

July was cold and damp says the weatherman

The weather during July was "decidedly cool and rather dismal" reports the Halesowen climatological station.

But surprisingly there were no records broken during the month.

Much of the heavy rainfall at this time of the year comes from thunderstorms, and these seldom cover more than a few square miles of ground as they pass overhead. It is not surprising therefore, to find adjacent towns, villages or even sides of a road to have markedly differing total of rain. This has been the case this July.

The local district has, in fact, had less rain than one would expect in a normal month, though areas just to the east which caught the severe storms of the early morning of July 26, have had substantially more than the average.

July began with unusually cold weather, the first of the month producing the coldest day with a maximum of only 13.5C (56F), and winds in a north westerly quarter. The first week was dominated by low pressure areas, though these

did not bring the customary rain belts to the district. Of the first ten days rain was only recorded on three, and none of this was heavy.

Pressure rose substantially on July 11, skies cleared somewhat, and night temperatures fell almost to freezing on the ground. July 11 was a very cold day in many respects regarding temperatures in the air, on the ground and in the soil. The night air-minimum of 5C (41F) and grass minimum of 0.9C (34F) would not be out of place in early March!

Although pressure remained fairly high, frontal troughs crossed the area in rapid succession over the next week and from July 11 to July 19 we had seven wet days and a total fall of 28.5 mm (1.12 in) of rain, accounting for almost 50 per cent of the month's fall.

Temperature was to remain unseasonably low until July 25 when south easterly winds brought in warmer continental air. By the mid-afternoon on this day the air temperature was 27.6C (82F), some two degrees C above anticipation

for a July 'high' The warm spell was extremely short-lived as severe thunderstorms moved north-eastwards from the near continent during the small hours on July 26.

The final week of the month was to produce the highest temperatures, though in general these were no more than average, around the mid-twenties centigrade (the mid to upper seventies Fahrenheit). Further hot, humid weather on the 29th was to be followed by severe thunderstorms and torrential rain in the area as a cold front passed northwards in the late afternoon and early evening. Approximately half of the month's total rain fell during a 30 minute deluge centred on 7.30 pm. In all 21.2 mm (0.84 in) fell, of which 5 mm (0.20 in) was recorded in the three minutes from 7.28 to 7.31 pm.

The heaviest fall was on July 29, but the wettest day regarding duration was the 13th, when rain was falling for 11.9 hours. Rain was recorded on 13 days with 9 'wet' days and 3 'very wet' days, all usual in July. Winds were generally light and blew from a north westerly quarter on 11 days. The windiest day, July 17 produced gusts in the region of 24 knots (28 mph).

Cloud cover at 75 per cent was typical for the month, and the sky was totally overcast at 8 am on 10 days of the month. The mean humidity at 90 per cent was 9 per cent above usual, hence the 'sticky' feel to several of the warmer days. Thunder was recorded on only one day when we could have expected three.

This summer has been one of the wettest on record with only about one day in three having escaped any rain since the end of May.

It was June that took the brunt of the bad weather with only six dry days.

Halesowen weather expert Mr Cedric Roberts said that during June 4.36 inches of rain fell locally compared with a norm of 2.32 inches and the trend has continued since then.

A series of heavy storms have caused problems. Last Thursday's downpour produced 0.72 inches of rain. During the first 15 days of August it rained on 11 of them.

"The season has been exceptionally dull with less sunshine than normal. The number of days on which rain has fallen is also well up on a normal year and this has compounded the feeling of an excessively wet summer," said Mr Roberts.

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