

Weather Eye

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September was a wet month in the UK, the first month of above average rainfall since February, and boosted by colossal downpours on the last day of the month when the country was drenched.

But there were some striking exceptions over the whole of September with Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis and much of Orkney and Shetland some of the driest places in the UK. Another anomaly was the usually wet hills of Snowdonia which had less rain than normal while Hawarden in the typically dry shadow of Snowdonia had double its average rainfall.

Although the grass now looks lush and green after recent downpours, a good deal more rain will be needed to end the drought over much of Britain. Thames Water announced that its hosepipe ban for the south of England was likely to remain in force until next year after the long run of below normal rainfall over 10 of the past 12 months. In fact, underground water supplies will not properly recharge until the trees have dropped their leaves and the weather turns colder, allowing rains to soak deep down into the ground.

Another standout figure in September was how temperatures continued the run of milder than average weather every month this year. In fact, this has been the mildest year on record so far.

October looks like following suit, with temperatures about normal for most areas with more bouts of wet weather, although the heaviest rains are likely in the west and northwest. With some gales at times, it looks like fairly typical autumnal weather. But predictions at this time of year are complicated by the remnants of old hurricanes that can send Atlantic weather patterns topsy-turvy, as seen recently with the impacts of the ex-hurricanes Fiona and Ian (Weather Eye, October 3).

As for the outlook over the rest of the year, the likelihood is for near normal rainfall and temperatures, driven by warmer than normal seas around the UK and a resurgence of La Niña across the equatorial seas of the Pacific.

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