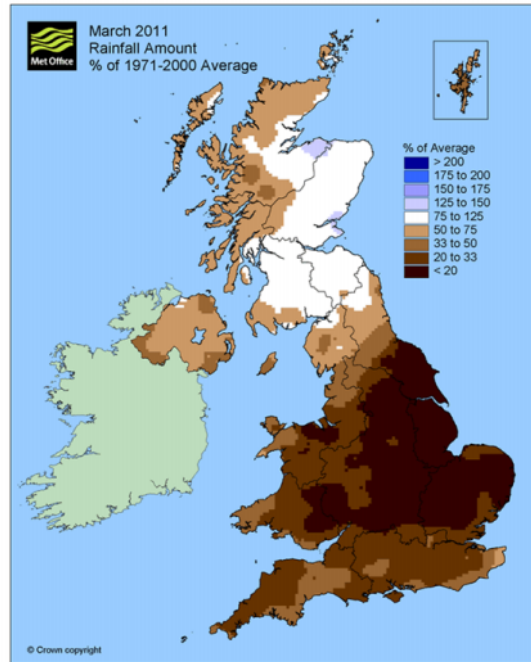
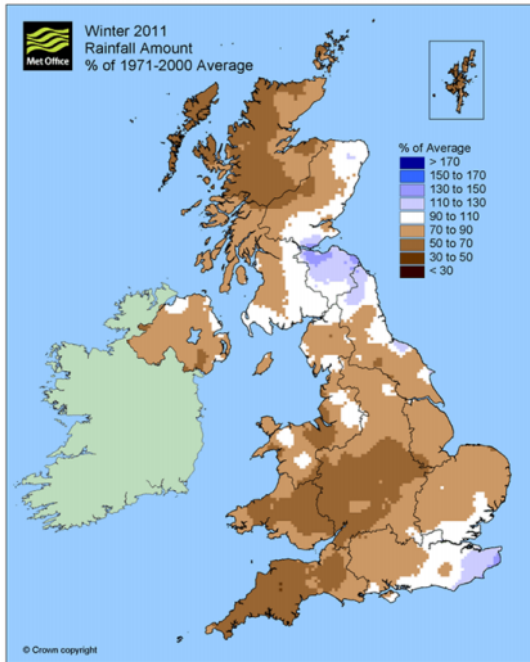


The current Surge Risk is assessed as **Low Amber**



SUMMARY

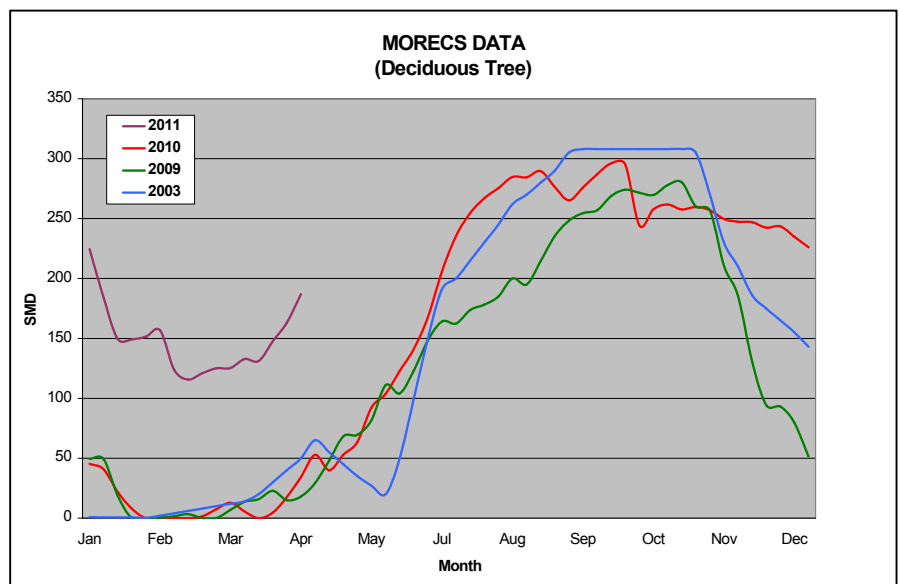
This is the first surge bulletin for 2011 and is being issued slightly earlier in the year than normal. The reason for this, and why we are posting an early warning of a possible subsidence surge for 2011, is best illustrated by the Met Office rainfall anomaly maps below:



Surges in the number of Subsidence Claims received occur as a result of hot dry weather causing a moisture deficit in shrinkable clay soils. The normal climatic drying effects are greatly enhanced by root activity of deciduous trees. As such they tend to occur in the Summer/early Autumn when the trees really get into their stride. A dry Winter and Spring will prime the situation and increase the amplitude of a surge should one arise, and this is exactly the situation we see here. The March rainfall at only approximately 30% of the 1971-2000 Average for the South East is said to have been the lowest for 100 years, and April also was exceptionally dry.

This has meant that the normal Winter rehydration of the shrinkable clay subsoils prevalent in the southeast has not taken place, and as can be seen in the Morecs plot we are starting the subsidence season with a significant moisture deficit already in place. This is the highest it has been in April since the mid 1990's.

We are already receiving reports that precise levelling currently being carried out on a number of properties in the South East is



showing early signs of movement, and cracking is starting to develop in cases where we would expect seasonal stability.

However, for a surge to occur it needs to be triggered by exceptional Summer weather – most surges to date have not followed dry Winters and Springs. The over-riding factor therefore is the weather in the Summer period when trees are in full leaf and temperatures can reach their highest levels. We saw in Autumn 2010 how quickly a developing surge scenario can be suppressed by a few days of heavy rain, and it is still too early in the year to predict with certainty.

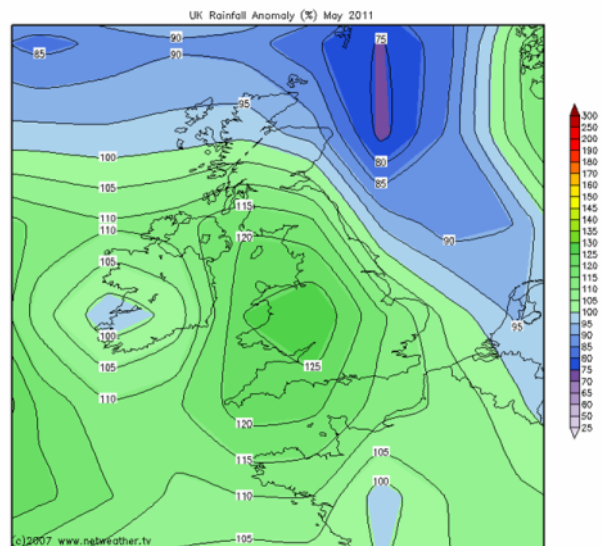
WEATHER FORECAST

The current spell of warm dry weather is predicted to last a few more days but there is change on the way. The Met Office is saying *“The weather looks to gradually return to more unsettled conditions across all of the UK, with showers or longer spells of rain at times. There will however be drier sunny interludes”*.

The May rainfall anomaly prediction is for slightly higher than average overall, and this should help to normalise the Morecs profile somewhat.

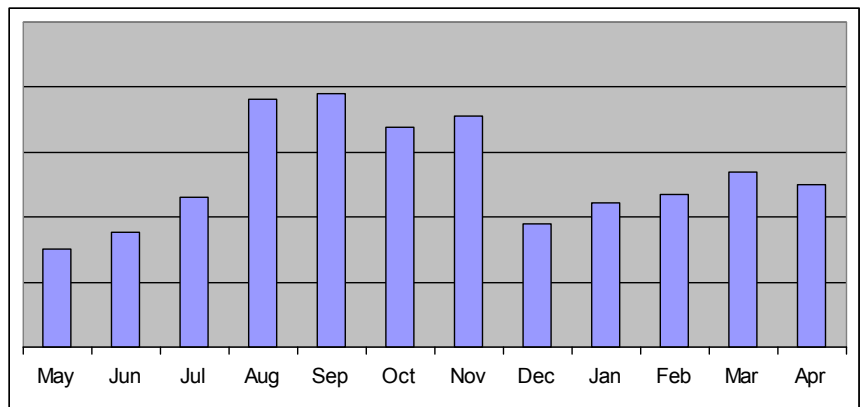
What can we expect for June ? According to Positive Weather Solutions *“June will see some good temperatures, but any sustained warmth is likely to break down quite quickly, with spells of heavy and often thundery rain developing from time to time. Generally speaking it will be a very mixed month”*.

With the normal precautionary warnings about how unpredictable the British weather can be, most of the forecasters are predicting a mixed July but better August, with this month seeing some extended spells of hot and dry weather.



INCOMING CLAIMS PROFILE

The graph shows the rolling twelve month intake of subsidence claims – the effects of the dry early Spring on claims numbers can be seen, with the lower level for April being attributed to the fewer than normal working days for 2011. Whether this increasing trend continues into the year will depend on the weather conditions for July, August and September.



This is the first bulletin for 2011 and updates will be issued on a monthly basis. If prevailing weather conditions vary significantly from that predicted such that the surge risk assessment changes, interim bulletins will be issued more frequently.