

SUN WORSHIPPERS are certain to be basking in sunshine in July and August according to predictions from two of the UK's most famous weather experts.

Former BBC, BBC Radio Five and BBC London weather man and broadcaster John Kettle and Berkhamsted-based meteorologist Brian Gaze are backing the latest campaign to raise cash for the Hospice of St Francis by predicting their own BBQ Index.

The Hospice's Biggest BBQ Party, launched last month, encourages anyone to hold a BBQ in their back gardens, at work, at school, in the countryside, at a fun day, fete or festival or anywhere they can gather friends, family and colleagues.

Special free BBQ party packs have been created to help plan the perfect BBQ including recipes, cocktails, theme ideas and more.

All barbecue-goers need do is simply give their host a donation which goes straight back to the Hospice.

With the early summer months a wash out, a sunshine filled July and August are essential for perfect BBQ weather.

John Kettle, who is currently resident weather broadcaster on Radio Wimbledon for Wimbledon fortnight, said: "I think we are bound to enjoy a better summer than last year which was one of the worst in my memory, not only for being on holiday but for BBQ's as well with more rain and wind than we should expect even in Britain.

"We need some sizzling summer temperatures to encourage everyone to shake of the early season blues and get the BBQ ready for some brilliant weather.

"I wouldn't expect wall to wall sunshine and hot days for three months, in fact that would prove very uncomfortable on my BBQ index, but rest assured some lovely cooking days lie ahead with those warm, balmy evenings following afternoon temperatures in the mid-twenties celsius, the perfect conditions."

To predict perfect BBQ weather, John suggests assigning a score of between 0 and 5 to weather conditions according to the criteria set out below.

Add the total score and if it is between 30 and 35, then you have perfect BBQ weather.

Factor point	5 points	4 points	3 points	2 points	1
Conditions	Dry	Light	Heavy	Continuous	
Thunder (C)		showers	showers	rain	
Temperature (Deg C) (T)	22-25	21	20	19	18
Sunshine Overcast	Full	Mostly	Partly	Mostly	

(S)	sunshine	sunny	cloudy	cloudy	
Wind speed (mph) (W)	5	6	7	8	9
Wind None direction (WD)	Southerly	Easterly	Westerly	Northerly	
Humidity Very High (H) (95-100%)	Low (0-65%)	Low Moderate (65-75%)	Moderate-High (75%-85%)	High (85-95%)	
Daylight Less than hours	12 hours +	10-12 hours	8-10 hours	6-8 hours	6

The formula is: 'The sum of variables x1-x7 are equal to or less than 35 and equal to or more than 30'

This equates to a dry day, a 5mph southerly breeze, and a temperature of 22-25oc with full sunshine, low humidity and over 12 hours of daylight.

Brian Gaze, Berkhamsted-based meteorologist of www.theweatheroutlook.com, is also backing the campaign.

He added: "It's always difficult to give long range forecasts but the expectation we have is that temperatures will be above average and rainfall will be lower than the long term seasonal average.

"It should be a sign of a better summer than last summer which was a real wash out.

"I am certain the BBQ index should be a lot better than last year!"

Mr Gaze, of Edgerton Road, set up The Weather Outlook website in 2001. The website provides a forum for local people to discuss the weather and provides long to medium range forecasts.

Amy Billington, Hospice BBQ party planner, said: "We are hoping the outlook will be favourable this summer for everyone to get together and simply have fun with a BBQ unlike last year which was terrible!

"Our free fundraising pack has everything you need including an invite to send out, recipes, party planning ideas and more to help you have the best BBQ party of the summer whatever the weather and support specialist care for our patients at the same time."

BBQ STATISTICS:

July 1995 gave us an exceptional 15 perfect BBQ days against a national average of 9 and may be hard to beat this year.

However, current hotter and sunnier weather bodes well and a score of 12 or more now seems likely.

August averages 9 perfect days and the best in most recent times was again back in 1995, when 18 days made the magical +30 rating. This time round long term trends suggest a figure of close to 18 is, again, entirely possible.

2007 was a poor barbecuing season with a low BBQ index rating throughout the whole of June and July.

April and May 2007 had more perfect BBQ days but were still well below the national average.

For your FREE fundraising pack please call 01442 869555, drop into your local Hospice shop or visit www.stfrancis.org.uk