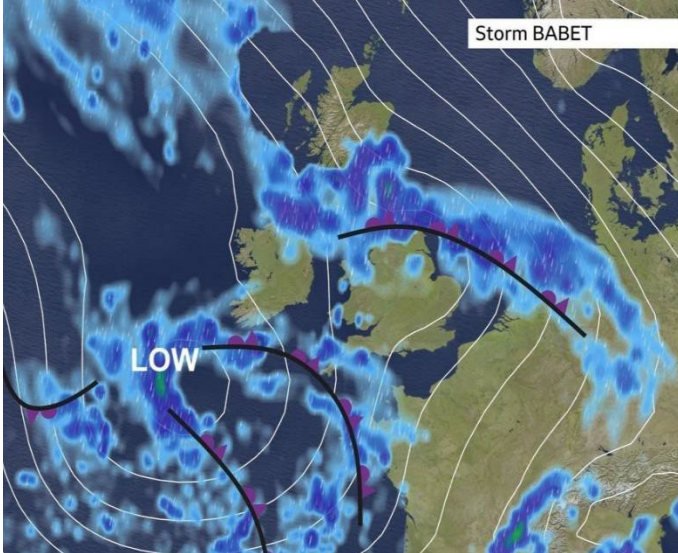


Storm Babet October 2023

On 20th October 2023 Storm Babet swept across the UK dropping huge amounts of rain and causing widespread flooding and damage. The Rivelin valley was badly affected as it damaged mill races and ponds, undermined bridges and tore away paths.

Rainfall radar of Storm Babet over UK (Source BBC weather)



Storm Babet, the second named storm of the 2023-24 storm season, originated from Bay of Biscay where the seas were unusually warm. This slow-moving depression moved up from the south-west and was joined by a second low pressure system and started moving across the UK on Wednesday 18th October.

The storm was predicted and the Meteorological Office issued yellow warnings (possible travel delays and possible risk to life and property) for much of the UK. Amber warnings (potential traffic delays and risk to life and property) were issued for over much of the Midlands and northern England (including the Sheffield area). Aberdeenshire saw a very unusual red weather warning (Dangerous weather with substantial disruption and widespread damage to property).

Storm Babet arrived in Sheffield in the early hours of Friday 20th October. It rained continually and heavily until 9 am on Saturday 21st. In this period the weather station at Weston Park recorded 66 mm of rain had fallen in less than twenty-four hours. To put this in context Sheffield on average receives 831 mm of rain in a year and normally the entire month of October sees 78 mm of rain. This is similar to the rainfall received during the Sheffield floods of 2007. Then ~88 mm fell on 14th June and a further 51 mm fell on 25th June in a short period of time. During Babet Aberdeenshire was, as predicted, hit the worst with ~250 mm of rain falling around Brechin causing widespread flooding of properties.



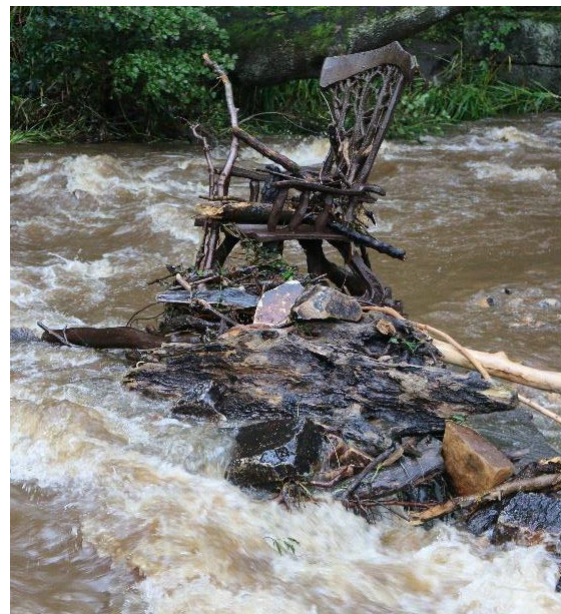
Environment Agency flood warnings for Rivers Don, Sheaf and Porter Brook as of 2pm Friday 20th October 2023

In Sheffield the Environment Agency had to issue flood warnings for River Don, Sheaf and Porter Brook. Fortunately newly completed flood protection works for the Upper Don held although elsewhere there was flooding at Catcliffe and widespread localised flooding.

In the Rivelin, Rivelin Valley Road was closed due to flooding and floodwater rose to almost the top of the arch on Hollins bridge, in doing so flooding the Rivelin park paddling pools and the foot bridge from the playground to the allotments. Luckily the Café and playground were beyond the flood limits. Elsewhere floodwater ripped away parts of the Rivelin trail, breaching pond retaining walls, took out stepping stones and weirs and undermined bridges.

At present the full extent of the damages is not known. For safety reasons, the Council has had to close some parts of the trail whilst damage is assessed and repairs can be planned and carried out. It may take months or years for the Rivelin Trail to recover from Storm Babet.

Mark Bateman



The Chair sculpture near Roscoe bridge covered in flood debris



Left – Hollins bridge with flood waters almost at the arch. Right– water on Saturday 21st covering the Rivelin Trail up valley from Hind wheel.