

Ten deadly weather events that shook Britain

Video transcript: 2003 Britain's hottest day in living memory

Kate Humble, Climate Change: Britain Under Threat BBC Two 2007: In August 2003, during a ten day heatwave, 35,000 people across Europe died from the heat.

It's predicted that by 2020, heatwaves like this will be 25 times more likely. The impact will be felt most in our cities. That's because of a phenomenon known as the urban heat island. What happens is that buildings and man made surfaces absorb much more heat than green spaces do. That heat is then slowly released, increasing city air temperatures well into the night. As a result there is no relief from the heat and the bigger the city the more noticeable the effect.

On the 9 August 2003, central London recorded temperatures nine degrees hotter than the surrounding countryside.