

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

Summary of observations compiled from returns of official stations and voluntary observers

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September 1968 — *Dry in the extreme north, wet and generally unsettled elsewhere*

Weather was cyclonic in character throughout the month except for short anticyclonic periods on the 6th—8th and on the 18th.

The month began cool and rather wet with rain or showers and scattered thunderstorms associated with a complex area of low pressure which moved across northern districts. The 4th—9th was milder and drier though rain spread across the country on the 5th. The next day an anticyclone formed off south-west England and temperatures rose above average on the 7th as the anticyclone moved north-eastwards to become centred off Scandinavia. There was some rain in the north and west on the 8th, but the 9th and 10th were the warmest days of the month in south-east England with temperatures rising 5 deg. C above the average. Thunderstorms broke out in southern England on the 10th, and the next two days were generally cooler with outbreaks of moderate to heavy rain and scattered thunderstorms associated with a deep trough which extended down the east coast of England from a depression near Iceland. Cockle Park, Northumberland, recorded 57 mm of rain during the night of the 12th/13th.

Pressure was high to the north of the British Isles on the 13th and, apart from some rain in the south-west, the day was mainly fine. On the other hand, pressure was falling steadily in the south of the country and during the morning of the 13th a depression formed off south-west England. This depression deepened very rapidly on the 14th bringing about 50 mm of rain to Chivenor and the Isles of Scilly. A pronounced trough of low pressure, associated with this depression, brought exceptionally heavy rain and thunderstorms to south-east England, and as the depression moved first south-eastwards and then north-eastwards across northern France, rain, frequently heavy, continued over much of the south-east England throughout the 14th, 15th and 16th. During these three days parts of Kent, Surrey and Essex had between 150 and 200 mm of rain. The highest daily totals occurred in the area of the North Downs; West Malling recorded 108 mm on the 14th. Also on the 14th a fall of 57 mm in 42 min. was recorded at Purleigh, Essex, and it is estimated that an intensity of this order can be expected only on one day in about 200 years. The rain led to widespread and disastrous flooding in Kent, Essex, Surrey, Sussex and East Anglia, the floods being particularly prolonged in the East Molesey area.

To the north of the country, however, pressure remained high on the 14th/16th and, in sharp contrast to the heavy rain in the south, weather in Scotland, Northern Ireland and north-west England was fine and dry with more than 11 hours of sunshine in places on the 15th. This fine weather spread to most other districts on the 17th and 18th although heavy rain returned to Kent on the 17th.

The remainder of the month was very unsettled as a succession of depressions moved eastwards across the country. All areas had frequent showers and there was more general rain at times, particularly on the 25th and 27th.

Pressure and Wind — Mean pressure was below the 1931-60 average except in the extreme north, the deviation at 0900 GMT ranging from +0.8 mb at Lerwick to -5.6 at Ross-on-Wye and Rhoose. Surface wind was mainly light and variable or south-easterly until the 19th apart from a period of north-easterlies from the 14th until the 17th. South-westerly winds predominated from the 20th until the end of the month. Gales were reported on 4 days in Scotland and on 6 days in England and Wales. A gust of 58 kt was recorded at Valley on the 27th.

Temperature — Although mean day temperatures for the month in England and Wales and in eastern Scotland were below the 1931-60 average, there was a mild spell during the second week when temperatures in parts of eastern England rose to 25°C.

Extremes included: (England and Wales) 25.6°C at Camden Square and Gillingham, Kent, on the 10th, -0.6°C at Moor House on the 25th; (Scotland) 22.8°C at Stanhope Farm and at Threave on the 9th, -2.8°C at Balmoral on the 19th; ((Northern Ireland) 21.4°C at Strabane Convent on the 9th, 0.0°C at Greenmount on the 17th.

Rainfall — The outstanding feature of the month was the heavy rainfall in south-east England on the 14th, 15th and 16th. Over England and Wales as a whole it was the wettest September since 1927 with rainfall nearly twice the average. In parts of Kent, Essex, the London area, Surrey and Sussex rainfall exceeded four times the average while at Whitstable, Kent, more than five times the average amount was recorded. In Scotland rainfall was above average over all southern districts and over a small area around the Moray Firth, elsewhere it was below the average. While several places in southern Scotland had over twice their September average, large areas in the north and north-west had less than half their average amount of rain. In Northern Ireland rainfall was mostly above the average and was twice the average locally in Counties Down, Armagh and Fermanagh.

Thunderstorms were widespread on the 2nd and 12th in Scotland and on the 13th and 17th in England and Wales; isolated outbreaks were reported elsewhere on 13 other days mainly during the first three weeks of the month.

Sunshine — Sunshine was below the average over the whole of Scotland except in the Western Isles and in a few places near the west coast. At Stornoway sunshine was 118 per cent of average. In England and Wales it was mainly below average except for a few areas in the south and west. Percentages of average ranged from 62 at Berwick-on-Tweed to 113 at Scilly.

Fog — Fog at 0900 GMT was reported at one place or another on 15 days in Scotland and on 21 days in England and Wales mainly during the first three weeks. Patches of sea fog affected the east coast of Scotland and the north-east coast of England from the 5th until the 12th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — The aurora was visible in Scotland on 9 nights.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES, SEPTEMBER, 1968

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE °C					EARTH TEMP. °C		RAIN DAYS	RAIN-FALL	SUNSHINE
	*Highest Max.	*Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 30 cm.	Mean 122cm.			
	Difference from Average									
0 SCOTLAND, N.	19.4	2.0	+0.1	+0.1	+0.1	+0.4	0.0	+6	69	87
1 SCOTLAND, E.	21.7	3.9	-0.7	+0.6	0.0	+0.5	+0.2	+2	114	73
2 ENGLAND, N.E.	24.0	0.6	-0.4	+0.6	+0.1	+0.5	+0.2	+3	204	93
3 ENGLAND, E.	25.0	4.4	-0.4	+0.8	+0.2	+0.2	-0.2	+4	259	90
4 MIDLANDS	24.4	4.4	-0.5	+0.6	0.0	+0.1	0.0	+6	218	80
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	24.3	4.1	-0.3	+0.9	+0.3	-0.3	-0.4	+6	244	95
6 SCOTLAND, W.	22.0	0.2	0.0	+0.2	+0.1	+0.4	-0.1	-1	159	94
7 ENGLAND, N.W. and N. Wales	24.1	5.0	-0.2	+0.6	+0.2	+0.1	+0.1	+2	198	92
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S. Wales	23.9	3.9	-0.4	+0.7	-0.2	+0.3	+0.1	+3	137	92
N. IRELAND	21.1	1.1	0.0	-0.3	-0.1	-	-	-2	141	103
SCOTLAND	22.0	0.2	-0.2	+0.3	+0.1	-	-	+2	101	85
ENG. and WALES	25.0	0.6	-0.4	+0.7	+0.1	-	-	+4	196	90

*Highest Max. and Lowest Min. of the District Value Stations.