

OCTOBER 2000.

October began with relatively low pressure surrounding the British Isles leading to some very wet and often stormy weather. Maximum temperatures were not too bad for the season, peaking at 17.1C on the 3rd though this was, incidentally, a sunless day! Total sunshine for the week was 20.4 hours, 7.1 hours of this coming on one day, the 5th. It was a wet first week, rain falling every day howbeit with just a trace on the 2nd and totalling 19.5mm. Both hail and thunder occurred in convective activity on the 5th.

The second week was also wet with as much as 20.2mm falling overnight on the 10th/11th. Sunshine was sparse with low pressure dominating much of the north West Atlantic leading to some severe gales across the Channel coasts on the early morning of the 11th. However, it was not particularly cold, temperatures holding up well in general, though in the small hours of the 9th grass temperatures did fall as low as 2.7C. By the 12th the grass had fallen to -1.1C [30.0F]. Pressure was exceptionally low on the morning of the 11th when the mean sea level pressure fell to 966.5mb, the station pressure falling to 948mb. In all the week saw 38.8mm [1.53ins] of rain falling, there

being no dry day at all. However, over the same period sunshine totalled just 21.7 hours.

The third week continued unsettled with Atlantic depressions pushing active frontal systems across the UK on a regular basis. Though it was a little less wet sunshine managed to creep up to 17.2 hours with three totally sunless days. Temperatures had by now begun to fall also, the maximum for the week 15th to 21st reaching no higher than 15.2C [59.4F] on the 18th with a ground frost registered on the 20th.

The fourth week began clear with a frost on the grass to -1.9C [28.6F] on the 22nd. It was also relatively sunny though it remained wet, some 26.3mm [1.04ins] of rain falling over the week, 10.8mm [0.43in] of this on the 28th. The final three days saw a period of exceptionally stormy weather as an intense low passed across the UK bringing heavy rain and severe gales. A total of 30.9mm [1.22ins] of rain fell on the 29th as wind speed peaked at 56 knots [64 mph]. This widespread rain caused already full rivers to overflow their banks over large areas of the countryside. The Severn was particularly badly hit.

SUMMARY FOR MONTH AS A WHOLE.

October was an exceptionally wet month, the second wettest since 1946 and the wettest since 1960 with 135.5mm [5.31ins] of rain. Rain fell on 24 days, the second equal wettest on record with 1960, and the worst since 1976. In all 18 days were wet with 7 very wet. Wide areas of the country were under flood by the 31st with the Severn from Shrewsbury to Gloucester particularly badly hit.

It was also cooler than average by 0.2C for the mean daily to as much as -0.7C for the mean maximum. There were three ground frosts, the worst to -1.9C [29F] on the 29th, though no air frost occurred. However, solar radiation temperatures held up well with a maximum of 45.9C [114.6F] recorded on the 13th.

Sunshine was very much down, only 85 hours being recorded, the lowest figure since 1982. In all 8 days were totally sunless, two above normal and the worst since 1993.

Barometric pressure was low, falling to 948mb on the 11th, though the entire month was dominated by Atlantic lows. A severe Atlantic storm on the 29th led to widespread gales, gusts here reaching 56 knots [64mph] at 06.30 causing structural damage as well as uprooting trees.

Thunder occurred once, as did hail and we had the first gale since 1998 on the 29th. There was no report of snow or sleet and also an absence of fog. In all, a stormy, wet and wild month.