

UK Pounded by Storms and Flooding



York City Center Underwater September 2008

Parts of Britain are mopping up after a weekend of storms and flooding that has been blamed for seven deaths.

Flooding struck large areas of Wales and western and northern England after one of the wettest Augusts on record. Heavy rains have swollen rivers and inundated roads.

Hundreds of people were evacuated and 1,000 properties flooded in the worst-hit town of Morpeth, Northumberland.

Authorities are warning of more flooding across Britain. Flooding was likely to worsen in coming days as rainwater drained into river systems, the Environment Agency warned. England's northeast was the most seriously affected but flash floods also hit parts of Yorkshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

John Hammond, a spokesman from the Met Office, said: "That's clearly not going to be very helpful given the large amount of rain we have already seen this month.

"It's an early prediction but arguably it's angling to be one of the wettest Septembers ever."

Weather officials are warning of more severe weather tomorrow covering northwest England, West Wales, southwest Scotland and the whole of Northern Ireland.

Five of the eight deaths happened on 5th September.

- A geologist died when he was buried by a mudslide in the Cotswolds, in the southwest.
- A teenage girl was killed when a car overturned in a stream during an adventure holiday in Wales.
- A young couple lost their lives when their car skidded off a road in Plymouth during a heavy storm.
- And a motorcyclist died when he hit a tree branch that had fallen during gales in North Yorkshire.

There were three more deaths over the weekend.

Timeline: Quebec A chronology of key events:

1627 - Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal de Richelieu founds the Compagnie de la Nouvelle France on April 29. King Louis XIII of France will grant them the monopoly on fur trade in return for their help in colonizing the St. Lawrence valley.

1627 - King Louis XIII of France introduces the seigneurial system and forbids settlement in New France by anyone other than Roman Catholics.

1629 - On July 16, three brothers, David, Louis, and Thomas Kirke take Quebec.

1632 - Signing of the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye on March 29. Acadia and Quebec are given back to France.

- A taxi driver died when his car skidded off a road alongside the swollen River Severn at Minsterworth, Gloucestershire, yesterday.
- A middle-aged woman died in the sea at Barton on Sea, Hampshire, yesterday despite another woman's frantic efforts to save her.
- Another swimmer died after being pulled from the sea at Perranporth in Cornwall on Saturday.

There was better news On Sunday when a three-year-old girl had a lucky escape when her father saved her after being sucked into a storm drain. Leona Baxter was splashing in a puddle when she was swept into the hidden drain and pulled under a torrent of gushing water.

Her 34-year-old father, Mark, a sergeant in the RAF, waded into the river Wear in Chester-le-Street, County Durham, and revived the youngster, who had stopped breathing.

Sources: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au>, <http://www.guardian.co.uk>

Worst Economic Downturn in 60 years

According to a interview given by the chancellor, Alistair Darling, Britain is facing "arguably the worst" economic downturn in 60 years which will be "more profound and long-lasting" than people had expected.

In the government's gravest assessment of the economy, which follows a warning from a Bank of England policymaker that 2 million people could be out of work by Christmas, Darling admits he had no idea how serious the credit crunch would become.

Growth in the economy ground to a halt in the second quarter of this year, thus ending the longest period of expansion in British economic history. The bust may not be far behind: many economists now believe an outright recession – two successive quarters where the economy shrinks in size – will follow later this year, a period of contraction that could extend well into 2009.

The problem is that although the economy stagnates inflation continues to climb. Many are predicting rising unemployment, negative equity, home repossessions, large-scale bankruptcies and stagflation for the foreseeable future. indeed, figures released in August suggested the slowdown had resulted in a £2.2bn shortfall in stamp duty revenues already this year, and government spending rising faster than ministers assumed.

There are signs the credit crunch is easing but first-time buyers are still finding it almost impossible to find a mortgage – and fewer want one as house prices fall by 10 per cent a year. Meanwhile, gas price rises are set to push inflation above 5 per cent, slowing the economy further.

The current economic situation will be seen as a blow for Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who frequently pledged as Chancellor not to return Britain to the "old boom and bust" he associated with the Conservative years. Shadow Chancellor George Osborne said: "Another day brings another gloomy prediction about the British economy. The Brown bubble has burst and, thanks to Labour's economic incompetence, nothing was put aside for a rainy day to help British families cope."

Sources: <http://www.guardian.co.uk>, <http://www.independent.co.uk>

Finance

Mutual funds - Features and Benefits

In my article in Issue 21 of the Britclub Gazette I was brutally honest about the costs involved in investing in Mutual funds. Why would a Mutual Fund advisor do that? You, the investor, must be fully aware of these fact before "Dipping your toe in the water". But the simple fact of the matter is, if you make better returns on your hard earned cash than simply putting your money in the bank, do the costs really matter? If the fund returns 15% against a GIC of 3% what do you care if the fund company takes a cut too? It takes time, effort and years of education and experience to be a successful fund manager and professional portfolio management costs.

With the right planning and strategy you can make healthy returns using mutual funds whilst severely reducing the risk because of the diversification inherent within the funds. There are many Mutual Funds on the market but you must choose the fund that is right for you. You can expend a lot of time and effort doing the research yourself or you can call upon the services of an advisor.

**For an honest & straightforward approach to investing contact Mick McCafferty
514 432 4986 - mmccafferty@sympatico.ca
*Mick has received industry-sponsored training and has access to unique
investment approaches to ensure your goals fit your financial security plan.***

Mutual funds offer a number of features and benefits, including:

Liquidity – Mutual fund units may generally be redeemed at any time. The redemption value will depend on the unit value on the day of redemption and may be lower or higher than the purchase price.

Diversification – While an investment in a single company or industry exposes an investor to the ups and downs of that company or industry, mutual funds allow investors to diversify their portfolios among many different companies and industries within Canada and across the world. Through a selection of funds managed by different fund managers, investors may also benefit from diversity of investment style.

Returns – Mutual funds offer the potential for higher returns compared to guaranteed investment certificates (GICs) and deferred annuities. However, mutual funds also carry more risk.

Professional management – Unit holders benefit from the expertise of professional managers who have training and experience in the investment field. Fund managers continually research and monitor markets, trends and the companies in which they invest to maintain proper diversification, and to maximize returns consistent with the fund's objectives.

Cost-effectiveness – Mutual funds are one of the most cost-effective ways to own a diversified, professionally managed portfolio. Mutual funds allow you to invest in several different companies at a fraction of the cost of buying individual units of each of the companies in similar proportions to the mutual fund.

Sophisticated investors realise that you should "Buy on the bad news". Many quality mutual funds are trading at bargain prices in these gloomy economic times. Whether inside an RRSP or in a self directed investment plan - **NOW IS THE TIME TO BUY.**

Olympics: Most Successful Games In A Century



Team GB finished its most successful games in a century with a total of 47 medals, 19 of them gold, 13 silver and 15 bronze, eclipsing every previous Games bar 1908 in London, which are incomparable in any useful way, and elevates British sport into the premier league of Olympic nations.

Only Russia, with 23 golds from 72 medals, the USA (36 from 110) and China (51 from 100) lie ahead of them, and Germany, Australia and France were comfortably beaten. Lord Moynihan, the chairman of the British Olympic Association, said the medal target for 2012 would be reviewed following consultation with the governing bodies, but he will be seeking an improvement in performance in London and did not rule out explicitly targeting third place.

Soon after the games Rupert Murdoch's Sun newspaper hired trucks to drive billboards around London and Sydney gloating about Britain's gold medal success over Australia at the Beijing Olympics.

The billboards were paraded through central London and Sydney streets as Britain celebrated its haul of 19 gold medals compared to Australia's 14. Emblazoned across an image of a massive red, white and blue Union flag were the words, "Where the bloody hell were you?" and the gold medal tallies for the sporting rivals. The message mimicked the controversial logo used by Australian tourism chiefs in an attempt to lure visitors Down Under. **Good on ya Rupert!**

The New Star of British Tennis

Andy Murray's runner-up finish at the US Open served as a fitting exclamation point to a superb season that saw him win three of his six career titles and climb to a career-best fourth in the ATP rankings.

"I have been getting consistently better," Murray said. "My rankings been moving up steadily and this being my first big Grand Slam a lot of things have gotten much better."

The 21-year old Scotsman competed in his first career Grand Slam final on Monday, losing 6-2, 7-5, 6-2 to Swiss star Roger Federer, who won the US Open title for the fifth consecutive year to capture his 13th Grand Slam crown.



Murray joins John Lloyd (1977 Australian Open) and Canadian-born Greg Rusedski (1997 US Open) as the only British players to reach a Grand Slam final in tennis' modern era. He burst onto the scene in 2008 with the most productive run of his career. Murray is hoping to one day become the first British man to capture a Grand Slam title since Fred Perry won the 1936 US Championships.

Source: <http://www.theage.com.au>

Other News & Events

Three British Muslims convicted in conspiracy

Three British Muslims were convicted in London of conspiracy to kill people with homemade liquid bombs. A jury on Monday found that the prosecution did not prove that there was a plot to blow up six trans-Atlantic flights from Heathrow Airport to North America. Instead it convicted Abdulla Ahmed Ali, Assad Sarwar and Tanvir Hussain on the lesser charge of conspiracy to kill "persons unknown" following a trial of five months and 50 hours of deliberations. The men had plotted to smuggle bombs made in bottles of soft drinks. Police found bottles, explosives and detonators at their homes. Since the arrest of the men in 2006, airline passengers around the world are still not allowed to carry liquids and creams on flights.

<http://www.jta.org>

Two world records set by British rowers

Two world-best times were set by British athletes during the opening day of the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games. Amid heavy rain and strong gust, 2006 world champion Helene Raynsford and compatriot Tom Aggar, the reigning world champion, set the new world marks in winning their heats of the women's and men's single sculls, both advancing directly to Thursday's finals.

As if sensing the historical significance of the occasion, Raynsford achieved her time of 5 minutes 38.44 seconds in the very first race of the inaugural Paralympic Games rowing regatta, incredibly slashing almost 20 seconds off the old mark (5:57.88).

<http://news.xinhuanet.com>

Stutter risk for bilingual kids

Children who are bilingual before the age of five are more likely to stutter than their non-bilingual counterparts, according to a British study published today. They also find it harder to shed this impediment.

The research was conducted among 317 London children who were referred to a speech therapist when they were aged between eight and 10. One in five of the stutters were bilingual, speaking English at school and a second language at home.

Boys outnumbered girls by a ratio of four to one.

The study, headed by psychologist Peter Howell of University College London, appears in the journal Archives of Disease in Childhood, published by the British Medical Association (BMA).

Oasis postpones show following onstage attack

With singer/guitarist Noel Gallagher still smarting from injuries he suffered after being knocked down from behind during Oasis' recent performance in Toronto, the group has postponed the final night of its Canadian tour, which was due to close out tonight in London, Ontario. The attack happened after a fan jumped onto the stage during the middle of the band's performance of "(What's the Story) Morning Glory?" at the Virgin Festival and shoved guitarist Noel Gallagher from behind.

Noel fell heavily on to his monitor speakers when he was pushed suddenly from behind by his attacker and suffered bruising to his ribs and hip.

<http://www.livedaily.com>

Zoom Go Under

Administrators appointed by collapsed airline Zoom have admitted there is little chance of the business being resurrected.

Accountants and business advisors PKF have begun the process of assessing Zoom's debts and assets.

It said a possible re-financing package had not been completed because of the "overwhelming" demands of creditors and suppliers. The low-cost transatlantic carrier suspended all its flights last month.

The Scottish-owned airline blamed the "horrendous" price of jet fuel and the economic slowdown for its closure, which left hundreds of passengers stranded and caused 45,000 more to lose their bookings. Zoom, founded in 2001, flew mainly to Canada from Glasgow, Gatwick, Belfast, Cardiff and Manchester airports.

<http://www.walesonline.co.uk>

Five pubs close every day as downturn bites

Five pubs close every day in Britain, a sharp increase over previous years and a clear reflection of the downturn gripping the country's economy, according to new research published Monday. The figures released by the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) show that over the first six months of this year, an average of 36 pubs closed each week, a 33 percent increase over last year's figures.

Pub closures this year are nine times what they were in 2006, and 18 times faster than 2005.

<http://afp.google.com>

And Finally

Funny news stories to make you laugh

Put Your Foot In Your Mouth

Employed by the human-development center of a corporation in the Midwest, my friend trains employees in proper dress codes and etiquette. One day as she was stepping onto the elevator, a man casually dressed in jeans and a golf shirt got on with her.

Thinking of her responsibilities, she scolded, "Dressed a little casually today, aren't we?"

The man replied, "That's one benefit of owning the company..."

Oil Change

45 year-old Amy Brasher was arrested in San Antonio, Texas, after a mechanic reported to police that 18 packages of marijuana were packed in the engine compartment of the car which she had brought to the mechanic for an oil change. According to police, Brasher later said that she didn't realize that the mechanic would have to raise the hood to change the oil.

This Smells Odd

When a man attempted to siphon gasoline from a motor home parked on a Seattle street, he got much more than he bargained for. Police arrived at the scene to find an ill man curled up next to a motor home trying to steal gasoline and plugged his hose into the motor home's sewage tank by mistake. The owner of the vehicle declined to press charges, saying that it was the best laugh he'd ever had.

A Penny Saved...

David Posman, 33, was arrested recently in Providence, R.I, after allegedly knocking out an armoured car driver and stealing the closest four bags of money. It turned out they contained \$800 in PENNIES, weighed 30 pounds each, and slowed him to a stagger during his getaway so that police officers easily jumped him from behind.

Not Me!

The Belgium news agency Belga reported in November that a man suspected of robbing a jewellery store in Liege said he couldn't have done it because he was busy breaking into a school at the same time. Police then arrested him for breaking into the school.

A Little Gas

A Dutch veterinarian was fined 600 guilders (about \$240) for causing a fire that destroyed a farm in Lichten Vourde, the Netherlands. The vet had been trying to convince a farmer that his cow was passing flatulent gas; to demonstrate, the vet ignited the gas, but the cow became a "four-legged flame-thrower" and ran wild, setting fire to bales of hay. Damage to the farm was assessed at \$80,000. The cow was unharmed.

Source: <http://digitaldreamdoor.nutsie.com>

Notices

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Momesso's in St Lazare now has Setanta Sports channel as well as Rogers, TSN, FOX and the Score. It's a great place for Brits to meet and watch great live sport. They also have Bass and Guinness on tap as well as some great food. "See you there – Mick"

Complex Sportif in St. Lazare. 1850 rue des Loisirs, St. Lazare, Quebec, J7T 3B4. (450) 424-7797.

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