

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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September 1961 — *Changeable; mild.*

The month provided a wide variety of weather types over the British Isles, ranging from warm anticyclonic through thundery cols to vigorous depressions. The 16th was particularly stormy in Northern Ireland and the north of Great Britain.

The fine very warm weather at the end of August persisted during the first two days of September. Widespread overnight fog cleared in most places by mid-morning and afternoon temperatures exceeded 27°C over much of southern and central England. On the afternoon of the 2nd severe thunderstorms broke out in Scotland and Northern Ireland and spread slowly southward during the night persisting over Lancashire, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire for most of the following day; at Litton, West Riding of Yorkshire, .43 in. of rain fell in 10 min around midnight and Manchester Airport had 1.39 in. in 60 min during the morning of the 3rd. In southern England over 1 in. fell at Dorchester, Dorset, in less than 3 hr and Sandown and St. Catherine's Point both had over 3 in. in 24 hr.

On the 5th a depression to the east of Iceland moved southward towards the North Sea, and winds over the British Isles veered to northwest behind a cold front which brought a belt of rain south-eastward across the country. The following day was showery with scattered thunderstorms. The 7th-9th was fine and sunny in most districts as a ridge of high pressure moved slowly eastwards across the country, but rain reached western districts on the 9th with the approach of the cold front of a complex low pressure system to the south-west of Iceland. The 10th was generally dull with occasional rain, which was heavy at times in the south-west, but the frontal rain cleared eastern districts early the following morning giving place to a generally bright but showery day.

During the 12th-16th the country was affected by two vigorous disturbances which had originated as hurricanes on the other side of the Atlantic. In north-west Scotland and Northern Ireland rainfall was heavy almost every day of the period; the 12th was the wettest day in north-west England and Wales, where many places had more than 1 in. of rain, and the 13th in southern England. On the 16th a small but intense depression moved north-east, skirting the west coasts of Ireland and Scotland, and bringing severe gales to these areas; at Ballykelly and Tiree gusts exceeded 90 kt.

A more settled period began on the 17th as a ridge of high pressure developed over England in the rear of the depression. The 18th was generally dry and warm with more than 10 hr of sunshine in many places, but as the ridge moved to southern Norway a weak trough spread north-east over the British Isles giving some occasional slight rain on the 19th and 20th. During most of the next week an anticyclone was centred near the Baltic with a ridge of high pressure over eastern and southern England where weather was generally dry, sunny and rather warm. Depressions from the Atlantic moved north-east near the Denmark Straits but associated fronts gave some occasional rain in the north-west of the British Isles. Early morning fog was prevalent during the period and persisted throughout the day in many areas on the 23rd.

There was a marked change on the 27th with widespread rain as a depression intensified in the South-West Approaches. On the 28th the depression turned north over the Irish Sea to north Scotland accompanied by widespread gales and rain; several places in western

Scotland had more than 1 in. of rain. Further rain in most districts on the last two days of the month was associated with a deep depression moving towards western Ireland.

Pressure and Wind — Mean pressure was below the average everywhere, the deviation at 9 hr ranging from 1.1 mb at Gorleston to 4.7 mb at Tiree. Surface winds were light and variable at first becoming north-westerly on the 5th-7th and predominantly south-westerly on the 8th-16th. They were mainly south-west to south in the north-west, but light and variable in the south-east, on the 17th-26th, becoming generally south-west during the remainder of the month. In Scotland gales were reported on 10 days; the gale of the 16th/17th was widespread and one of the most severe on record. Mean hourly wind speeds of 56 kt and 65 kt were recorded at Rannoch and Tiree respectively with gusts exceeding 90 kt. In England and Wales wind reached gale force on the 1st, 12th-16th, 18th, 21st and 28th-30th (11 days) and gales were widespread on the 15th and 16th.

Temperature — Mean temperature was generally above the 1921-50 average, the excess being 1.4°C in England and Wales, 1.1°C in Scotland and 0.7°C in Northern Ireland. The first two days of the month were unusually warm. Ground frost occurred on 10 nights in England and Wales, being rather widespread during second and last weeks. Extremes included: (England and Wales) 31.6°C at Gatwick on the 2nd, -1.7°C at Alwen on the 25th; (Scotland) 25.6°C at Selkirk on the 1st, -1.1°C at Logie Coldstone on the 29th; (Northern Ireland) 25.0°C at Armagh on the 1st, 2.8°C at Loughgall on the 18th.

Precipitation — The general rainfall expressed as a percentage of the 1916-50 average was 105 in England and Wales, 118 in Scotland and 117 in Northern Ireland. Less than the average was recorded over the greater part of central and northern England except the Lake District, whereas more than 150 per cent of the average occurred in Pembrokeshire, Dorset and eastern Kent.

Thunder was rather frequent during the month occurring on 11 days in Scotland and on the 1st-6th, 10th, 11th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 17th, 19th, 20th, 23rd, 26th-29th (19 days) in England and Wales. Thunderstorms were widespread and accompanied by heavy rain locally on the 2nd and 3rd.

A slight fall of snow was reported from Glenmore on the 26th.

Sunshine — The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the 1921-60 average was 97 over England and Wales, 98 over Scotland and 103 over Northern Ireland. Sunshine was generally below average in eastern England and mainly above in the north-west; it was 25 per cent above the average at Manchester Airport.

Fog — In Scotland fog was reported at one place or another on 15 days, but hill fog occurred at Lowther Hill on 23 days. In England and Wales early morning fog occurred on 18 days, it was widespread on the 1st and 2nd and around the 23rd when it persisted all day in many areas.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — The aurora was visible in Scotland on 10 nights: it was seen as far south as Bournemouth on the night of September 30th/October 1st.