

Monthly Weather Report

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August 1961 — *Generally cool and changeable but very warm at the end of the month*

After the first two days weather was generally cyclonic until the 8th with a complex low pressure system to the north of the country, but from then until the 12th a ridge of high pressure moved slowly eastward from the Atlantic across the British Isles. For most of the remainder of the month a large anticyclone persisted to the south-west of the British Isles while depressions moved east or south-east between Scotland and Iceland.

Pressure was low over Scandinavia on the 1st and 2nd and north-westerly winds over the British Isles brought showery weather with sunny periods; heavy thunderstorms gave rainfall exceeding 1 in. at a number of places on both days — nearly 1 in. fell in 30 min locally in Devon on the 1st. The warm sector of a complex depression south of Iceland moved across almost the whole country on the 3rd giving general rain which was heavy in western districts; at Langdale, Westmorland, 3½ in. of rain fell in 6 hours. The next four days were mainly showery with scattered thunderstorms, although there were periods of more continuous rain in south and south-east England on the 4th and 5th. During the 7th and 8th a small but vigorous depression moved from the Bay of Biscay across the country to the North Sea. The 8th was unusually wet and stormy. Many parts of Scotland had more than 2 in. of rain in 24 hr and there was serious flooding, particularly in the Glasgow area. Wind reached gale force in most districts; at Dungeness and Cardington gusts of 63 kt were recorded.

As the depression moved away north-eastwards weather behind it over England and Wales was generally fine on the 9th, apart from a few scattered showers, although in Scotland an associated trough gave some more continuous rain for the greater part of the day. On the 10th a depression formed off our south-west coasts and moved eastwards along the English Channel. Rain fell continuously for about 24 hr over much of the south-west, many places in Somerset recording more than 3 in. during this time; at Torre 1 in. fell in 90 min. The rain continued for some time on the 11th in eastern England but a ridge of high pressure moved from the Atlantic over the western part of the country and many places in Cornwall and Devon had over 10 hr of sunshine. The 12th was fine and sunny generally, the first day of the month to be almost free of rain in England and Wales.

During the next week weather was changeable as troughs of low pressure moved south-east across the British Isles around a quasi-stationary anticyclone off the south-west coasts; in the generally cool north-westerly air-stream cloudy periods with occasional rain alternated with sunnier spells.

The anticyclone moved southward on the 20th and winds backed to west. Warm-front rain spread from the west that night and there were periods of rain or frequent showers on the 21st as a depression moved south-east skirting the coast of Scotland. After a showery day on the 22nd further troughs in the general westerly air-stream brought changeable weather on the 23rd-26th, rain in the west being heavy at times.

Rain persisted in Scotland and Northern Ireland on the 27th, but with pressure rising over most of the country and an anticyclone over northern France moving slowly eastward, weather over most of southern England was fine and warm. The next day the anticyclone was centred over northern Germany and southerly winds with fine warm weather became general over the British Isles, although sea

fog affected many coastal areas in the south-west. The 29th was the warmest day of the month, the air over the British Isles being drawn from the Western Mediterranean; afternoon temperatures reached 32°C at several places. Weather remained generally fine and warm during the last two days of the month though maximum temperatures were not as high as on the 29th.

Pressure and Wind — Mean pressure was below average over much of Scotland but above average elsewhere, the deviations at 9 hr ranging from -1.8 mb at Lerwick to +3.6 mb at Scilly. After two days of north-westerlies surface winds were mainly westerly until the 8th, north-westerly or variable on the 9th-12th and north-westerly again on the 13th-19th. Subsequently winds were generally south-westerly until the 27th and then southerly until the end of the month. Wind reached gale force in Scotland on 14 days and in England and Wales on the 2nd-4th, 7th-9th, 19th-22nd, 25th and 27th (12 days). Gales were widespread on the 8th, the highest mean hourly wind speed exceeding 40 kt at a number of places.

Temperature — Mean temperature was 0.3°C below the 1921-50 average in England and Wales, 0.4°C and 0.5°C below the average in Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively. Maximum day temperatures in England and Wales were generally below normal though high temperatures from the 27th onwards raised the averages appreciably. The 29th was the warmest day nearly everywhere with maximum temperature over 30°C in many places; at Ross-on-Wye it was the warmest August day since 1942.

Extremes included:—(England and Wales) 31.8°C at Abingdon and Pershore on the 29th, -1.1°C at Grizedale on the 5th; (Scotland) 28.9°C at Kinlochewe on the 29th, -0.6°C at Tarfside on the 3rd and 5th; (Northern Ireland) 24.2°C at Ballykelly on the 28th, 3.3°C at Garvagh on the 12th.

Precipitation — The general rainfall expressed as a percentage of the 1916-50 average was 100 over England and Wales, 131 over Scotland and 85 over Northern Ireland. Less than half the average rainfall was recorded over the extreme south of England from Portland Bill to the Isle of Sheppey, but more than 150 per cent of the average occurred in the Peak District, northern Lincolnshire, Renfrewshire, Argyshire, western Inverness-shire and southern Ross-shire.

Thunder was heard in Scotland on 4 days and in England and Wales on the 1st, 2nd, 5th, 8th, 10th-15th, 22nd, 24th, 29th and 31st (16 days). Thunderstorms were widespread in south-east England on the 1st and in northern, western and central England on the 8th.

Sunshine — The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the 1921-50 average was 103 in England and Wales, 105 in Scotland and 98 in Northern Ireland. Abundant sunshine everywhere towards the end of the month helped to raise totals which had been below the average generally, especially during the second and third weeks. During the last week of the month sunshine in north-west England was about twice the average.

Fog — In Scotland fog was reported at one lower level station or another on 10 days although Lowther Hill experienced hill fog on 22 days. In England and Wales fog occurred on 16 days; sea-fog affected many south-western coastal areas around the 28th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — The aurora was visible in Scotland on 10 nights.