

By the 26th a deepening area of low pressure was approaching the British Isles from the Atlantic whilst a weakening ridge covered the Midlands. The day was one of light southerly winds and broken cloud with a few local, and light, showers with maximum temperatures around 21C. This deepening depression was off Shannon by 9 a.m. on the 27th driving an active cold front NE wards across the country. This brought spells of heavy rain and fresh to gale force winds to some exposed coasts and hills, though the Midlands fared much better than most on this occasion.

The deep parent depression lay to the NW of the country on the 28th and this drove frontal systems with their associated bands of heavy, and often thundery, rain NE towards the North Sea. Between these lay areas of relatively sunny weather which brought maximum temperatures to 20C. During the late afternoon and evening a belt of moderate rain spread from the south west giving a period of an hour or so of wet weather before finally clearing around dusk.

By the 29th a weak ridge covered central England, with low pressure approaching from the SW which was expected to track along the Channel during the late evening and night. The frontal system from this spread rain, some quite heavy, across the Midlands around midnight, the low pressure centre moving into the North Sea early on the 30th. The system brought 12.5mm of rain to the area in a little over 7 hours, leaving in its wake rising pressure with sunny spells during the afternoon of the 30th. In this sunshine, humidity levels rose appreciably, producing a rather sticky day with maximum temperatures of 20. C. The final day of the month saw a depression tracking across the country, the attendant fronts producing spells of heavy rain accompanied by thunder around lunch time. Some parts of the Midlands had quite severe flooding, though here rain amounted to just 8.5mm.

AUGUST 1997.

August was a very warm month. The mean maximum of 24.1C was the highest since 1975 and the second warmest on file. The mean minimum of 13.8C was the highest recorded in data extending back to 1956 whilst the mean daily of 19.0C was the highest since 1995 and the second warmest on record. In all 15 days recorded maxima above 25C with two periods of 7 consecutive days each, the highest daily to 30.6C on the 10th.

The month was not as sunny as in recent years being the least sunny since 1993. Two days were sunless whilst 9 days saw in excess of 9 hours each and 3 days with over 12 hours each, well below the figures for 1990 and 1976.

Rainfall was marginally below normal at 67.3mm with 13 rain days of which 4 saw in excess of 5mm and 3 in excess of 10mm.

Thunder occurred on two days though no hail was recorded.

In terms of precedence, August ranked sixth in order of excellence from the last 42 overall. In terms of mean daily temperature the month ranked 2nd in the last 42 behind 1995 whilst the ranking for mean daily sunshine put it in 18th position.

THE SUMMER OF 1997.

The summer has not been particularly noteworthy, ranking 17th in the past 42 years. This has been due to a very poor June which saw 155.5mm of rain and just 134.5 hours of sunshine. The total of 256.6 mm of rain for the season put it on par with 1960 in 4th equal wettest position since 1956. June was particularly wet providing almost 61% of the total fall. The 41 days on which summer rain was recorded, was however, about average for the season.

The total of 540.8 hours of bright sunshine was a little above average as were the days seeing no sun at all. Of the past 42 summers, 20 have been sunnier, though the maximum daily sunshine of 15.5 hours recorded on June 1st was a mere 0.1 hour below the all-time record.

In terms of mean daily temperature this summer falls alongside those of 1985 and 1990 in 6th equal position of warmth. In this case it was the very warm August which helped lift the figures, producing as it did two runs of hot days with maximum temperatures in excess of 25C.

The incidence of thunder was slightly below average, as was that for hail. Winds were light, though a gust to gale force occurred on June 7th when speeds reached 34 knots.