

SNOWMAN VISITS VENICE

Russia joins the export drive. Icy gales sweeping westwards from Siberia drives the Adriatic to Italian doorsteps.

Even Venice - long a favourite of King Sol - is hit by the wintry blast. St. Marcus Square - mecca of all tourists - changes its familiar picture-postcard look, as the city's beauty spots hide themselves beneath a snow blanket.

Venice has one advantage over other towns. There is no need to sweep the snow off the streets. With the canals likely to freeze up, this Siberian-like winter may yet force Venetians to pull up their blinds and put skis on their gondolas.