um."

The sayings and predictions about the weather collected in the following pages, were in use in the village about 1900, and although some were original and local, others were known and used elsewhere. In this age when the weather forecast is a regular feature on television, radio and in the daily newspapers, the old sayings and predictions about the weather are gradually being lost, and our object is to record these on paper before they disappear altogether.

SAYINGS ABOUT RAIN

"Wet Friday, wet Saturday, wet week."

"Wet Friday, wet Sunday."

"It's teemin wi rain outside."

"He's like an April shower
That wets a stone nine times in an hour."

"If it's wet and cold in May,
There will be plenty of hay."

"If it rains on Saint Swithun's Day (15th July)
It will rain for forty days."

Jacob's Ladder - "When shafts of sunlight are seen coming through broken dark clouds, they are drawing up water, and it is a sure sign of rain."

SAYINGS ABOUT THUNDERSTORMS

" Clouds shaped like anvils in the sky,
Mean a thunderstorm by and by."

When haymaking, if a swirling wind spun hay in the air, they said -
" It's a sign there is thunder about."

" I allus get the 'lead ache when there's thunder about."

" He's like a duck in a thunderstorm."

Comfort to a child during a storm -

"Doont be frit, its ony thunder, the clouds are bumpin together."

" Aint it close ? Theer'll be a storm afore long."

" Never stand under a tree in a thunderstorm."

" Cover up your mirror during a thunderstorm."

" Thunder turns the milk sour."

" If the storm comes from over the Wreake, it'll be a bad un."

A boy bringing home his saturated little brother during a thunderstorm

" 'Sorl right Mam, ar Willie wor already wet through afore he fell
into the brook."

" It wont be much, it will soon blow over."

" Wot a terribul storm it wor. I sat on ar steers I wor so frit."

SAYINGS ABOUT LIGHTNING

" Lightning never strikes in the same place twice."

" Look yer, that's sheet lightnin'!"

" No it aint, it's forked."

" Cover up your knives and forks if it's lightning."

" Count the seconds after a flash of lightning, and each second is
a mile from the storm."

On warm summer nights, when lightning lit up the clouds, children were told -

" It's ripening the corn."

" It's lightning over the Forest, so it will soon be coming this way."

" Holly keeps away lightning."

" Fern protects the house from lightning."

SAYINGS ABOUT RAINBOWS

" It is God's promise that the world will not be flooded again."

Oil on a pool of water - "That's where a rainbow has been."

" Never point at a rainbow."

During the 1960's, a photograph of a double rainbow over the church was taken from the vicarage garden.

SAYINGS ABOUT FROST AND COLD

" I hope that sharpe frost last night aint done mi taters !"

" It's healthy weather, the cold kills all the germs."

" It's bitter outside, I'm chilled to the bone."

" It's nippy this morning !"

" The weather is always cold when the floods are out."

" It's as cold as charity."

" Sunshine and a white frost bring fog."

" Yo mind Jack Frost doont get yer !"

" Dry yer 'ands proper, else yowl get um chapped."

" It's always cold while the blackthorn is out."

" Aint it cowl ? Mi 'ands are like a block of ice !"

On a very cold washing-day:

" It's freezing the clothes as stiff as boards."

" After three frosts it will rain."

" By guy, it's nesh this mornin'."

" This cowl weather meks yer fale nesh."

" I'm starved wi cowl."

" It eint erf a binjer this mornin'."

A "duck's frost," was a short morning frost which soon disappeared when the sun shone, but it was hated by poachers, because their footmarks could be seen clearly.

SAYINGS ABOUT WIND

- " It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. "
- " The apples wont set after this cold wind. "
- " Hark at the wind moaning up the chimney. "
- " That wind from over Segfruf guz right through yer. "
- " It's that wild tonight, it'll fetch the chimney-pots off. "
- Washday - "It's a good drying wind today. "
- " Coyer rye, it's wild tonight ! "
- " When this wind drops, we shall have some rain. "
- On a windless day - "The clothes hang like dead men. "
- " As fickle as a weathercock. "

When the wind blows from Mountsorrel, it changes the church clock, by pressure on the lands. It has been know to lose two minutes after a very windy day.

SIGNS OF A CHANGE IN THE WEATHER

- " There'll be a change in the weather, I can feel it in mi corn. "
- " Red sky at night,
The shepherd's delight;
Red sky at morning,
The shepherd's warning. "
- " Red sky at night,
And in the morning grey,
Are two sure signs
Of one fine day. "
- " When the water-hens build low, it is the sign of a dry summer;
When they build high, it will be a wet summer. "
- " It's got real clammy outside. "
- " Anackrel sky,
Not long wet, not long dry. "
- " When the cat is frisking about, it is a sign of a change in the weather. "
- " A Mottled sky - Soon to be wet, soon to be dry. "

It has been observed that the west side of the church tower, facing towards Mountsorrel, provides a good indication of the weather. When it is humid, and there is rain about, the limestone becomes dark grey in colour. When there is a spell of dry weather on the way, the stone becomes much lighter in colour. After heavy rain, some of the stones are almost black.

" If the ash is before the oak,
Then we're in for a soak;
But if the oak is before the ash,
We'll have a splash and dash."

" Ne'er cast a clout till May is out."

" One swallow does not make a summer."

" It is as uncertain as the weather."

" Hang a fir cone outside the backdoor. If it opens, it will be fine,
if it closes, it will rain."

" At one time, the sight of a seagull over Sileby was a sure indication that there were storms at sea," said a Sileby man, "but nowadays, there are hundreds of them over this area feeding on refuse tips."

Pesimists about the weather

" Isn't it a loveley day ?"
" Ar, but yo wait till termorner!"

"This is beautiful weather we are having."
"Way sholl suffer fer it."

After two days of glorious sunshine -
" Way cud do wi sum rain fer the gardin."

S A Y I N G S A B O U T F O G

" This fog will clear if the sun comes out."

" The fog is so thick even the birds are walking."

" It's a real pea-souper."

" Yer cant see yer 'ond before yer."

" The fog is as thick as a blanket."

" Fancy, its ony two in the afnoon, yet it's as dark as night."

" This fog is so mucky, it makes yer eyelashes look black."

" I pity the poor 'osses in weather like this."

S A Y I N G S A B O U T F I N E H O T W E A T H E R

- " If there is a morning mist over the hills, it will be a fine day. "
- " It is going to be a fine day, the butterflies are out. "
- " The weather will be fine as long as there is enough blue sky to make a sailor (or a policeman) a pair of trousers. "
- " It's that 'ot, yer cud fry an egg on the causey. "
- " After the morning mist goes, it will be a scorcher today. "
- " If you see the old moon in the arms of the new, it is a sign it'll be fine. "
- " It's so dry, the peas are rolling out of the ground. "
- " The ground is as dry as a bone. "
- " It's muggy today. " (a warm damp atmosphere with an overcast sky.)

S A Y I N G S T H R O U G H T H E Y E A R

Sick people said, " I shall be better when the sun shines on both sides of the hedge. "

- " After Plough Monday, the nights begin to draw out. "
- " If the birds whistle in January, frost is sure to come. "
- " Where the wind is on Candlemas Day (2nd February)
There it will stay till the first of May. "
- " February fill dyke,
Either black or white. " (rain or snow)
- " Where the wind is in March,
It will be there till June. " (21st March - 21st June)
- " March winds blow down dead wood from the trees, and old people went out picking up sticks for fuel. So it was said, "March is sticking-time. "
- " If March comes in like a lion,
It will go out like a lamb. "
- " March winds and April showers,
Bring forth May flowers. "
- An April gardening warning:
" Yo bi careful, - clear moon, frost soon. "
- " April and May are the keys of the year. "

" He who weeds in May,
Throws all his work away."

" A cool May,
A good harvest day."

" As many frosts in May,
As there are fogs in March."

" A cold May,
Is good for corn and hay." (a hot May withers the young shoots)

" A pouring wet May brings a flaming June."

" A dribbling June,
Puts all things in tune."

" June hay is worth a king's ransom."

" The second week in July, and the second week in August, always
bring a few warm fine days."

Sibley Church Magazine, July, 1899:

" May harvest - a bountiful hay harvest and glorious weather for
cutting and stacking, should be followed by a thank offering
to Him Who is the giver of all good things."

Sibley Church Magazine, August, 1898:

" The weather. We have had an unusual spell of dry weather, no rain
fell from 25th May to 18th June, when at last the refreshing showers came."

" When the rooks nest high, it will be a fine summer."

A Victorian verses sung at school in Sibley:

" Little birds sing songs of praise,
All the summer long;
But in the chilly autumn days,
They forget their song."

" May ed better summers than this when ah wor a kid."

A saying in mid-September - " It begins to come down a bit at Jekko time."

" When the ice before Martlemas bears a duck,
Then look for a winter of mire and muck."

" If there's ice in November to bear a duck,
The Rest'll be nowt but sludge and muck."

" A dull November - a bleak December."

" Sun before seven, cloud or rain before eleven."

When a storm was threatening - " It looks blacker Bill's Mother's."

A child's plea on a wet day:

" Rain, rain, go away,
Come again another day."

During a heavy drizzle - " It's mizzlin wi rain."

" This is the sort what soaks you through."

" The swallows are flying low, look yer, there's rain about."

In heavy rain - "It's nice fer ducks !"

On a cold winter night, when it is pouring with rain:

" I wouldn't turn a dog out on a night like this."

" It's raining heavens hard."

" Cum in an tek yer coat off, yer wringin wet."

" A misty ring round the moon is a sure sign of rain."

" It's chuckin it down wi rain."

" It's raining cats and dogs outside."

" If the cast sits with its back to the fire, rain is on its way."

" It's coming down in buckets full."

" The moon looks watery tonight, we're bound to get rain."

" It looks like a clearing-up shower."

" The rain is coming down in sheets."

" When the moon is on its back,
There is water in its lap."

" Burning fern leaves brings rain."

" The rain is coming down like stair-rods."

" A snail crossing your path is a sign of rain."

" If you can see Charnwood forest clearly - it is going to rain.
If you cant see it, it's raining."

" If you step on a rain-beetle, it will rain.
But if you pick it up and bury it, the sun will shine."

" From Christmas until May,
Weak cattle decay."

" A green Christmas,
A fat churchyard."

If the sun shone on both sides of the hedge on Christmas Day, they said:
" It will be a good year for apples."

" A green Christmas brings a heavy harvest."

" Winter never dies in her dam's belly." (we are sure to get frost
and snow)

" As the day lengthens,
The cold strengthens."

WEATHER INTERPRETATION

A study of the weather conditions during the past hundred years, shows that the following predictions can be made with some accuracy:

A warm spring is followed by a cold summer and a wet winter.

A wet cold spring is followed by a cold wet summer, a cold dry autumn and a cold dry winter.

A dry warm spring is followed by a warm summer and a warm wet winter.

A dry cold spring is followed by a dry summer and a cold dry winter.

SILEBY FLOODS

After heavy and continuous rain, Sileby brook always overflowed. Photographs taken about 1900 show Brook Street looking like a Venetian canal. "It's through Jimmy Breed's," was the first cry to announce that the floods were out. Johnny Morris was usually the next to suffer, and the statement, "It's in at the front and out at the back," indicated the water was rising. "It's over the Fountain Bridge," meant that the entrance to the Inn in Brook Street was submerged, and during the great flood of 1912, the hand-rails of the bridge were under water.

It is said that one year, the flood came so quickly, the inhabitants of Brook Street were unprepared for the deluge, and a dog was drowned in one of the houses. In an attempt to prevent the water from entering the houses, the residents along Brook Street brought clay from the brickyard to seal their front doors.

During a flood in the days when there were thatched houses beyond the Fountain Inn, people borrowed barrels from the Inn, and employed them as stepping-stones to reach their dwellings.

"They're pumpin it out at Tommy Towles," was heard when the brook overflowed. Someone said, " We remember seeing odd things going sailing down Brook Street in the floods, oil drums and skips from the hosiery factory." The extent of the flood was estimated by the distance Cossington Road was submerged. "It's up to the Free Trade," was a common place expression. But the year it reached "Doctor Grey's," must have been an exception.

A S I L E B Y F A T A L I T Y D U R I N G A S T O R M

The Leicester Journal, published on 26th June, 1789, contains this new item:

" On Sunday evening last, Dorothy Shuttlewood a young woman of Sileby, was unfortunately struck dead by a flash of lightning in her dwelling house, just at the time she was passing to a cupboard, by the side of the fireplace, to take an hymn book. An iron crane projecting from the chimney, close to which the poor girl passed, it is supposed, attracted the lightning.

The Coroner's inquest sat on the body and returned a verdict - Sudden death occasioned by lightning."

L O C A L W E A T H E R I N O L D R E C O R D S

1562. In January, there was a great tempest which uncovered 411 bays of buildings in Leicester.

The Syston Parish Church Register contains these references:

1602. "The Harvest late, barley not got in before St. Matthew's Day, and on that day, no pease nor beans were got in at Syston."

1603. " A pound of good hops sold for 2s. 8d.
A strike of malt 17d.
A strike of wheat 2s. 4d."

1606. " Grinding was so scant by water or wind, that at the feast of St. Luke, people came from Hinckley to Syston to grind their corn."

1606. " The frost so hard and continued that men could not set forth their ploughs till after St. Valentin's Day."

1645. A local historian recorded that " during a terrible storm, there fell hail stones as big as common musket balls."

Some items found in the Loughborough Parish Church Registers:

1735. "On the last day of July, a tempest of thunder, lightning and rain which continued half an hour after nine, to half an hour after three in the afternoon, to the great astonishment of ye Parishioners and County both, it being on the Market Day, Thursday." The flooding was extensive, and water entering the lower rooms of the houses was so deep, it would " take an Horse up to the Belly."

1764. At 2.30 p.m., on 18th June, there was a severe thunderstorm. Lightning entered the house of Mr. Pochin, an attorney, and struck a bed-post. In the room there was " a suffocating sulphurous smell."

1780. On the 29th May, there was a memorable storm. Many windows in the town were broken by hailstones, "some as big as pigeon's eggs."

1782. " Also be it remembered that the Spring of ye same year was so wet that Corn was very late before it was all sown & Harvest was not all Carried in, in this Parish, till Novr. 7th. The price of Barley advanced from 18s. to 48s. Pr.Quarter."
1783. " A frost began on Christmas Day, and continued upwards of eight weeks, during which time many poor people had no work, and the inhabitants subscribed the sum of £123.4.0d. laid out in Bread, Coals, and given weekly to some poor as did not receive weekly from the Overseers. 380 families took part in this benefit."

This Public Notice appeared in Loughborough on 5th June, 1783:

"The White Apron Fair usually held on Holy Thursday, is, on account of the late bad weather postponed to Thursday the 12th. inst., being Thursday in Whitsun Week. The public are requested to take notice, the inhabitants of Loughborough have laid in fresh cheap and elegant assortment of goods in their different departments of trade, and if care, assiduity and taste are formed to please, they promise themselves a VISIT from their COUNTRY FRIENDS. N.B. Rational, entertaining and pleasant amusements mixt with Variety and Wonderful and Curious."

(It was the custom at that time to wear white aprons on Maundy Thursday, and the fair attracted visitors from all the villages around Loughborough).

1808. There was a heatwave during the summer. A newspaper reported:
" On Wednesday, 13th July, the temperature was 92 degrees. The heat was so intense that in consequence thereof, many people Died, especially they at work in the Hay Fields, also a great number of Horses, particularly Coach Horses drawing Stage Coaches."

REFERENCES TO WEATHER IN THE DIARY OF THE REV. JOHN DUDLEY, VICAR OF SILEBY.

1807. " September. Bad weather and sore throats in the village. Almost every inhabitant of the village had one or more attacks in summer, and specially in September. Acid gargles and Chermonita Tea in use. Swellings of the head and other parts of the body were common." November 26th: Snow, finished digging potatoes 27th."
1802. " Fine weather. Peach trees in blossom about the middle of March. Saw swallows April 21st. Heard Cuckoo 27th. June 4th, turkeys hatched. Apples generally destroyed by pests. Peaches and nectarines began to ripen last week. Grass very small, so that meat was never less than 6d. per lb. Cheese at Michaelmas Fair was £3 per cwt, butter from 14d to 18d per lb.
1803. " Weather hot till July 17th, when heavy thunderstorms came on, attended with large hail stones. Thunder incessant. Finished Hay making July 16th, quick and well got."

THE CHURCH WEATHERCOCK

A reminder that men, like the wind can change. St. Peter, after denying that he knew Jesus was brought to himself on hearing the crowing of a cock. The weathercock on the tower of the Parish Church was put there in 1914. An engraving of the church made in 1794 shows the former cock, in the same position. The Parish Church of Seagrave has a fish, one of the earliest Christian symbols.