



Cool Britannia

Iain Cameron, Adam Watson

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Cool Britannia Snowier times in 1580-1930 than since Global warming and climate change have become headline news in recent years. Climate, however, has always changed. Thick ice covered most of Britain in the last Ice Age, and prehistoric man thrived during a warm climate after the ice melted. In a later warm period the Vikings farmed in Greenland, but then came the cold of the Little Ice Age for several centuries up to the mid 1800s. Climatologists in the 1900s noted some old writings that told of more snow in northern Europe then, including Britain. For this authoritative new book, the most experienced observer of British snow patches has combined forces with the keenest recent enthusiast who has stimulated many new voluntary observers. A factual review, it gives more evidence of a colder snowier Britain in the 1580s to early 1900s than since 1930. The most comprehensive historical account yet published for snow patches on British hills, it also collates for the lowlands much evidence that was previously unpublished or in obscure, little-known sources. The authors recount a few past extraordinary cases of severe snow affecting British folk, even in lowland southern England. Their verbatim quotations from early writers give a remarkably live impression, so that readers feel they are out in the cold with these pioneers of long ago. The modern scientific evidence is clear that the cool centuries described by the authors for Britain also affected the rest of Europe and indeed all other continents across the globe. Hence this book will be of interest to many readers far beyond Britannia. Authors Adam Watson, BSc, PhD, DSc, DUniv, raised in lowland Aberdeenshire, is a retired research ecologist aged 80. He began lifelong interests on winter snow in 1937, snow patches in 1938, the Cairngorms in 1939. A mountaineer and ski-mountaineer since boyhood, he has experienced Scotland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, mainland Canada, Newfoundland, Baffin Island, Finland, Switzerland, Italy, Vancouver Island and Alaska. His main research was and is on population biology, behaviour and habitat of northern birds and mammals. In retirement he has contributed 16 scientific publications on snow patches since 1994. He is a Fellow of the Arctic Institute of North America, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Royal Meteorological Society, Royal Society of Edinburgh, and Society of Biology. Since 1954 he has been a member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club and since 1968 author of the Club's District Guide to the Cairngorms. Iain Cameron, 37, was brought up in lowland Renfrewshire, and works as an environmental, safety and health manager. Since 2007 he has been a co-author with Adam Watson on the annual snow-patch paper published by the Royal Meteorological Society in their scientific journal *Weather*. Although living in south-east England, he spends many weekends each summer and autumn in the Scottish Highlands, doing detailed fieldwork on snow patches. During preparation of this book, he inspected works by early authors at the British Library, and visited sites in lowland England where early writers reported extraordinary summer snow patches. Since 2008 he has stimulated and coordinated many new voluntary observers of snow patches across Britain. Through them, he contributed the first comprehensive note on snow patches in England and Wales in summer 2010, published in *Weather*.

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