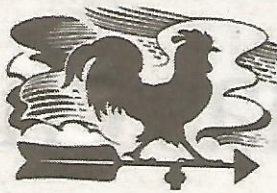


Weather

Weather Eye Paul Simons



Autumn arrives with a bang today with blustery winds and heavy spells of rain pummelling the UK. The jet stream is to blame as it became invigorated and drove a deep depression through the country.

That upsurge in the jet stream came from Hurricane Ian, which burst across the Caribbean and battered Cuba, where the whole country was plunged into a blackout. The hurricane then fed off very warm waters in the Gulf of Mexico, a notorious breeding ground for hurricanes, and so Ian rapidly grew into the catastrophic storm that tore into Florida.

Even though the hurricane will come nowhere near the UK, it has had a big indirect impact our weather. The storm dragged up warm tropical air and injected it into the atmosphere, where it collided with colder air sweeping down from the far north. That contrast in air masses drove the jet stream into a frenzy, racing across the Atlantic at speed and driving the wet weather across the UK.

But the high speed of the jet stream will also help to drive the wind and rain rapidly through the UK. And so by tomorrow much of the country will be blustery but not as windy and rain should ease off with more in the way of sunshine, although the south may be stuck with more persistent rain. On Sunday most of the country should have a brighter and calmer day as high pressure builds up from the south. And next week the high pressure remains and helps keep the weather calm over southern and eastern parts, while the jet stream carries on driving more wind and rain to northern parts and especially the northwest. So, it looks likely that the wettest area will be in the northwest, the driest in the southeast. Or to put it another way, there will be lots of rain where it is least needed, and little rain where it is most needed. But one good thing is that milder air will sweep in next week from the southwest, raising temperatures and making it feel a bit warmer.