

Durlston weather summary 2023

A total of 1279mm rain made 2023 the wettest on record at Durlston. Measurements have been taken for 36 years since 1988.

The 30 year averaging period for this assessment was 1991-2020 as used by the Met Office. In contrast to 2022 only February and June were drier than average, May and August about average, during the rest of the months an extra 40% or more was recorded with March and July being almost twice as wet as the average. In the period October – December 556mm of rainfall was recorded, 135% of the 30 year mean of 348mm. This can be seen on the graphs below.

The Stevenson screen containing the thermometer was damaged by gales in Nov 2022 and there were supply problems with its replacement. 2023 temperature data will show the weather trends but absolute values may be over stated. References are made to the Met Office's data from their Swanage weather station.

January Wet and windy in the first half of the month with most of the month's rainfall by 19th followed by frosts and near-zero temperatures. A minimum temperature of -3.8°C was recorded in Swanage on 23rd. Above average rainfall.

February High pressure influenced the weather for much of the time although it was unsettled at the beginning and end of the month. It was remarkable for its dryness; only 18.1mm of rain was recorded at Durlston, the driest February since 2012.

March Dry with cold N / NE winds for the first week, then a series of low pressure fronts from the SW, with gales on 31st. Rainfall was double the 30 year mean, making it the wettest March since 2001.

April A predominantly unsettled month with above average rainfall. There was little in the way of consistent warmth although it was sunny with high pressure at Easter. Above average rainfall.

May Average monthly rainfall, mostly in the period 4th – 11th, including the Coronation Bank Holiday weekend. High pressure then built and the rest of the month was fine with NE / E winds and cold nights.

June A dry, sunny and settled month, very warm daytime and night time temperatures and light winds from 9th onwards. The hottest day of 2023 in Swanage was 12th June when a maximum temperature of 27.4°C was recorded. There were thunderstorms but rain missed Purbeck; only 7mm was recorded on 3 days mid month, approximately 12% of the 30 year average of 57.6mm.

July A contrast to June and also to July 2022. It was very unsettled and windy month, with rain on 14 days, feeling autumnal. The jet stream was to the south of the UK, bringing a succession of frontal systems across the country and a heatwave to Southern Europe. There were below average temperatures and double the average July rainfall for Durlston.

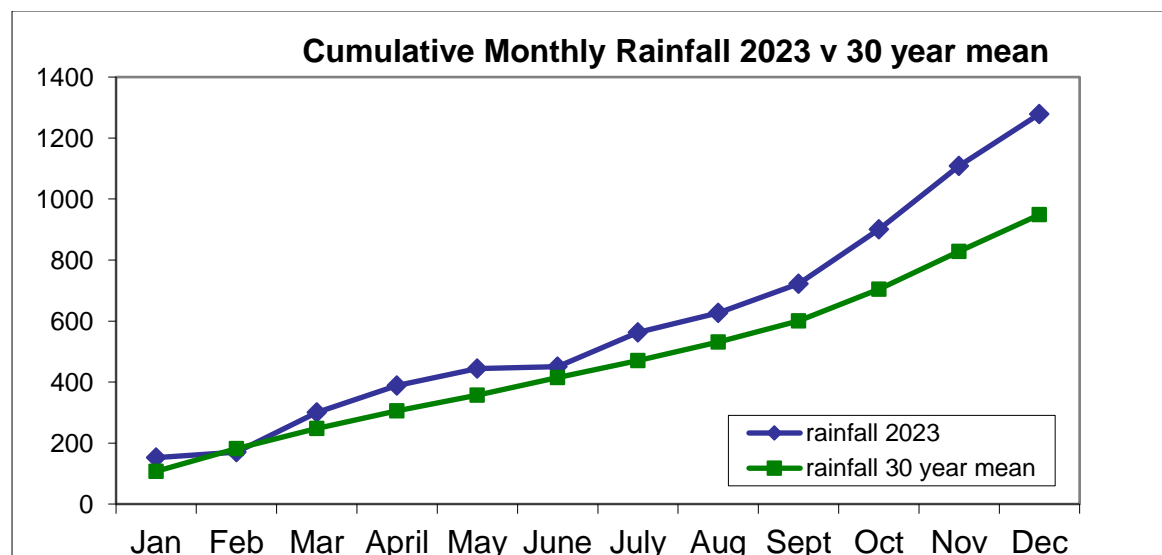
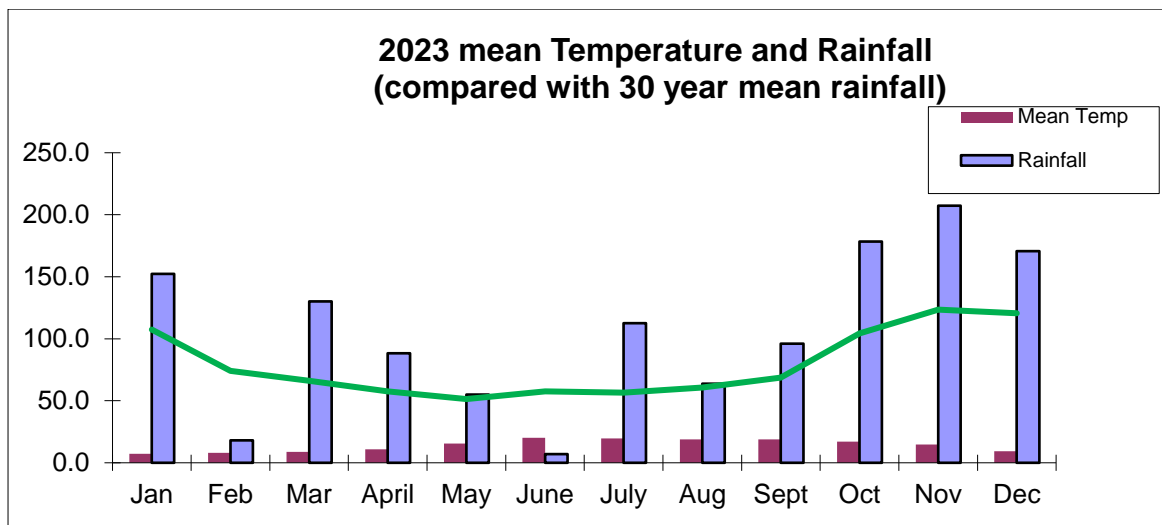
August An unsettled month with low pressure dominating and bringing strong winds at times (mostly at weekends). There were short spells of high pressure but the month was mainly cloudy with average rainfall.

September A warm month overall with a temperature of 23.7°C recorded in Swanage on 9th. High pressure for the first half of the month brought dry and settled conditions. This was followed by an abrupt change with Atlantic low pressure systems bringing windy and wet weather during the second half with thunder and lightning on 17th. Above average rainfall.

October A warm and dry start to the month. Storm Barbet brought Easterly gales and 31mm of rain on 18th, causing overtopping at Swanage seafront. Consistently wet and windy weather for the rest of the month led to one of the wettest Octobers on record for Durlston.

November One of the wettest Novembers on record with the ongoing influence of Atlantic low pressure systems. Storm Ciarán on 2nd was exceptionally powerful but fortunately the strongest winds were to the south of the UK. However some of the concrete winter flood defences in Swanage were moved by gusts and Studland beaches experienced considerable coastal erosion.

December The month started with a cold snap, sunny days and overnight frosts and fog. However the run of wet and windy weather continued with rain on most days until year-end. Above average rainfall.



For the Met Office's overview of 2023's weather data, see <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/maps-and-data/summaries/index>