

Title:
Whatever Happened to
Seasons

PSEUDONYM: STARGAZER

Forth Environment Link (FEL) Climate Change competition

'Whatever Happened to Seasons'

I recall when I possessed a summer wardrobe that came into effect during the month of May and was worn until September. At this point it was replaced by my winter wardrobe until the following Spring. The nature of each month was very distinct and one knew what type of weather to expect.

But, to be realistic, as an avid gardener I am very aware that the vegetables and flowers I nurture are actually coming into bloom too early in the year. Strawberries begin to form in the springtime; Forsythia is blooming in the early winter months.

Having moved house last year and left behind my beloved greenhouse I discovered to my astonishment that I was able to successfully grow tomatoes outside without even the need for greenhouse nurture at the outset. This was, without doubt, due to the unusually warm summer that we experienced.

The behaviour of wildlife is also changing. We experience an absence of certain species of insects such as bees or ants. Alternatively we have an unexpected invasion of other species. I recall an occasion whilst visiting Yorkshire some years ago when the ground was literally carpeted with ladybirds to such an extent that it was impossible not to stand on them. Why did this happen.

The volume and strength of storms over the past few years, causing massive destruction of trees is unprecedented. The period of the Covid infection marked a time when climate change was most evident. As someone who spends as much

time as possible outdoors I welcomed the fact that 2022/3 was an exceptionally warm and sunny year. However there were days when the heat was so intense that I would be forced to retreat inside. It was very obvious that something was seriously impacting upon nature and that weather conditions were going to continue to be unpredictable.

I very much enjoy watching nature programmes, particularly those presented by David Dimbleby. It is evident from watching these programmes that changing weather conditions are impacting adversely on the natural world and it is irreversible unless drastic changes are made to human behaviour. Animals, fish and coral reefs are being destroyed by climate change, chiefly caused by human behaviour which creates pollution of lands and seas.

Even for those of us who fully accept the effect that climate change is having on our world as we formally knew it there are many who are inclined to the opinion that this is a recent phenomenon with no acknowledgement that it has been gradually gaining momentum over centuries. One only has to think back to changes that have occurred, not only in our lifetime, but for generations in the past. Whilst events such as the industrial revolution, resisted by many at the time who were considered luddites, provided progress in terms of increased knowledge and improved manufacturing processes the process impacted heavily upon the environment. When we consider the blackened buildings created by the burning of fossil fuels and the frequent human experience of breathing in smog there was ample evidence that we were in fact destroying the planet and yet we continued without recognition of what was happening. Over decades we humans have taken for granted the beauty of our surroundings and the health-giving benefits of nature. We disregard the importance

of natural resources such as clean water, unsullied beaches and the abundant resources of the land and sea.

The technological age has led to us mining natural resources in order to produce 'must have' items such as mobile phones, digital communication and smart cars. We need to accept that such resources are finite and will eventually diminish and ultimately cease to exist. Sadly we regard convenience to ourselves to be paramount. We now pay for the environmental damage created by the use of plastics that pollute the seas and cause harm to living creatures. We live in a disposable society that demands regular replacement of household items and clothes. We dig holes in the ground to dispose of what we consider we no longer need; fashion overrules common sense.

I am constantly distressed by encountering litter along the paths of my frequent walks but this is largely accepted by the majority of the population; no-one seems to regard such behaviour as unacceptable.

One can only hope that the drastic reality of what is happening to our world is inevitable unless personal and political actions are taken to change human behaviour and we learn to appreciate the value of a clean, healthy environment.

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