

SOMERSET Floods

Jan 2014

CAUSES

PHYSICAL

- 1 - Very low lying land of Somerset levels (max 3-4 m above sea level)
- 2 - Land is a coastal plain that has been reclaimed for farming (many artificial drainage channels and rivers)
- 3 - Drained by rivers eg Tone and Parret flowing W to Bristol channel
- 4 - A succession of Atlantic storms had brought heavy rainfall
- 5 - Ground was saturated by previous rainfall = less infiltration, more overland flow
- 6 - High tide in Bristol channel and lower reaches of rivers prevented water flowing out to sea.

HUMAN

- 1 - Farming had become more intensive; pastoral to arable, land more compacted, less infiltration, more overland flow
- 2 - There had been no recent dredging of the drainage channels/ditches making them less efficient at removing excess water.
- 3 - Increasing urbanisation and population increase eg Bridgewater = more impermeable surface, more rapid overland flow of water into rivers.