

Durlston weather summary 2020

Nationwide, 2020 was a year of extremes with the wettest February on record, the sunniest spring, a heatwave in the summer and a day in October breaking rainfall records.

2020 was one of the top five hottest on record for the UK, but also one of the top ten wettest and the top ten sunniest years.

Winter (Dec 2019, Jan, Feb) was the 5th wettest on record (Met Office records from 1862) for the UK, as well as the 5th mildest. The strong jet stream high in the atmosphere allowed a succession of Atlantic low pressure systems to push across the UK, including Storms Ciara, Dennis and Jorge in February.

Rainfall totals were well above normal virtually everywhere, with many places getting more than three times their expected average. It was the wettest February on record with the UK recording 237% of its average rainfall. It was also the fifth wettest of any calendar month on record.

Spring (March, April, May). There was a marked change to much drier and more settled weather patterns in mid-March, and the UK had a record-breaking sunny spring. It proved to be the sunniest April and also the sunniest spring with 626.2 hours of sunshine (Met Office records from 1919). The UK saw more sunshine than in most summers, with only three summer seasons being sunnier (1976, 1995, and 1989).

It was the eighth warmest spring on record for the UK, with both England and Wales having their fifth warmest spring on record and the fifth driest spring for the UK overall.

Summer (June, July, Aug) was warmer, wetter and duller than average with all months seeing some settled, hot spells. The third hottest day ever recorded in the UK, 37.8°C, was recorded at Heathrow Airport on July 31st.

Unseasonable weather brought Summer 2020 to a close with two named storms, Storm Ellen on August 19th and Storm Francis on August 24th; two of the most notable August storms in the last 50 years.

Autumn (Sept, Oct, Nov) was marginally warmer than average; a relatively sunny and dry September gave way to a dull and wet October balancing out rainfall and sunshine for the autumn overall.

The strong winds and heavy rain from Storm Alex (Oct 2nd) brought some impacts and travel disruption, while large waves affected parts of the south coast exposed to the east – for example at Swanage. Oct 3rd provisionally holds the record for the UK's wettest day on record, (Met Office records from 1891).

November was generally mild, with fewer frosts than usual.

December was generally unsettled and mild but with some colder interludes. Very wet weather affected parts of south-west England and south Wales just after mid-month. Heavy rains led to flooding and Storm Bella brought more heavy rain and strong winds to parts of the UK on December 26th with the highest wind gust of 2020 (106 mph) recorded on the Isle of Wight.

At Durlston, the total rainfall for 2020 was 1013mm, just above the rolling 30 year mean of 944mm but made up of very wet months (Feb, Oct, Dec) and exceptionally dry months(April – July, Sept)

The maximum temperature recorded was 31.3C on August 9th, the minimum was 0.2C on December 8th and 31st, with no sub-zero temperatures recorded during the year.

January – mild, Storm Brendan midmonth – 60mph gust and 48mm rain in 2 days

February – storms Ciara, Dennis and Jorge – 60mph gusts. one of the wettest February's on record for Durlston, double the 30 year mean rainfall.

Over the winter (Dec – Feb) a total of 441mm rain recorded, about 50% more than the 30 year mean.

March – wet up to 15th, then N and E winds, settled and sunny

April – mostly dry and settled, below average rainfall

May – dry, sunny and settled, rain only recorded on 3 days, one of the driest May's on record for Durlston

June / July –continued settle spell, below average rainfall

August –hot for first half of the month, then wet and windy, Storms Ellen (19-21st) and Francis (25th). The third highest recorded at Durlston 31.3C was recorded on 9th, warm nights, temperatures didn't drop below 19 °C for several nights resulting in a mean temperature for the month of 18.7C.

September – calm and dry until 23rd then colder and wetter.

October –windy, Storm Alex on 2nd/3rd, 62.9mm rain in 3 days, rainfall total of 197mm was almost double the 30 year mean of 104mm.

November – below mean rainfall

December – generally wet and windy with above average rainfall, sunny at Christmas, followed by Storm Bella with 62mph gust and frosts at year end