

October 2001

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

UK overview

A very warm month over the whole of the UK. It was also very wet across England, Wales and Scotland, with only Northern Ireland experiencing less than average rainfall.

Over 90 mm of rainfall was reported in the Cambridge area on the 21st, causing severe flooding. A temperature of 25.3 °C was recorded at Herne Bay on the 13th.

England and Wales diary of highlights

Unsettled, wet and very warm. Frequent spells of rain and showers.

1st to 8th With low pressure close by to the north or west, conditions were often unsettled. Blustery thundery showers on the 1st became more scattered during the 2nd to 4th, however there were good sunny periods. After some rain in the west on the 5th, there were more blustery showers on the 6th, some being heavy and thundery in south-east England and East Anglia. In the Norfolk Broads a tornado caused local destruction. On the 7th Mumbles reported a 67 knot gust as a deep low moved north-east from the south-west approaches, bringing stormy conditions to much of the region. There were copious amounts of rain and later frequent squally thundery showers, many places received more than 50 mm in 24 hours. More thundery showers occurred during the 8th especially in the south.

9th to 13th With high pressure not far away, quieter changeable weather prevailed. Apart from thundery showers in the south on 9th and some occasional rain in the north-west and west at first, it was mainly dry. There were long sunny periods, and it became very warm with some morning mist and fog patches. Temperatures brushed past 25 °C at Herne Bay (Kent) and in London on the 13th, this is exceptionally warm for so late in the year.

14th to 24th Complex low pressure was centred to the west then south-west of the UK, this brought mostly warm and unsettled weather with plenty of rain and showers on most days apart from the 16th which was mainly dry. From the 19th a number of active low centres and associated fronts crossed the region, bringing more bands of rain and showers often heavy with thunder. Overnight 19th/20th a swathe of rain gave 50 mm in 4 hours at Hereford, with 26 mm falling in one hour. Another disturbance hesitated over East Anglia on the 21st depositing 90 mm at Cambridge with severe local flooding in Cambridgeshire.

25th to 28th Unsettled at first as depressions passed the UK to the north-west, a cold front moving erratically eastwards gave the south-west and Midlands a very wet day on the 26th. The 27th and 28th were mainly dry, sunny and warm as high pressure began to assert itself.

29th to 31st A windy end to the month as a deepening low off Scotland moved east to southern Scandinavia. The 30th was very warm everywhere, many places touched 20 °C inland. A cold front moved south-east later bringing some bursts of heavy rain overnight and introducing breezy, chilly and fresher conditions for the 31st.

Scotland diary of highlights

Record warmth in east.

Winds in October blew almost exclusively from between west and south-east, with hardly any outbreaks of cold air at all. As a result, it was very warm, with many station records being broken in the east of the country. The previous warmest October in many places occurred in 1969.

The wind flow in October may be roughly summarised as follows.

First week south-westerly blowing around a depression in mid-Atlantic.

Second week westerly with the low north of Iceland.

Third week south-easterly blowing around a depression to the south-west of Ireland.

Fourth week Southwesterly with lows travelling between Scotland and Iceland.

The first couple of days saw heavy showers in the west, with Tyndrum and Cassley (Sutherland) recording 35 mm and 41 mm of rain on the 1st and 2nd respectively. On the 5th warm air spread north and the temperature at Durness reached 20.3 °C.

The 8th was a wet day as a depression crossed Scotland, but later in the second week there was some fine weather in the east, with the temperature reaching 20.2 °C at Peebles on the 11th.

The south-easterly spell of weather lasted from the 14th to the 23rd and comprised a fairly dry spell (16th to 19th) sandwiched between wetter episodes. Bridge of Cally (Perthshire) recorded 41 mm of rain on the 14th and the lowest temperature of the month (1.5 °C) occurred at Cassley on the morning of the 16th.

The 24th to the 28th saw mostly showery weather, although a band of rain crossed the country on the 25th. On the 29th and 30th a band of warm and humid air ahead of a slow moving cold front brought heavy rain to the north-west Highlands. At Lochcarron nearly 200 mm of rain fell in 60 hours, and a landslide blocked the nearby road and railway.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

Warm and dry

1st to 6th Warm, bright and showery. Sunny on 2nd but dull on 5th.

7th to 8th Conditions much more unsettled and wet. Warm and bright on 7th but cool and dull on 8th.

9th to 13th Warm with only occasional showers and good spells of brightness.

14th to 18th Warm but unsettled with more frequent and heavy showers. Very warm and wet on 17th but drier and brighter on 18th.

19th to 21st Cool and dull with lowest minimum temperatures of the month being recorded on the morning of 21st.

22nd to 25th Warm and brighter with showery conditions.

26th to 31st Cooler and largely dry for period 27th to 29th. Very dull on 29th and 30th but bright again on 31st. Lowest maximum temperatures of the month were recorded on 31st giving a cool, bright and largely dry day to end the month.

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