

SEPTEMBER 1997.

From the 1st to the 3rd low pressure dominated the UK from a depression to the north of Scotland which pushed frontal systems across the area giving spells of showery rain. The 2nd saw a period of over 5 hours rain and the 3rd a spell of 3 hours, though temperatures remained relatively high peaking at 20.6C on the 2nd. Pressure began rising on the 4th which was a day of almost unbroken sunshine totalling 12 hours, and a maximum temperature of 20C.

The 5th was a day of sunny spells and showers as troughs crossed the region from the Bristol Channel. At around 14.00hr the rain was heavy, falling at a rate of 26mm per hour for a short period. This pattern of showery activity continued on the 6th with the low pressure area moving slowly north eastwards and filling.

Pressure began rising on the 7th as an anticyclone developed across the southern part of the country and built appreciably. This killed off all shower activity and led to much more settled weather with clear skies and plentiful sunshine, near to or a little above, 10 hours daily on the 8th, 9th and 10th. However, by the 11th this high pressure had retreated into Europe as low pressure approached from the Atlantic. More cloud was apparent and winds strengthened on the 12th as a cold front crossed south eastwards across the whole country bringing much cooler air in its wake.

High pressure re established itself over the UK from the 13th with the depression remaining well to the north east. The ensuing day was one of prolonged sunshine and only occasional showers, though it continued cool, the maximum only reaching 14.9C. This high pressure area remained to the south of the country over the next few days giving settled conditions though it was rather cloudy and relatively cool temperatures reaching no higher than 18.5C by the 16th.

A cold front moved southwards over the area on the 17th giving no more than a light sprinkling of drizzle. The parent depression lay to the north west and this dominated the weather in the northern half of the country, the south remaining relatively settled. By the 18th a warm front lay from the Wash to Dublin becoming slow moving. The morning of the 18th was sunny, though cloud encroaching from the west brought a period of moderate rain from 1800 for an hour, then more continuously from 2250.

With high pressure to the north and low to the south this undulating front was to remain almost stationary for the duration of the 19th giving a cool and wet day, with a total fall of 21.1mm of rain by 0900 on the 20th. Skies began clearing from mid morning on the 20th giving spells of sunshine, temperatures remaining cool.

An omega blocking high was becoming established on the 21st with a slow moving frontal system still straddling the SW peninsula. Over the Midlands the day was one of almost unbroken sunshine and a maximum temperature of 17.9C. The blocking high remained dominant over the next seven days giving almost 11 hours of bright sunshine on both the 22nd and 23rd with maximum temperatures approaching 19C. Both the 24th and 25th were more cloudy, though skies did eventually clear on the afternoon of the 24th to give 5.2 hours of sunshine. The 25th was much more cloudy, the sheet of thin stratocumulus penetrating well inland from the North Sea and failing to clear at all.

Though this high pressure still dominated most of Western European weather, persistent cloud plagued much of the UK. This did break a little on the 26th allowing 1.1 hours of hazy sunshine and a maximum temperature of 17.1C under fairly slack easterly winds. With a continuing fall in pressure as the high edged slowly into Continental Europe, dull, though dry weather continued over the Midlands on the 27th. This pattern continued into the 28th as pressure gradually declined and a cold front edged slowly southwards. This ground to a halt over the Midlands on the 29th giving a cloudy and misty day with spells of light or moderate drizzle, amounts being insignificant.

By the morning of the 30th this front was still over the area with more or less continuous drizzle persisting overnight. Winds veered from SW to NE as the front gradually edged northwards bringing somewhat drier and brighter weather into the area later in the morning.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE WHOLE MONTH.

September was another dry month, the total of 31.4mm being approx. 50% of the monthly average. Rain fell on 10 days of which 6 were wet(>1mm) and 1 very wet (>10mm) making this the second driest September in 7 years. Sunshine totalled 158.2 hours, the sunniest since 1991. The 12 hours recorded on the 4th made this the sunniest September day since September 1st 1993 with 12.4 hours. In all 4 days saw no sun, a fifth above expectation for September. Temperatures remained above expectation, the mean maximum of 18.1C being the 2nd equal highest since 1991. However, 11 Septembers since 1956 have seen higher means. The days maximum of 22.5C on the 18th was a little below the 23.1C expected for the month.

No ground or air frost was noted, though grass temperatures fell to 2.1C on the 23rd. Fog occurred once, on the 30th, though there was no incidence of hail or thunder. Winds were relatively light at 5 knots.