

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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October 1955—Somewhat drier and sunnier than normal; rather cold except during second week.

An unsettled period during the first week which ended with widespread rain, was followed by a week of mild, mainly anticyclonic conditions; the remainder of the month was colder with some unusually heavy rain in southern England towards the end of the third week.

There were outbreaks of thundery rain with sunny periods for the first few days as slow-moving troughs crossed the country, but on the 5th the first major depression of the autumn developed off north-west Ireland and moved across south Scotland to reach the North Sea on the 6th. Widespread rain, heavy in many places, accompanied its passage and behind it there were squally thundery showers with strong north-westerly winds reaching gale force at times. An anticyclone from the Azores moved to the Bay of Biscay on the 8th and later to southern Russia. Warm air from the Atlantic which spread over the country to the north of this anticyclone was heralded by widespread drizzle and prolonged rainfall in Cornwall. Pressure remained generally high over southern England until the 15th and during this period weather was mostly dry and warm with sunny intervals, although fog formed night and morning and was widespread in the Midlands and south-east England on the 11th, where it persisted locally all day. An intensifying upper trough extending down the Norwegian Sea to the British Isles moved quickly eastward on the 15th, and cold polar air, with wind direction becoming north-westerly at all levels, spread over the country causing a general fall of temperature of about 15°F. At Rotherham, the minimum temperature which was 53°F. on the 15th fell to 26°F. on the 16th, while London, with a maximum of only 48°F., had its coldest day since March. On the 18th a depression deepened considerably as it moved southward from Iceland; it was centred over Ireland by midday the following day, afterwards turning north-east and 24 hr. later was over the northern North Sea. Rain was widespread over the British Isles with unusually heavy falls in places; in 24 hr. Poole recorded more than 4 in. and Swanage and Bournemouth each had over 3 in. while Southampton registered 1½ in. in 24 hr. on both the 18th and 19th. A cold front associated with the main depression moved slowly across the country on the 20th, accompanied by occasional rain, but a wave on this front developed into an active depression which remained in the neighbourhood of the southern North Sea until the 23rd. Northerly gales developed along the east coast with heavy and prolonged rainfall in south-east England where many stations recorded over 2 in. in 24 hr. and several in the extreme east of Kent over 3 in. By contrast the weather was fine over most of the rest of the country. The last week was mainly fine apart from some fog here and there, but it became progressively colder as polar air again spread southwards with wintry showers in the north and east; on the nights of the 28th, 30th and 31st air frost was widespread.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure was everywhere above the average for the period 1921–50, the deviation at 9h. ranging from +0.2 mb. at Scarborough to +3.5 mb. at Armagh. Winds were mainly between west and south-west, during the first half of the month; during the latter part north-westerly winds predominated.

In Scotland winds reached gale force on 13 days, and in England and Wales on 10 days; gales were widespread on the 6th and blew at many eastern coastal districts on the 21st and 22nd. Among the highest gusts recorded were 74 kt. at Bidston and 65 kt. at Aberporth both on the 6th, and 75 kt. at Kete on the 5th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature was below the 1921–50 average by 1.3°F. in England and Wales, 1.2°F. in Scotland and 1.0°F. in Northern Ireland. The second week was unusually mild with temperature reaching 70°F. in many places, but temperature during the second half of the month was considerably below the average. Extreme temperatures included:—(England and Wales) 73°F. at Huddersfield (Oakes) on the 10th, 17°F. at Lincoln on the 31st; (Scotland) 71°F. at North Berwick on the 9th, 18°F. at Castle Douglas on the 18th; (Northern Ireland) 68°F. at Garvagh on the 8th; 26°F. at Garvagh and Nutts Corner on the 23rd.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the 1881–1915 average was 77 in England and Wales, 108 in Scotland and 86 in Northern Ireland. Rainfall exceeded the average over the north-western half of Scotland, most of south-east England and locally in south Cornwall. There was more than 150 per cent. in parts of northern Scotland and in eastern districts of East Anglia and Kent. Most of Great Britain however had less than 75 per cent., and less than 50 per cent. of the average was recorded over the west Midlands, districts bordering the Bristol channel and the lower Severn valley, Anglesey and locally in Durham and East Lothian. Most of Northern Ireland had less than the average but there was a small excess in the extreme north.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hours or less were:—

- 18th 2.72 in. at Treherbert, Glamorgan, 2.56 in. at Portland Bill, Dorset.
- 19th 2.50 in. at Stone, Staffordshire, 2.39 in. at Blackbushe, Hampshire.
- 21st 4.35 in. at Ramsgate, 3.96 in. at Broadstairs both in Kent, 2.25 in. at Lowestoft, Suffolk.

Wintry showers of sleet or snow occurred around the 16th and 17th and during the last few days of the month, when in Scotland it lay to a depth of 1 to 3 in. on high ground. Thunder occurred locally on 6 days in Scotland and on the 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 19th–21st in England and Wales.

Sunshine.—The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1921–50 was 121 over England and Wales, 101 over Scotland and 112 over Northern Ireland. In west Scotland and the Hebrides several stations had less than the average amount, but all other areas showed an excess: Sheffield and Hawarden recorded more than 150 per cent.

Fog.—Scotland had 11 days with fog; in England and Wales it was widespread in the early morning from 8th to 13th and during the latter part of that period the fog was dense locally, persisting most of the day in many places.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on 6 nights.