

Hold the front page – for climate services!

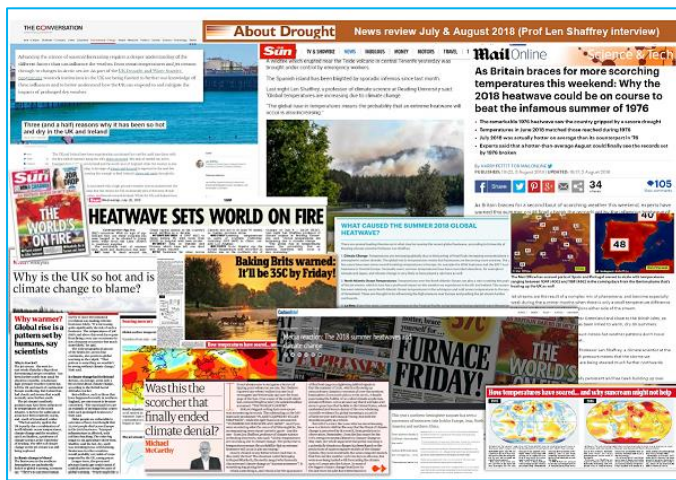
Posted: October 2018

By Sally Stevens, Communications Manager at the Institute for Environmental Analytics, Knowledge Exchange leader on About Drought, a journalist and science communications trainer for ERA4CS.

It's not every day that climate science makes the front page 'splash' on the biggest-selling red-top tabloid, but as temperatures soared in the UK this summer, so did the appetite for the science behind the story.

Professor of Climate Science [Len Shaffrey](#) wrote an article on the summer's high temperatures which placed climate change prominently on mainstream news pages across the UK media including – appropriately – the front page of The Sun, the UK's biggest selling print newspaper.

Len, who leads the ERA4CS project [WINDSURFER](#) also works on the [UK Drought & Water Scarcity Research Programme's](#) IMPETUS project, improving predictions of drought to support decision-making and says: "I was particularly pleased to put the issue of climate change on the front page of The Sun!" You can read his original article in [Conversation UK](#)



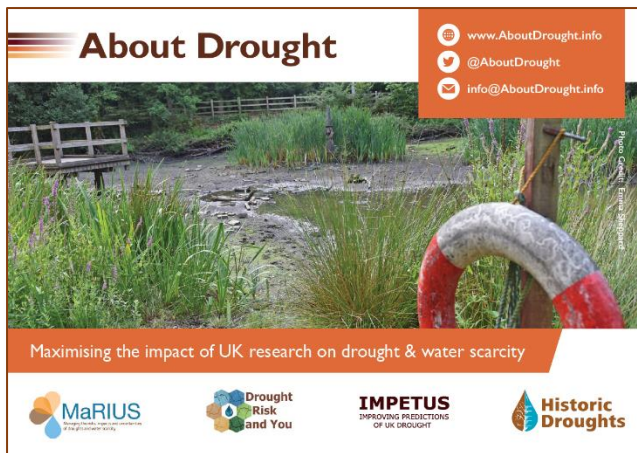
News review: Professor Len Shaffrey is based at the University of Reading's Meteorology Department. His article was written for Conversation UK and picked up by national newspapers - including the front page of The Sun which sells 1.45m copies a day and is read by around 3 million people each day – as well as news websites.

Writing about climate science and services for non-scientific readers was highlighted at the ERA4CS Summer School in Pisa as essential for meaningful and effective communications with climate services users, stakeholders and the wider public. Reliable, expert, trusted yet accessible reporting is vital if the excellent research taking place is to be of societal and environmental benefit – to make a real difference.

Conversation UK is an independent, free online news platform aimed at promoting high-quality, reliable articles written by trusted researchers or academics with proven deep expertise (and in some cases PhD students under supervision) for a non-scientific / public audience. They can volunteer to write on a topical issue on the current news agenda or can register in advance to be called on as a 'media-ready expert' to write an authoritative article of around 600-800 words in response to relevant news, at short notice, supported by a Conversation UK Editor, who is a professional journalist.

The process has tight deadlines but nevertheless allows a Conversation UK Editor to review the article, and suggest changes to engage the widest possible public audience. The proposed changes are then sent back to the expert author to accept or reject. Only when the author is happy will the article be published.

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Find out more about the UK drought programme with this video documentary [About Drought Showcase](#)

For the latest data sets, drought podcasts and historic archives visit <http://aboutdrought.info/>