

Exceptionally hot day, 31 July 2020

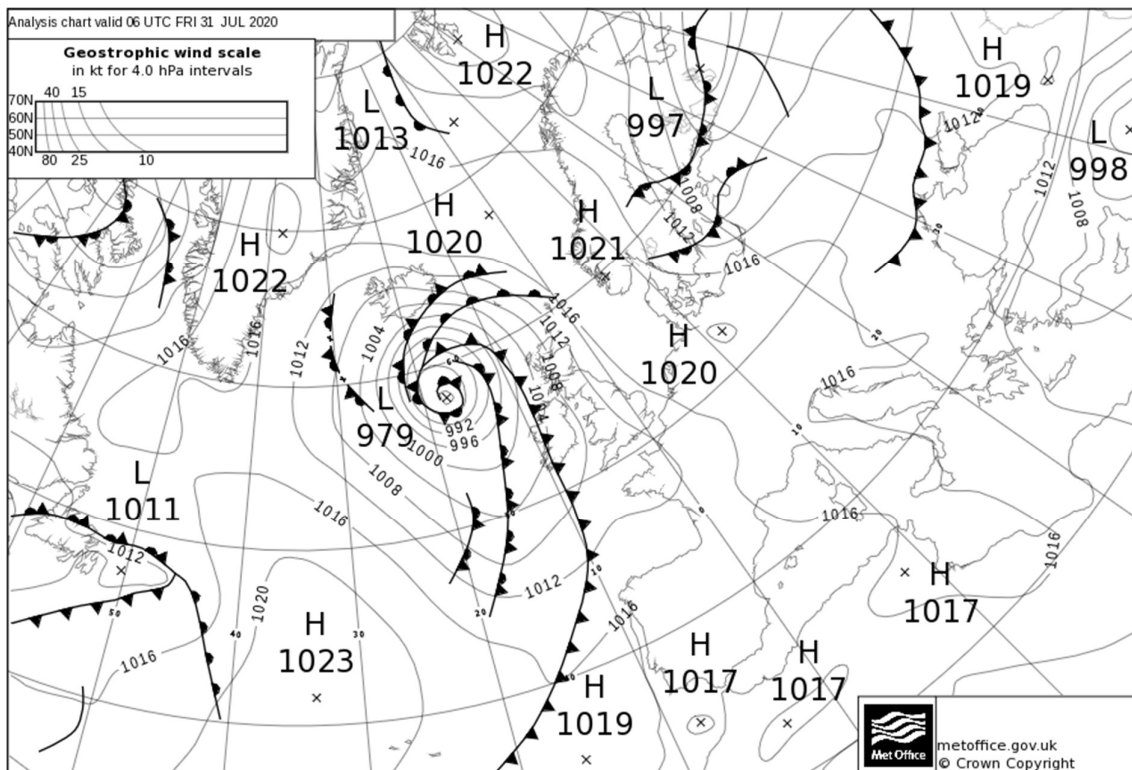
On 31 July 2020 the temperature reached 37.8 °C at Heathrow, Greater London, making this the UK's third hottest day on record. Temperatures across central southern England widely exceeded 34 °C and locally 35 to 36 °C.

Impacts

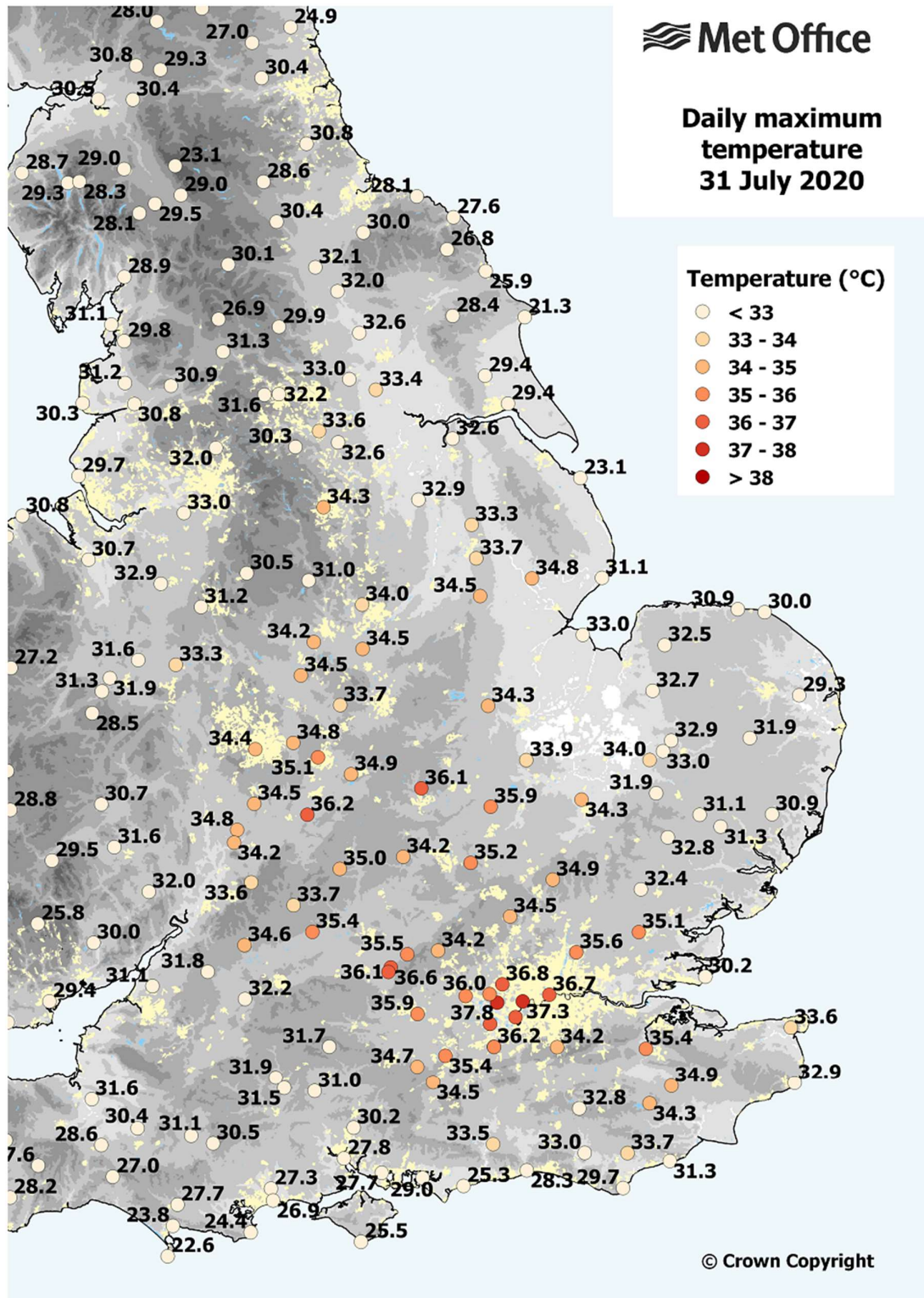
Crowds descended on beaches along the south coast at Poole, Bournemouth and Brighton causing gridlock on roads; trains were also very crowded.

Weather data

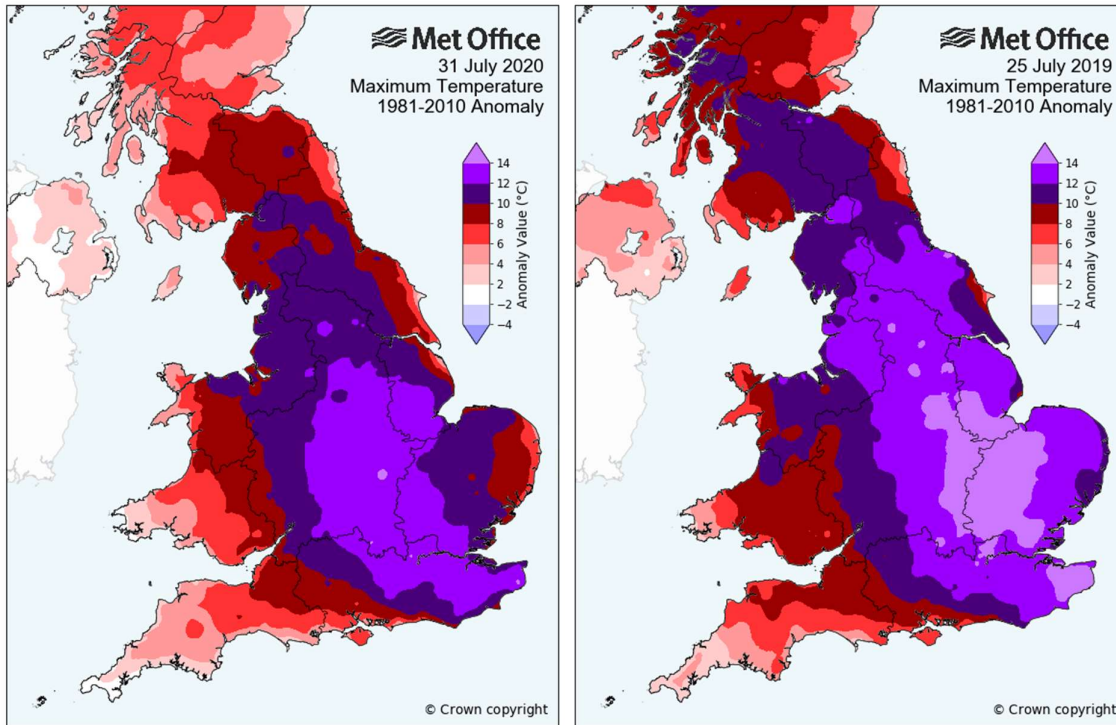
The analysis chart at 1200 UTC 31 July 2020 shows a deep area of low pressure to the west drawing a flow of hot air from the continent across southern and central parts of the UK. However, fortunately this was an isolated day of extreme heat, with daily maximum temperatures much lower at 30.4°C on 30 July and 27.7°C on 1 August.



The map below shows daily maximum temperatures on 31 July 2020. The temperature reached 37.8°C at Heathrow and 37.3°C at Kew Gardens, while 36°C was also recorded in Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Northamptonshire.



The maps below compare daily maximum temperatures on 31 July 2020 and 25 July 2019 (when the UK record of 38.7°C was set at Cambridge Botanic Garden). On 31 July 2020 temperatures across central England were widely 12°C or more above the July 1981-2010 long term average, but in general the heat was not quite so extreme as 25 July 2019.



This was the UK's third hottest day on record and only the fourth occasion where temperatures in the UK have exceeded 37°C. The UK all-time record of 36.7°C (98°F) at Raunds, Northamptonshire, Canterbury, Kent and Epsom, Surrey stood for nearly 80 years until 37.1°C on 3 August 1990 at Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. This was broken by 38.5°C at Faversham, Kent on 10 August 2003 and 38.7°C at Cambridge Botanic Garden on 25 July 2019.

The table below lists the UK's hottest days on record. Prior to 2003, this would have been the UK's hottest day on record, and of the six occasions when temperatures have exceeded 36.7°C (98°F in the UK), three have occurred in the last six years.

Date	Daily maximum temperature (°C)	Location
25 July 2019	38.7	Cambridge Botanic Garden
10 August 2003	38.5	Faversham, Kent
31 July 2020	37.8	Heathrow, Greater London
3 August 1990	37.1	Cheltenham, Gloucestershire
1 July 2015	36.7	Heathrow, Greater London
9 July 1911	36.7	Raunds, Northamptonshire, Epsom, Surrey, and Canterbury, Kent

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