



It Rained..... and Rained..... and Rained.....!!

*The Weather at Dover
from October 2000
to March 2001*

by F.G.Thomas

SUMMER 2000 had a maligned reputation but statistically it was close to average - except for rainfall. This was only 6 inches, 66% of average. The water companies look forward to the winter half

year, when precipitation exceeds evaporation, for the replenishment of their resources. From October 2000 to March 2001 they were not disappointed!

The sea retains its heat in autumn, so the rising convection currents often create spectacular cumulus clouds over the Channel which enhances the beauty of the days at the end of the year. There is also a surprisingly high incidence of thunderstorms in October when those clouds develop into cumulo-nimbus, the mighty thundercloud. October 2000 was no exception, with no less than six days with thunder. It was also a month of gales and heavy rainfall. Dover Harbour was closed for sixteen hours during Sunday 29th and Monday 30th. At one time over a dozen ships were seeking shelter in the Downs off Deal.

If one inch of rainfall is the criterion for a very wet day, 246 of such days have been recorded in Dover since weather records began at the Castle in 1866. Of these no less than 118 fell in the three autumn months, 53 of them in October alone. In 2000 it rained on 25 days in October, which gave a total of 9.52 inches for the month, no less than 228% of the long term average - the third wettest of any month in 134 years of records!



Reflections in the flooded cricket pitch at Alkham

The Drellingore flooding, Hogbrook Hill Lane, after surrounding the village hall and flowing on to cover the cricket pitch to the left of the bridge. The Labrador's expression says it all!



A wet November followed in which only three days were free of rain. The monthly total was 8.76ins, the third wettest November on record. By now, so much water had accumulated in the chalk that the Drellingore, our local winterbourne or nailbourne, burst forth on Sunday 12th, - one of the earliest dates on record for this to happen.

Winter came in December with wet and very mild weather. In fact, Thursday 7th had a temperature of 15.1°C (59.2°F). The rain decreased after the 14th and the weather became colder, but not before another 4 inches of rain had flooded the Alkham Valley. Eventually, the Drellingore rose as far back as the Canterbury-Folkestone road.

There was no white Christmas in these parts, for the nineteenth successive year, but the month ended on a cold note with a thin covering of snow on the last four days, the only snow to settle in the whole of the year 2000. The last day of the year was also the coldest. The night minimum on the 31st was 5.5°C or 22.1°F (9.9°F degrees of frost).

The wet autumn of 2000 was only our second wettest, but it had made a significant contribution to the grand total for the year of 46.21 inches, a Dover record.

At the turn of the year we are often reminded of things to come. 'When the days begin to lengthen the cold begins to strengthen'. One could add 'and the rain begins to lessen'. Not so in 2001. There was some sleet but each of the first three months of the year brought close to 5 inches of rain, to give an aggregate of 15.42 inches. This has been the wettest start of any year and has given the grand total of 38.42 inches for the last six months - yet another local record!

This heavy rain saturated the chalk, caused flooding of houses, roads and the Abbott's Cliff railway tunnel and resulted in many landslides. Strange to relate, it has all happened before - almost! The same six months of 1939-1940 and of 1960-61. Remember? And then there was no mention of global warning!

*It rained and rained and rained and rained
The average fall was well maintained
And when the tracks were simply bogs
It started raining cats and dogs.*

*After a drought of half an hour
We had the most refreshing shower
And then, most curious thing of all,
A gentle rain began to fall.*

*Next day but one was fairly dry
Save for one deluge from the sky
Which wet the party to the skin
And then - at last - the rain set in.*

These lines are not about Dover's deluge but refer to that part of South Island, New Zealand, which has an average 300 inches of rain per annum. Let us be thankful for small mercies!

Editor's Note: the photographs with this article (and including the front cover) were taken by Clive and Margaret Batchelder in December 2000 and January 2001.



The Drellingore rushing along between the village hall on the left and the private house on the right, taken from Hogbrook Hill Lane.

Dear Editor

I am informd as folows: shud I beleve it?
Jack Woolford

Proposed Language Reform

The European Union Commissioners have announced that agreement has been reached to adopt English as the preferred language for European communications, rather than German, which was the other possibility.

As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five-year phased plan for what will be known as EuroEnglish (Euro for short).

In the first year, 's' will be used instead of the soft 'c'. Certainly, sivil servants will resieve this news with joy. Also, the hard 'c' will be replaced with 'k'. Not only will this klear up konfusion, but typewriters kan have one less letter.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year, when the troublesome 'ph' will be replased by 'f'. This will make words like fotograf 20 per sent shorter.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expected to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will encourage the removal of double letters, which have always been a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horrible mes of silent 'e's in the languag is disgrasful, and they wil go to.

By the fourth year, peopl wil b reseptiv to steps such as replasing 'th' by 'z' and 'w' by 'v'.

During z fifz year, ze unesenary 'o' kan b dropd from vords kontaining 'ou', and similar changes vud of cors, be aplid to ozer combinations of leters. After zis fifz yer, v vil hav a reli sesibl riten stil. Zer vil b no mor trubls or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi to understand ech ozer.

Zen z drem vil finali kum tru.