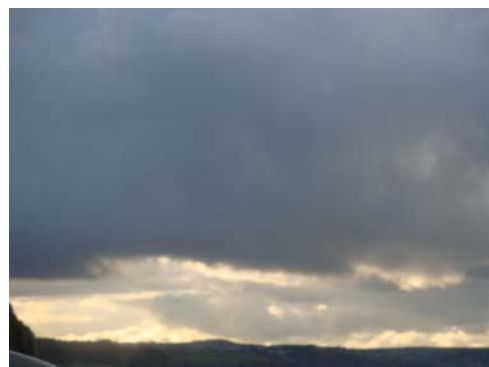


The last week has been a very interesting experience and a confirmation that our decision was the right one to make!

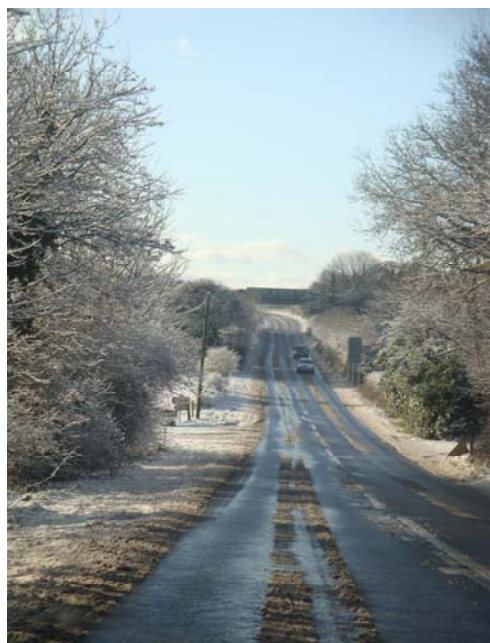


New Years Day we watched the snow arrive in Wales.

We had gone to Wales to celebrate the end of 2009 and the beginning of 2010 with friends!



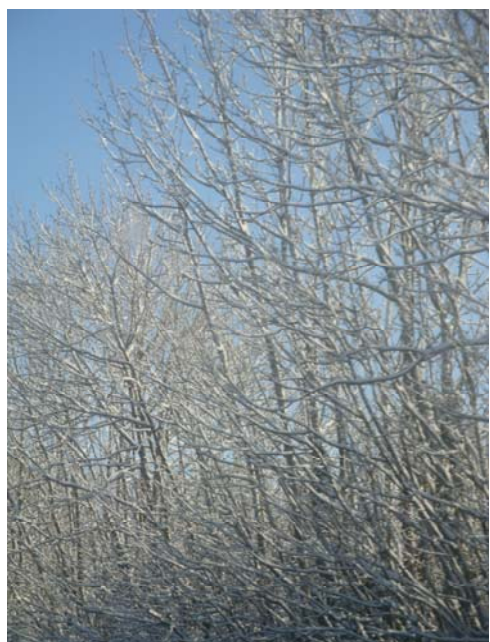
On New Years day we were on a beach not far from Fishguard when we watched the snow arrive on the West Coast of England. The week before Christmas 2009 we had experienced the challenges of snow in Kent (South East Coast of England), but this experience had been short lived.



We left from our New Years Eve celebrations in Wales on very snowy roads and drove over to Wiltshire, in a journey which took longer than the whole journey from the East Coast (Kent), to the West Coast (Wales). It was a slow and slippery journey.



Sunday 3rd saw us returning from Wiltshire to Kent again on very snowy roads - the start of the snow we were to experience this week...!



Today, a week later, we are still 'snowed in'.

It's interesting as one of the reasons for my move back to the sub-tropics was to ensure that we could spend a lot of time outdoors, and here we were being forced by the weather to stay in-doors.



Now we are suffering from what is known as 'Cabin Fever'!

The south of England is not the best place to live when it snows - we are not prepared for the unusual weather - airports close, planes are delayed and/or cancelled; railways battle, trains are delayed and/or cancelled; roads become impassable.

On Monday and Tuesday it snowed, but not the extent that it worried us. People were still driving around - getting into work - going shopping - getting out. Trains were running, planes were flying, and people were driving!

Wednesday I got into the car to drive to the office. Having worked in countries like Switzerland this really highlighted the difference in our preparation for this type of weather. Although the roads were gritted they didn't give me a feeling of confidence, and no I don't have snow tires on my car. Of course, if I had been in Switzerland I would have done so!



It snowed all day - this photograph on the left shows the garden as it was getting it's first covering of snow. The photograph on the right shows the level of snow as I left the office

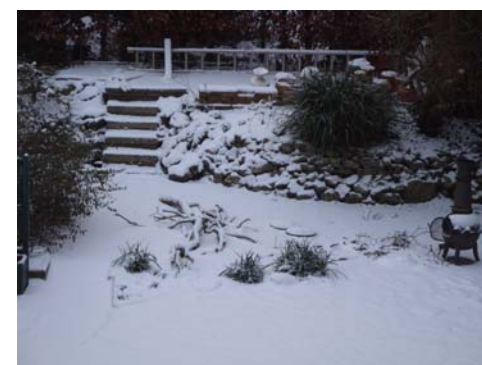


to drive home - as it had been snowing, I left early! The drive home was interesting as a lot of people had decided that it was a good idea to go home early - the roads were busy and the traffic was slow.



It snowed all Wednesday night and into Thursday.

Unknown to us this was the start of our blizzard experiences. Yes the back garden looked magical - white, shiny, glittery - the front garden and the roads, the same, but they are a different story! How are we to get out and about?



The light on Thursday afternoon, when two bands of clouds went through town with sunlight between them, was intriguing. Although it was obvious that the clouds were bringing in the next band of snow and snow showers, the light was incredible.



Friday morning very early the spotlights in the back garden went on and there was a fox trying to work out what 'snow' was.



It was fascinating watching him work his

way down the garden pathway, across the lawn and over the fence into next door's garden. Yes we had been on the receiving end of lots more snow. The garden at this point was buried under about 4 or 5 inches of snow.



The road that our driveway leads off was under the same volume of snow and untreated of course! One of the wonderful things about this road - now an ice rink with snow on top - was that it is downhill to the main road! By mid-morning no-one had driven down our road - a number had walked into town for more groceries and/or shopping.



Throughout Friday we watched snow flurry after snow flurry cover the ground with snow.

The temperatures remain around the freezing mark – between -2C to 0C. With these sort of temperatures the snow isn't melting! Now we have a layer of ice covered by snow on the untreated roads.

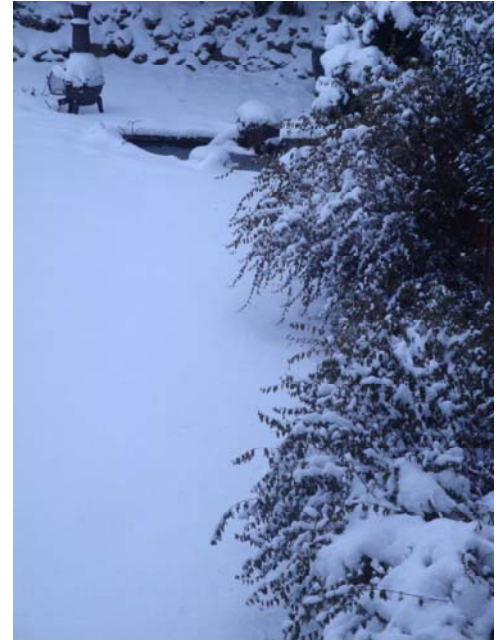
By now we are becoming avid watchers of the weather programs on TV and the weather pages on the internet ... what next? Yes you've guessed, it snowed all through Friday night and into today. By the end of Friday, we were had close to 6 to 7 inches of snow around us.

Throughout this week the airports have suffered - travellers are stuck trying to get to destinations or at their destinations trying to get home ... trains battling - travellers stuck at home or at work ... roads - well our experience today is that they are practically impassable. The gritting lorries have been out on the main roads but the majority of roads remain untreated.



We woke up this morning to more snow!

Today we've watched the blizzards and the wind with no let up. At one point during the early afternoon I was unable to see the end of the garden because of the quantity of snow coming down, which was also being blown around.



To add to the snow storm, snow was being blown off roofs of houses, cars, fences, trees, shrubs. Now we've got about 10 inches of snow in the garden and on the road leading to our driveway!



This evening, as I write this blog, the world out there seems very peaceful and quiet; but is this the calm before the next blizzard?

Probably ...!

We understand that our next snow 'flurry' (shower or blizzard) is due overnight.

Roll on next winter when we will be in Madeira and experiencing a full winter there for the first time!

