

By the 18th pressure began to rise from the south west as a high approached the UK and this settled the weather down, though it remained generally dull over the Midlands with daytime temperatures reaching a rather warm 19.7C. Sunshine was, however, limited to a mere 36 minutes for the day which saw spells of intermittent light drizzle. With relatively cloudy skies the night of the 18th/19th was not cool, indeed the overnight minimum was no lower than 14.8C giving the warmest night since August 14th. A slow moving cold front eventually halted over the Midlands early on the 19th resulting in a cloudy, if dry, and muggy day with little in the way of sunshine. After overnight fog patches the 20th began with near cloudless skies and rising temperatures as the high in the North Sea migrated towards Denmark and intensified. Daytime maxima rose to 24.2°C with over 7.6 hours of sunshine.

The high pressure remained centred on the near Continent over the next 3 days bringing a spell of settled, though not particularly sunny, weather. Maximum temperatures were in the upper teens on both the 21st and 22nd though sunshine was limited to 1.2 hours and 0.8 hour respectively. By the 23rd the high pressure had begun to decline a little and the day was near cloudless and very sunny, temperatures peaking at 20.5°C and sunshine totalling 8.7 hours under relatively light easterly winds. The 24th saw a further decline in pressure though winds remained predominantly easterly. The low stratus sheet cleared by mid-morning, the afternoon being quite sunny and warm. With a rapid decline in pressure as a deepening low moved slowly eastwards in Biscay the 25th was rather a depressing day with just 36 minutes sunshine and a maximum of 17.4°C though it remained predominantly dry. A brief interlude of slight rain occurred from 20.44UTC to 21.05UTC and again from 02.23 to 07.44UTC on the 26th.

During the 26th the low in Biscay pushed an occluded front slowly northwards across the UK bringing periods of heavy rain and thunderstorms. Parts of Birmingham had up to 47mm of rain from this storm in a little over 3 hours whilst here 27.5mm fell, with a rate of 72mm/hr being recorded at 18.58UTC. Thunder was heavy and this finally passed north westwards at 20.40UTC leaving a slack northerly air stream and humid and foggy conditions in its wake. The 27th saw a weak low in the southern North Sea which meandered slowly northwards, whilst the Biscay low moved into France and gradually filled. After a short spell of rain mid-morning the weather dried out though it remained foggy and muggy for the rest of the day, continuing into the 28th.

Brief light rain at 11.11 UTC on the 28th gave way to brighter conditions in the afternoon though it remained sunless. Skies cleared overnight on the 28th/29th to allow ground temperatures to fall to 5.0°C, their lowest since the 12th. The day was generally dull with brief sunny interludes giving no more than 0.5 hour for the total. A deepening low approached the south west during the night of 29th/30th and this spread rain, some quite heavy, to the area from 0215 to 0850 UTC, a fall of 16.3mm occurring as an occluded front moved quickly northwards across the region. Thereafter skies cleared to give sunny intervals and scattered, heavy, showers with 3.9 hours sunshine.

SUMMARY FOR SEPTEMBER 1998.

September was a most unusual month. In terms of temperature the record for the mean daily first set in 1991 at 14.7C was equalled, whilst the highest maximum of 24.2C was the best since 1993. The mean daily maximum of 18.5C was also the highest since 1991 with the lowest night minimum of 5.8C turning in the highest value in 17 years. So it has not been a cold month.

However, it has been both dull and wet. Total rainfall at 101.3mm was the highest since 1994 being 60% above expectation, with the wettest day producing a total of 27.5mm, some 49% up on average and the worst since 1994. Rain fell over a period of 55.9 hours, 48% above normal and the worst set of figures since 1994. In all, rain fell on 15 days which is two up on a normal September.

Sunshine was also well down, the 121.3 hours total being the worst since 1994 and 9% below expectation. The best day, the 15th, produced a total of 9.6 hours, the lowest daily total in September since 1988, while 3 days saw no sun at all. Only two days provided more than 9 hours each, the worst figures since 1993.

Thunder was heard on 4 occasions, some 3 up on average and the most since 1981 (also 4). Gale force gusts were registered on one day peaking at 35 knots with just one day recording fog.

Not a good start for Autumn !