Coldest Winter in 500 Years

Written by Administrator Tuesday, 04 December 2012 06:23 -

Coldest winter in 500 years was described in *New Scientist*, 7 February 2009, p46 which reported that on January 6, 1709 the temperature plummeted from Scandinavia to Italy - from Czechoslovakia to the west coast of France, and everything turned to ice. The sea, lakes and rivers froze, and the soil froze to a depth of a metre or more. Livestock died in their barns, chicken's combs froze and fell off, trees exploded and travellers froze to death on the roads.

Off Italy's west coast, sailors aboard English men-of-war died from the cold. One of England's most meticulous meteorological observers William Derham wrote, "I believe the Frost was greater (if not more universal also) than any other within the Memory of Man". 1709 holds the record as the coldest European winter of the past half-millennium. It was the climax of a period known as the "Little Ice Age" which began in the 14th Century AD and extended to the 19th Century AD.

No-one really knows what caused the extreme cold but it seems the sun's output was low, and there were some large volcanic eruptions 1707 and 1708, including Mt Vesuvius, Mt Santorini and Mt Fuji that would have sent large amounts of dust into the atmosphere. Dennis Wheeler, a climatologist at the University of Sunderland, UK, is working with the E.U.'s Millennium Project, which aims to reconstruct the past 1000 years of Europe's climate. Wheeler is using records of wind and weather from the Royal Navy. So far he has found some unexpected results. Cold weather in Europe usually results from freezing winds blowing in from Siberia in the east, but Wheeler found a predominance of southerly and westerly winds and many storms - conditions that normally bring milder weather. Wheeler commented: "This combination of cold, storms and westerlies suggests some other mechanism was responsible for that winter." He went on to say: "We need to explain the natural variation in climate over past centuries so that we can tease apart all those factors that contribute to climate change. But before we can do that we need to nail down those changes in detail. Climate doesn't behave consistently and warmer and colder, drier and wetter periods can't always be explained by the same mechanisms."

New Scientist

Editorial Comment: The Little Ice Age was preceded by a period known as the "Medieval Warm Period", which was warmer than the current warm period, but no-one was driving cars or generating electricity then. We do need to understand the natural variations in climate, but we also need to have the humility to admit that there are many forces at work that we cannot control (or tax), such as volcanoes, wind, sunspots, and God. We should then get on with being good stewards of the things God gave us dominion over, and put our trust in the Creator who

Coldest Winter in 500 Years

Written by Administrator Tuesday, 04 December 2012 06:23 -

can control these greater forces. (Ref. weather, environment, history)

Evidence News 8 April 2009