

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL STATIONS AND VOLUNTEER OBSERVERS

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August 1954—Cool and dull, mainly wet in England, Wales and southern Scotland.

Conditions in most parts of the country were again dominated by frequent and active depressions and the weather of August was similar to that of the preceding two months and maintained the character of this summer as combining low temperature with a general deficiency of sunshine. Over most of England and Wales, except parts of south-west England, and in Scotland south of the Clyde-Forth valley there was also considerably more than the average rainfall.

From the 1st to the 3rd a depression moved from the Atlantic to the northern North Sea and on the 4th a secondary disturbance moved northward from the Bay of Biscay to affect southern districts of the British Isles. Troughs of a new Atlantic depression moved across the country on the 5th and subsequently a complex low pressure system covered the British Isles. On the 9th another small but active depression moved quickly north-east along the English Channel to become slow moving over the North Sea on the 10th. Periods of rain and frequent showers occurred but there were long sunny periods in some places; thunderstorms occurred locally on most days and rainfall was heavy at times. Temperatures rose to 70°F. or above locally during the first few days, particularly in southern England. Strong westerly winds prevailed on the south coast on the 7th.

A weak ridge of high pressure moved in over the British Isles on the 11th; it was followed on the 12th by a trough of low pressure and on the 15th and 16th by another ridge. Weather was changeable over this period, with rain in most areas and thunderstorms in places but also sunny periods.

On the 17th and 18th a deepening depression from the Atlantic moved eastward across Ireland and northern England giving heavy rain in England, Wales and southern Scotland on the 17th. On the 18th an intense ridge of high pressure developed from the Azores towards Scandinavia and maintained fine weather for a few days over much of Scotland, Ireland and parts of western England and Wales. The depression, however, became slow moving in the North Sea on the 19th and then began to move slowly south-west. It was replaced by another system which persisted as a complex depression over the southern North Sea and gave rise to a period of dull, wet weather over eastern districts of England, which gradually extended to much of Scotland, Wales and western England and did not finally clear up until the 25th. During this period there was some very cool weather, and thunderstorms and heavy local rain were frequent; considerable sunshine occurred at times, however, in some north-western and western areas.

On the 25th a ridge from the Azores anticyclone spread over the British Isles; it subsequently moved slowly southward into France but southern England had mostly fine weather, with considerable sunshine and temperature once more rose into the seventies. Scotland, Northern Ireland and to a lesser extent Wales and northern England had mostly cloudy weather with rain or drizzle at times. South-westerly gales occurred in north and west Scotland on the 30th.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure was everywhere below the average for the period 1921–50; the deviation at 9h. ranged from –1.1 mb. at Stornoway to –4.6 mb. at Gorleston and Cranwell. Winds reached gale force at times, mainly on the 7th, 18th–20th, 24th, 29th and 30th. Among the highest gusts, in knots, were 50 at

Scilly on the 7th, 54 at Eskdalemuir and 50 at Renfrew on the 29th and 64 at Stornoway and 52 at Lerwick on the 30th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature differed from the average for the period 1921–50 by –2.3°F. in England and Wales, –1.5°F. in Scotland and –1.9°F. in Northern Ireland; over Great Britain as a whole it was the coolest August since 1931. As in previous months the low mean temperature was due more to cool days than cold nights. The highest day temperatures occurred as a rule during the first and last weeks. In the intervening period there was some unusually cool weather; the maximum temperature at Kew on the 19th, 57°F., was the lowest there for any August day since August 1931. Low minima were registered in places on the 1st, 12th, 16th and 17th.

Extreme temperatures included:—(England and Wales) 81°F. at Camden Square, London, and at Halstead on the 31st, 36°F. at Cawood on the 1st; (Scotland) 75°F. at Stirling on the 24th and at Gordon Castle and Dyce on the 26th, 28°F. at Glenlivet on the 17th; (Northern Ireland) 71°F. at Castle Archdale on the 26th, 38°F. at Castle Archdale on the 16th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915 was 141 over England and Wales, 103 over Scotland and 74 over Northern Ireland. It was generally less than average in Scotland north of the Clyde-Forth valley, in Northern Ireland, locally in Wales and over part of south-west England. It was more than average elsewhere and more than twice the average in a large area in north-east England and the north Midlands, locally in south-east Scotland, over parts of East Anglia, and locally in London. There were many days with heavy rain, which caused considerable flooding in some areas.

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

1st	3.16 in. at Swansea Waterworks and 3.12 in. at Cardiff Waterworks, both in Brecknockshire.
15th	2.36 in. at Bidston, the highest daily fall there in 88 years of observations.
17th	3.45 in. at Llydaw Intake, Snowdon and 3.40 in. at Blaenau Festiniog, Merionethshire.
20th	2.46 in. at Sheffield Waterworks, Yorkshire.
21st	3.10 in. at Freshwater, Isle of Wight, most of which fell in 60 minutes.
23rd	2.30 in. at Danby Lodge, Yorkshire.
31st	2.60 in. at Lochailort, Inverness-shire.

Thunderstorms occurred frequently, mainly on the 1st–2nd, 4th–16th, 19th–22nd and 31st; during severe storms in south Wales on the 22nd a man was killed by lightning at Chepstow and heavy rain and hail fell at Maesteg, Glamorgan.

Sunshine.—The deficiency of bright sunshine was again a noteworthy feature of the weather; a small excess occurred only at one or two places in the north-west of Scotland. Over England and Wales as a whole and also at Inverness it was the dullest August since 1912. In England and Wales this summer (June, July and August) was also the dullest summer since 1912.

Fog.—Fog, mainly at night or in the morning occurred rather frequently, particularly on high land and on the west coasts. Sea and air traffic were delayed by thick fog in London and the Home Counties on the morning of the 21st.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on four days. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on one day.