

## THE WEATHER IN BRITAIN DURING THE WEEK OR THE WHEATLEY STORM

The severe thunderstorm in the Wheatley district on 9 June 1910 was one of many rainstorms which occurred in Britain during that week. Four days earlier on the 5th over 2" of rain was recorded in three places in a band of thunderstorms stretching from Ireland, through central Wales to southern England, the heaviest falls occurring in Wiltshire and Dorset. On the 7th a similar belt of storms located a little further north from Ireland to south-east England produced rainfall totals of over 3" around Chipping Norton and Stow-on-the-Wold, the highest value recorded being 4¼." Further storms occurred on the following day although these paled into insignificance compared with the intense storms over southern Britain on the 9<sup>th</sup>. While many places experienced over an inch of rain the greatest storm activity lay on a line from Brighton to Stratford-on-Avon, with two areas, one 15 by 12 miles north of Reading and the other 10 by 7 miles east of Oxford, recording falls of over 2". Wheatley was the centre of this second area..

Summarising the week's weather, the Oxford Times of 18 June concluded: "It is doubtful whether any village in the Kingdom can show a more extraordinary record of rainfall than that of Wheatley." The reporter for the Thame Gazette, perhaps a weather enthusiast or one of the lucky local inhabitants not to have been affected personally, wrote of the storm in glowing terms: "The climatic disturbances which have been so general throughout the last week were equally severe in this district and, although fortunately unattended by loss of human life, much serious damage is reported. Even the memory of "the oldest inhabitant" will be taxed to recall such vivid and incessant lightning as that which was witnessed on Tuesday and Thursday. The sight was indeed a most magnificent one, the heavens being illuminated with sheet, forked and ribbon lightning, and, but for the damage which inevitably followed in its wake, the storm could be counted as a grand spectacle."