



Yet again the sight of swathes of the UK under water dominated the news bulletins. The BBC repeated the footage of a hapless motorist sweeping past its cameras into the flooded ford, only to grind to a halt and have to push his car out of the deluge in front of a gawping nation. There was talk of the great Christmas getaway becoming the great Christmas going nowhere, with shopkeepers wringing hands at the prospect of their biggest trading day being called off. The Environment Agency had all hands to the pump (literally in some cases) as it struggled to keep drainage channels clear of debris.

What strikes clear about the latest series of flooding events is the geographical spread. In years gone by, certain places were prone to floods at the wettest times and people knew where they were. Recently, the whole country has, at one time or another, had to gird its loins and fear the worst. The Met Office, meanwhile, has predicted that next year will be one of the warmest on record – one of the 10 warmest globally in records that go back to 1850. Whether that is due to greenhouse gas emissions, the natural fluctuations in climate or a combination of the two is unclear.

- Ed Davey, in the meantime, has postponed a decision on whether to include aviation and shipping emissions in the UK's targets. That means, of course, he can now pretend the issue does not exist until after the next election. He didn't say whether that means there are no emissions from aeroplanes or ships – on the basis that is I refuse to mention it, it doesn't exist.
- Of a more pressing and direct impact on this little corner of the world is the decision to allow fracking for shale gas to recommence in Lancashire. There have been horror stories emerging from some parts of the world of the effects on water supplies, but that doesn't seem to bother some Members of Parliament who just want to see we get our 'fair share' of the spoils.

- Global warming and the associated perils and inconveniences are all now irrelevant, of course, because the world is just about to end – today! That is according to some very strange people who have latched on to the fact that the Mayans (you know, the ancient people who knew EVERYTHING about EVERYTHING) stopped bothering with their calendar after today. If I don't add any more columns following this one, you'll know the strange people are right and I've got my comeuppance. It would certainly bode ill for the Met Office's own predictions. There should be a category in the Environment Directory for 'soothsayers' or 'apocalypse predictors'.

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