

Tiptoeing in the snow, a f-f-frozen pheasant



Picture: RICHARD BROOKS

HE was probably wishing auntie had given him the usual pair of socks for Christmas.

For as this cock pheasant picked his way through the snow on tiptoe yesterday, he looked none too happy with the chilly ground beneath his feet.

Puffed up against the cold, he stepped gingerly across a frozen field near Fakenham, Norfolk, no doubt hoping Mr Fox hadn't unwrapped any winter woollies either and was shivering at home instead.

But it's little wonder he was feeling the cold.

The Met Office predicts this will be

By **Tamara Cohen**

the coldest December since records began 100 years ago.

Boxing Day fell right into line, with temperatures staying stubbornly below freezing in many areas.

Snow fell in Northern Ireland and Scotland - and more is expected tomorrow, spreading south into central England.

But although 6in is predicted in some areas, forecasters believe this will be the last snow we'll see for a while - a prediction that's likely to please humans and birds alike.

How the Christmas cold turned us back to the box

By **Simon Cable**
Showbusiness Reporter

WHEN it's cold out there, all you want to do is snuggle up in front of the fire and watch TV.

And as temperatures dropped as low as -18.2c (-0.8f) in some parts, giving us the coldest Christmas Day on record, that's exactly what we did.

A peak audience of 27.8million switched on their set that day - the highest audience for almost a decade.

The figure is up three million from last year - and is the highest Christmas Day audience since 2001, when a peak of 27.9million viewers was recorded. It means that at one point, almost half the population tuned into primetime shows.

Once again, it was the BBC which offered the most popular fare, providing eight of the top ten programmes.

More than ten million tuned in to see the Doctor Who Christmas special.

But the most popular show of the day was an hour-long episode of EastEnders. An average of 11.4mil-



lion watched Stacey Branning exit Albert Square. The Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special also proved very popular, gaining an average audience of 9.4million.

Meanwhile, the Queen's speech was seen by 6.5million.

Coronation Street was the most watched ITV1 programme, drawing an audience of nine million,

making it the sixth most-watched show of the day.

But Emmerdale was the only other ITV1 show to make it into the top ten with 7.2million viewers - up two million on last year's Christmas episode.

Although BBC1 showed all the top five programmes, the channel's audience share was slightly down

CHRISTMAS DAY VIEWING

Programme	Channel	Audience
EastEnders	BBC1	11.4m
Come Fly With Me	BBC1	10.3m
Doctor Who (Left)	BBC1	10.3m
Royle Family	BBC1	9.9m
Strictly Come Dancing	BBC1	9.4m
Coronation Street	ITV1	9.0m
The One Ronnie	BBC1	7.9m
Shrek 3	BBC1	7.2m
Emmerdale	ITV1	7.2m
BBC News	BBC1	7.0m

1,000 WAYS TO CHANNEL HOP

LESS than 30 years ago we could flick between just three TV stations - and most of us probably remember the launch of Channel 4 in 1982 and Five in 1997.

But 2011 will mark another milestone, when the 1,000th channel is licensed by the broadcasting watchdog.

According to Ofcom, 948 stations are currently broadcast in the UK, including those on terrestrial, cable, Freeview and Sky. They include 73 non-English channels, 67 pornography, 45 music and 29 children's stations, as well as 45 home shopping

channels. Only the U.S. has more choice, with 1,783.

Mark Lawson, who presents Front Row, Radio 4's arts programme, said: 'There is no doubt that the 1,000th TV licence will have a big symbolic significance. But the danger, as most people will probably acknowledge, is that the opening up of television was never about ensuring quality - it was mainly about quantity.'

The rise in channels has been attributed to the low cost of running a TV station here. It costs £2,500 to bid for a licence and then an annual fee of £1,000.

from previous years, registering 30.4 per cent overall throughout the day, compared with 31.3 per cent last year and 34.2 per cent in 2008.

That figure has been put down to the growing number of digital channels.

The BBC's director of vision, Jana Bennett, said: 'I've been very proud

of all the programming across the BBC this Christmas.' And BBC1's controller, Danny Cohen, said: 'I'm delighted to see that BBC1 was so popular on Christmas Day.'

'With flying sharks on Doctor Who and festive glitz from Strictly, we aimed to offer something for everyone on this special day.'

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