

OCTOBER 1998

The month began with high pressure becoming established over Scandinavia and ridging westwards across the eastern areas of the UK. The effect of this was to draw in a rather cool and blustery easterly wind from the by now, rapidly cooling central Continent. A small low centre in sea area Plymouth moved in France and filled. The day was one of blustery showers and little in the way of sunshine, 1.6 hours being noted. Maximum temperatures reached 16.6C and 0.7mm of rain was recorded over the 24 hour period.

By the 2nd the low over France was filling whilst a ridge from Iceland to Trafalgar maintained the broad easterly air flow across the country bringing in a persistent cloud layer which blotted out all sunshine and brought spells of light rain. It was a very cool day with a maximum no higher than 12.0C. The ridge was still present on the 3rd though declining, with an Atlantic low approaching Ireland. Fronts began to influence the weather in the west whilst the east was kept dull and cold. Here the morning was sunny, the daily total of 3.1 hours of sunshine all being recorded prior to noon. Thence it became cloudy with intermittent, though light, rain temperatures being held back to a maximum of just 12.4C

The rather cool easterly flow continued across the UK from the 4th to the 6th, days being overcast with spells of light drizzle or longer periods of light rain. Daytime maxima held to the 11C mark with little in the way of brightness let alone sunshine, the weather being more akin to mid November than early October. The area of low pressure remained to the north of the UK with a predominantly easterly air flow and this kept temperatures well down over the 7th and the 8th. Daytime maxima rose no higher than 13.5C and overnight on the 8th/9th clearing skies gave a widespread ground and slight air frost.

By the 9th the wind had backed NW to W to SW and the day saw a little more in the way of sunshine, some 3.9 hours being recorded. An occluded front moved south eastwards late afternoon and this brought a spell of moderate rain to the area between 15.25 and 17.00 UTC. The low over Viking moved north eastwards and filled whilst a weak ridge became established over the country for the duration of the 10th. Skies remained predominantly cloudy with only brief spells of sunshine interspersed with light rain showers.

Later on the 10th a further Atlantic low pushed frontal systems towards the western seaboard of the country heralding a more mobile westerly situation. After a brief sunny interlude during the morning light showers developed late morning lasting into the afternoon, with a frontal system moving southwards during the night of the 10th/11th bringing a spell of more general rain. Once the front had passed the day was much brighter with 6.6 hours of sunshine and a maximum temperature of 15.3C.

Low pressure persisted to the north west of the UK and this continued to feed frontal troughs from north west to south east across the region. This brought a spell of light rain during the small hours of the 12th after which the day produced good sunny periods under a warmer south westerly flow. By early on the 13th the country was covered by a complex area of low pressure with weak frontal systems moving eastwards. The day was generally cloudy, though warm, with more general rain falling from 17.05 to 19.10 UTC. The day produced an hour of sunshine and a maximum temperature of 17.2C

An active cold front passed over the station at 08.00 UTC on the 14th giving a period of heavy rain followed by a drop in temperature in the fresher north westerly air. Rain fell at a rate of 28 mm per hour at 07.59 UTC, the sky then clearing to give good sunshine amounting to a total of 6 hours and an afternoon maximum of 16.2C. An anticyclone began to develop in the Channel on the 15th with a further rise in pressure to the north west of the UK though both were to prove short-lived as an approaching Atlantic low moved rapidly from Rockall across northern Scotland during the 16th. This brought rain to the Midlands as a cold front moved rapidly across the region a fall of 17.1mm being recorded by 09.00 UTC on the 17th. As this frontal system cleared the country a small but deepening Atlantic low moved into the Irish Sea and translated rapidly across the UK towards Denmark.

Daylight on the 17th saw almost cloudless skies and bright sunshine, though this rapidly gave way to increasing winds from the SW and heavy cloud. Gusts to 36 knots occurred widely during the early afternoon as an occluded front crossed the area bringing a spell of blustery rain. Pressure rose rapidly once this front had passed, skies cleared, and overnight on the 17th/18th the first air frost of the season occurred with a screen minimum of -1.3C and grass temperatures down to -2.5C. Following this the day was one of prolonged sunshine, though it remained cool, temperatures climbing no higher than 11.4C despite the 8.6 hours of sunshine.

The following day again dawned relatively clear, and under the influence of a weak ridge of high pressure long sunny periods developed giving a total of 6.6 hours for the day. It continued cool, with an afternoon maximum of just 12.0C though it remained dry. A deepening Atlantic low made rapid progress eastwards with well developed frontal systems in attendance. This brought continuous and heavy rain to the Western Isles, Ireland and parts of Wales during the 20th though its progress eastwards was delayed until late evening and overnight in the Midlands. Temperatures rose significantly overnight on the 20th/21st to reach a 24 hour peak of 14.5C by 09.00 UTC, though the passage of the warm front brought a fall of 4.2mm of rain.

During the 21st pressure continued to rise with the UK sandwiched between an intense low to the south of Iceland and high pressure over Iberia. This compacted the isobars and brought strong to gale force