

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

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Fine spells; occasional heavy rain and thunderstorms.

From the 1st to 11th and again from the 27th to 31st Atlantic fronts alternating with ridges of high pressure affected many districts. In the intervening period pressure remained fairly high although a cold front crossed the whole country on the 16th and 17th and there was further frontal activity over Northern Ireland, southern Scotland and in parts of northern England and Wales on the 19th and 20th.

Weather

The first two weeks were mostly wet and rather windy in the west and north. In other areas the first week was also wet but the second was much drier. After the 11th there were dry spells in all areas and it was often sunny and warm. However, there were occasional outbreaks of rain and these became more frequent during the last week. Throughout the month outbreaks of heavy rain were often associated with thunderstorms, particularly in the south and east. Overnight fog also occurred frequently in these areas and sea fog affected Channel coasts and North Sea coasts at times.

Wind

Although winds were usually light or moderate they were sometimes fresh or strong with local gales, especially during the first 10 days. Western and northern districts were most frequently affected and gusts of 50 kt were reported from a number of places. A mean hourly wind speed of 60 kt and a gust of 80 kt were recorded at the high-level station at Cairngorm (Inverness-shire) on the 9th.

Temperature

Over Northern Ireland, Scotland and north-east England mean temperatures were within 1 degC of average whereas in Wales and in the rest of England they ranged from about average to 1.5 degC above average. During the first few days temperatures were generally a little above average but the period from the 12th to 17th was much warmer and maximum temperatures of 27°C or more occurred at times. On the 14th a maximum temperature of 32.1°C was recorded at Mayflower Park, Southampton and on the 16th the temperature reached 32.0°C at East Dereham (Norfolk). Most of the fourth week was also warm with one or two hot days especially in southern and western areas. Temperatures were below average from the 4th to 8th and again towards the end of the third week particularly in Northern Ireland, Scotland and northern England. At other times temperatures were near average. Air frost occurred on a few days in the north and north-west and there were some reports of ground frost from all districts except southern England.

Rainfall

It was wetter than average in the south of Northern Ireland, in parts of western and northern Scotland, in most of Wales and in many western and southern areas of England. Monthly rainfall reached 175 per cent of average in Scotland and over twice the average on part of the Welsh coast. Elsewhere it was drier than average especially in places in eastern Scotland where less than half of the average amount of rain fell and in small areas of east and south-east England which had less than a quarter of average rainfall. Early days were generally rainy but most of England became dry after the 7th. In other areas including Wales and northern England dry weather was delayed until the 12th. Significant rainfall recommenced just after mid-month but until the 26th it was sporadic and there were a number of dry days. Thereafter rainfall was much more frequent in all districts. Outbreaks of heavy rain occurred at times and these were often associated with thunderstorms, especially in England and Wales. Hail was also reported. According to the Press a policeman was killed by lightning at Hartlepool (Co. Durham) on the 1st and there was lightning damage and serious local flooding during a heavy thunderstorm which affected south-west London on the same day. Among the intense falls of rain which occurred during this storm was one estimated as 68.3 mm in 45 minutes at Balham, a 'very rare' fall, and another, classified as 'remarkable', of 41.0 mm in 35 minutes at Morden Hall. Widespread heavy rain on the 5th and 6th caused flooding in many places and some 'remarkable' falls occurred in Wales. During the 24 hours from 09 GMT on the 5th 110.1 mm of rain fell at Abergynolwyn (Merioneth) and 109.2 mm were measured at Ceinws (Montgomeryshire). Extensive flooding occurred in the Channel Islands and in south-west England and Wales during thunderstorms

on the night of the 22nd/23rd when a 'remarkable' fall of 76.0 mm in about 7 hours was recorded at Dartmouth (Devon). On the 27th severe thunderstorms were widespread in the Midlands and southern England and heavy rain was also reported in central and north-west Scotland on the 31st.

Sunshine

In Northern Ireland, sunshine totals were mostly near or below average but parts of north-east Scotland had their sunniest August since 1947. It was also sunnier than average elsewhere except for a few places in South Wales and south-west England. Sunny days were frequent but the only really widespread and prolonged sunny spell occurred between the 12th and the 15th in areas well away from eastern and southern coasts.

Fog

Fog patches often developed overnight in the Midlands and in eastern and southern England but they usually dispersed fairly rapidly during the following morning. Elsewhere overnight fog occurred much less frequently. Sea fog affected coastal areas bordering the Channel and the North Sea at times between the 12th and 24th and again on the 29th. It was widespread and occasionally persistent on north-eastern coasts and in south-west England and the Channel Islands. Hill and coast fog occurred widely in rain on a few days during the first and last weeks.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

On the 7th a whirlwind associated with a thunderstorm near Southend (Essex) was reported to have uprooted trees, damaged houses and lifted parked cars at Thorpe Bay.

Table 1 District values**August 1973**

District	air temperature °C					mean 30-cm earth temp °C	rain-days	rainfall	sunshine
	Highest	Lowest	max.	min.	mean				
	Max. †	Min. †	difference from average						
0 Scotland N	26.5	0.5	+0.1	-0.6	-0.3	—	-2	111	113
1 Scotland E	27.9	2.4	+0.3	-0.1	+0.1	+0.4	-1	70	124
2 England N E	29.6	3.9	-0.3	0.0	-0.2	+0.8	-3	74	108
3 England E	31.5	4.7	+0.3	+0.6	+0.4	0.0	-3	42	101
4 Midland Counties	30.5	6.6	+0.8	+0.3	+0.5	+0.9	-5	68	106
5 England S E	30.5	6.0	+1.3	+1.1	+1.2	+0.3	-7	58	103
6 Scotland W	27.6	4.1	-0.1	0.0	0.0	+0.1	-1	85	104
7 Eng N W & Wales N	29.0	6.0	+0.7	+0.4	+0.5	+0.3	-2	109	112
8 Eng S W & Wales S	28.9	6.6	+0.8	+0.6	+0.6	+0.7	-4	100	96
N Ireland	27.1	3.4	+0.5	+0.3	+0.4	—	0	94	92
Scotland	27.9	0.5	+0.1	-0.2	-0.1	—	-1	88	113
England & Wales	31.5	3.9	+0.6	+0.5	+0.5	—	-4	77	104

† Highest max. and lowest min. of the District Value Stations