

July 2003

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1961-1990.

UK overview

It was very warm across all parts of the UK, with the Northern Isles around 3 °C higher than their average mean temperature for July. Northern Ireland had significantly below average sunshine.

Highest temperature of the month was 33.6 °C at Wisley (Surrey) on 15th. Cardinham (Cornwall) reported 58 mm in the 12 hours ending 0900 GMT on 25th.

England and Wales diary of highlights

Changeable and very warm or hot, with some thunderstorms.

1st to 3rd A depression in the North Sea brought a cool unsettled spell, with rain and thundery showers in many places. Some general rain in the north-east on the 3rd.

4th to 11th The weather became mostly dry with rising temperatures as the low pressure moved to Scandinavia and high pressure settled close by to the south. Some rural areas had a few mist or fog patches on occasions around dawn. Atlantic fronts skirting northern districts on the 8th gave some rain and drizzle. Most days saw long sunny periods. Very warm or hot conditions occurred in many parts during the 9th and 10th. A weak cold front passing later on the 10th introduced fresher air by the 11th.

12th to 15th With high pressure over Scandinavia, sunny, dry, hot weather soon returned as air was drawn from the continent. Local mist and fog patches cleared quickly but thundery rain intruded into the south-west at times later. Wisley in Surrey reached 33.6 °C on the 15th while Maidenhead had its hottest July day since 1976.

16th to 20th More unsettled as Atlantic depressions encroached, but it stayed mostly very warm or hot at first. There was widespread thundery rain, heavy at times during the 16th and 17th, as a low moved north-east across the country. St Athan in the Vale of Glamorgan had over 50 mm in 12 hours on the 17th. Western areas had more rain at times on the 18th, 19th and 20th, while eastern areas were sunnier and drier. Residual hot air over the south-east and East Anglia on the 19th gave way that evening as thunderstorms broke out, some lasting into the early hours.

21st to 23rd A breezy spell with sunny periods and some scattered showers mostly in the west and north.

24th to 26th Atlantic depressions to the north-west brought an unsettled spell with rain bands depositing copious amounts in places, especially over south-west England, Wales and the Midlands. Cardinham in Cornwall received 58 mm in 12 hours ending 0900 GMT on the 25th. Thunder was reported from Lyneham in Wiltshire during the 26th.

27th to 31st After some thunderstorms in the south-east and East Anglia early on 27th, further rain and showers with cooler temperatures affected many places. A small low moved eastwards over northern England during the 30th bringing heavy thundery showers to north-west England and eastern England down to East

Anglia, with tornadoes reported from Sculthorpe in Norfolk. As the month closed more rain moved into western and north-western areas.

Scotland diary of highlights

Warm and sunny first half, unsettled second half.

On the 1st a depression over the North Sea gave north-easterly winds over Scotland, with showers in the south-east and fair weather in the north-west. During the next few days the depression became slow moving over the south of Sweden, with northerly winds over Scotland. It was mainly cloudy in the north, but the 3rd and 4th were brilliantly sunny in the south, with temperatures rising to 25 °C in places.

From the 6th to the 12th there was high pressure over England and mostly weak fronts crossed Scotland. There was a lot of cloud, but rainfall amounts were small and temperatures were near average.

Hot and sunny conditions covered most of Scotland from the 13th to the 17th as an anticyclone moved from the North Sea to Scandinavia. At first winds were southerly and the sunniest weather was in the east. The wind gradually backed into the south-east and mainly cloudless skies extended to the whole country. By the 17th low pressure and cloudy conditions affected the south. The temperature reached 28 °C somewhere on every day, with a peak value of 30 °C at Prestwick on the 16th.

A long period of unsettled weather began on the 18th and lasted for the rest of the month. Low pressure was established to the west or north, causing winds over Scotland to blow from between south and west. Fronts crossed the country at regular intervals, bringing associated bands of rain, with showery interludes between. However, there were no spells of prolonged or heavy rain or strong winds. The general theme was one of large amounts of cloud, with rain never too far away. June and July combined was the warmest since the Scottish temperature series started in 1961.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

Warm but wet and dull.

Overall, July was warm, with many areas recording maximum day-time temperatures of over 20 °C for over half the month. While night-time temperatures stayed in double figures throughout the month, ranging between one and eight degrees above average for this time of the year. However the weather was rather unsettled with a mixture of long sunny spells, interspersed with showers, which were at times thundery and heavy in nature.

1st to 6th Light rain or showers, along with some sunny spells were recorded at the start of the month in most areas across the province. Although day-time temperatures were initially around normal for this time of the year, they became cooler between the 3rd and 6th. Temperature values recorded were one or two degrees below average over this period. It remained fairly dry during this period, however rain did affect most areas on the 6th, particularly in the north of the province.

7th to 9th Temperatures increased slightly during this time, though it was cloudy, with some light rain and drizzle recorded in all areas. The 7th and 8th were dull, though it became sunnier on the 9th.

10th to 12th A weak frontal system moved across Northern Ireland bringing cloudy and dull conditions. Temperatures were around normal during this time though day-time temperatures recorded on the 11th actually fell below normal throughout the province. Although cloudy, little or no measurable rain was recorded anywhere.

13th to 19th High pressure dominated the weather over much of this period bringing very warm and at times hot and sunny conditions throughout Northern Ireland. Most areas recorded over 20 °C on each day during this period; temperatures of over 28 °C were recorded on the 16th. On the whole it was fairly dry though some showers did occur which were locally quite heavy with thunder on the 17th. In the south-east of Co Down 70 mm of rain was recorded over a 14-hour period, which caused widespread flooding in the area.

20th to 31st Throughout the rest of the month a succession of bands of rain and showers tracked across the country and brought rather unsettled conditions to the province. Some of the showers were quite heavy and thundery in nature, most notably on the 20th, 24th, 27th and 29th. Between 12mm and 25mm of rain was recorded in some areas on these dates. Over this period day-time temperatures were slightly lower but still above normal by one or two degrees while night-time temperatures were warm and at times humid. In between the rain and showers there were some good sunny spells, though little or no sunshine was recorded on the 28th, 29th and 31st.

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