

Durlston Country Park - Weather Records 2003

Nationally 2003 was noted for :

- June - hottest since 1976
- August - record temperature 38.5' (East Anglia)
- September - sunniest in 30 years
- October - sunniest ever

Here at Durlston things were less dramatic, sea breezes by day in the hot weather reducing the temperature (highest daytime maximum 30.2°C (86F) in August) and frequency of cloud cover reducing the hours of sunshine. Apart from one or two spells of frosty weather in the winter months, in January, February and just before Christmas, temperatures were near or above the average.

The rainfall total of 875.7mm (34.5") was lower for Durlston than it has been for the last six years: in fact for five of the last ten years the total has exceeded 1,000mm. The wettest seasons in 2003 were spring and autumn separated by a rather dry summer in which the absence of moisture was accentuated by the heat and attendant evaporation. Much of the rain fell in heavy, squally rain showers, some of them thundery, with winds gusting to gale force. This meant that the absorption rate was low and run-off high.

There were some exceptionally heavy falls during the year:

35.4mm	1.4"	1-2 Jan		38.8mm	1.5"	31 Oct
44.1mm	1.7"	19-20 Jan		23.5mm	0.93"	24 Nov
20.5mm	0.8"	7 June		33.9mm	1.3"	26 Nov
23.0mm	0.9"	23 Oct		33.8mm	1.3"	1 Dec

(These amounts were recorded at 0900hrs on the dates given, referring to the previous 24 hour period.)

Monthly Summary

- January Began warm with heavy rain and storm force winds, but quickly turned cold, 9 nights below freezing in periods of high pressure. High total rainfall.
- February Cold, with long spells of easterly winds, 6 nights below freezing: mild end to month.
- March Sunniest on record, long periods of high pressure, dry (66% av rainfall)
- April More high pressure but only one frost: dry until showers late in the month, average temperatures.
- May Mild with well distributed rainfall above average in total.
- June Wet with heavy, thundery showers: 3 days with 70+f temperatures.
- July Long dry spells, bulk of rain in last 10 days giving well above average total.
- August Dry, fairly sunny but very warm; sea breezes
- September Very dry, only 5 days with rain, warm
- October Again long dry spells, but heavy thunderstorms, cool. Downpours at end.
- November Much fair weather and a cold snap: some showers until final 8 days when heavy downpours and strong winds 150% average rainfall
- December Heavy rain to begin with, some dry spells and a cold snap just before Christmas, then heavy, stormy rain showers