

Penzance – Thunderstorms & Funnel Cloud – 17th August 2006

After only 3.0mm of rain over the first 16 days of August, there was a brief thunderstorm around 07:00BST on 17th August. This was the 1st thunderstorm since 31st August 2005, the longest ever gap between thunderstorms.



After this cleared, most of the day was warm and sunny, with a maximum temperature of 22.3C. There were however large cumulus inland.

Looking inland from Penzance mid afternoon

It was virtually cloudless over the sea apart from small patches of altocumulus, and some altocumulus castellanus near the horizon.



Then, around 16:00 a band of showers approached from the south. These invigorated rapidly as they hit land. A heavy shower around 16:40 dropped 3mm of rain in 5 minutes. This was quickly followed by a thunderstorm from 17:15-18:00. This dropped a further 12.6mm, most in around 15 minutes 17:30-17:45. The thunder passed overhead, giving around 6 very close flashes. A funnel cloud occurred over northern Penzance, passing virtually over my house.

The rainfall was much more intense nearby. There was flooding at Gulval, 1 mile east of Penzance, where flash flooding washed mud through houses. There was also flooding at Drift, 2 miles to the west. At Gulval there was also large hail.



***Flooding at Gulval & the Penzance Funnel Cloud.
My house is behind & to the left of the tower***

Funnel Cloud 18th August

The 18th was another warm and fairly sunny day in Mount's Bay, the maximum temperature being 22.7C, not far off the warmest place in the UK. It was fairly still & humid. These temperatures resulted in huge Cb developing just inland. In particular a virtually stationary, small but intense shower/thunderstorm idled just inland from the west coast of the Lizard peninsula all afternoon. There was almost certainly due to a 3 way sea breeze convergence. (south westerly onshore breeze on the west coast of the Lizard, south-easterly on the east coast, and a north-westerly breeze blowing in from Hayle on the north coast) all afternoon. Thunder was audible in Penzance around 13:30BST.



At 15:55BST there was a clear funnel cloud near the southern edge of this storm, just to the north of Helston. I dashed home to get the camera, but too late. This was widely reported as a tornado, but it appears not to have reached the ground. This photograph was taken near Helston. It appeared to drift slowly north before dissipating.

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