

# Monthly Weather Report

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## OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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### September 1959—*Sunny and warm; exceptionally dry over England and Wales*

The anticyclonic conditions which had dominated the weather during the preceding four months continued throughout September except for a brief interruption around the 20th. Most places in England and Wales were virtually without rain during the first three weeks.

The month began with an anticyclone centred over the North Sea and a blocking pattern at 500 mb. with the upper high over north Scotland and the upper low over Biscay. The blocking pattern moved slowly eastwards and degenerated over Europe on 8th–9th but the surface anticyclone persisted until the 11th. On most days during this period many places recorded 10–12 hr. sunshine and afternoon temperatures, which at the beginning of the month were in the upper sixties, rose steadily and from the 6th to 12th exceeded 80°F. somewhere in Britain every day. Temperature rose to 84°F. in parts of the Midlands and south-west England and to 86°F. at Gatwick on the 11th.

On the 12th another anticyclone became centred off north-west Scotland and an upper blocking system became re-established over the eastern Atlantic with its low centre north of the Azores. With light north-easterly winds over most of the country weather was markedly cooler although temperature exceeded 70°F. locally. It remained generally sunny but was dull in some eastern districts where there were some light scattered showers.

The anticyclone drifted south-east on the 17th–20th and declined but a weak upper low persisted over the Bay of Biscay. There was little change in the weather until the 20th when pressure fell steadily over the British Isles as an active cold front, with minor wave disturbances moving north-eastward along it, moved slowly south-eastwards across northern districts subsequently clearing south-east England about noon on the 23rd. Many places in western Scotland and some in Northern Ireland and north-west England had over 1 in. of rain on the 20th while on the 21st rain was more general with some heavy falls in the north and Midlands, but amounts in the south were small. Some slight rain or drizzle persisted in the south-east the following morning, but otherwise only some scattered showers occurred in the north.

From 23rd to 25th a succession of fronts from the Atlantic gave some rain in northern districts as a small anticyclone moved eastwards across southern England to northern Germany. Weather in the south was mainly fine and dry although on the 25th rain was fairly widespread in south-western districts.

Pressure rose rapidly over the British Isles on the 26th and on the 27th an anticyclone became centred over the southern part of the country where many places had more than 10 hr. sunshine. However, there was some heavy frontal rain in the extreme north of Scotland. The anticyclone moved eastwards and by the 30th was centred near the southern Baltic. With warm southerly winds over the British Isles the last few days of the month were fine and dry with afternoon temperatures reaching the lower seventies locally.

**Pressure and Wind.** Mean pressure was everywhere above the 1921–50 average, the excess at 9 h. ranging from 10.3 mb. at Wick to 3.9 mb. at Scilly. Easterly winds predominated over the greater part of southern and south-east England until the 19th, but in the extreme west and north winds were mainly southerly until the 11th after which they became generally north or north-easterly in the northern part of the British Isles. From 20th to 28th winds were mainly south-westerly but rather variable in the south on the 22nd, 23rd, 27th and 28th. They became generally southerly during the last two days of the month. It was a very quiet month in nearly all districts but in the extreme north of Scotland winds reached gale force on the 28th and gusts of 59 kt. and 53 kt. were recorded at Grimsetter and Lerwick respectively on the 22nd.

**Temperature.** Mean temperature was above the average for the eighth successive month, the excess being 2.5°F. in England and Wales, 2.4°F. in Scotland and 2.1°F. in Northern Ireland. These above average values were mainly due to high day temperatures; for example, in south-west England the mean maximum was 5°F. above but the mean minimum nearly 1°F. below the average. The warmest days occurred on the 10th–12th when 80°F. was reached in western Scotland and 84°F. or above locally in central and southern England. Air frost occurred in several places and ground frost was fairly frequent, especially on higher ground in the north; at Houghall it occurred on 18 nights.

Extremes included: (England and Wales) 86°F. at Gatwick on the 11th, 23°F. at Corwen on the 28th; (Scotland) 80°F. at Renfrew and Ruthwell on the 10th, 28°F. at Eskdalemuir on the 27th; (Northern Ireland) 80°F. at Armagh on the 11th, 36°F. at Loughgall on the 2nd and 4th.

**Precipitation.** The general rainfall expressed as a percentage of the 1916–50 average was only 10 per cent. over England and Wales where it was easily the driest September since comparable records began in 1870, and probably the driest since 1754. Over Scotland, with 36 per cent. of the average, there has been no drier September since 1894 although September 1933 was as dry. Over Northern Ireland with 45 per cent. of the average it was the driest September since 1941. Periods of 15 days or more without measurable rain occurred over most of England, Wales, southern and central Scotland and the eastern part of Northern Ireland. Parts of East Anglia and Devon had no measurable rain throughout the month and there was less than 5 per cent. of the average over much of the Midlands, East Anglia, southern England and the central and southern Pennines. Rain on the 21st ended periods without measurable rain of about 30 days in parts of north-east England, and of about 37 days in parts of the south. By the end of the month a few stations in the Midlands and East Anglia had had no measurable rain for 48 days.

Thunderstorms occurred locally in East Anglia and south-east England on the 6th, rain being heavy for a time at London Airport, and thunder was heard in south-west England on the 4th.

**Sunshine.** The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the 1921–50 average was 146 over England and Wales, 132 over Scotland and 130 over Northern Ireland. A number of stations in western districts had more than 180 per cent. of their September average; among these was Plymouth Hoe with a daily mean sunshine of 9.3 hr., nearly 2 hours more than the average for June. Bolton had 190 per cent. of its average. At many places in southern England it was the sunniest September since 1911 while at Eastbourne it was the sunniest since 1895. In Scotland it was the sunniest September at Ruthwell since 1915 and at St. Andrews since 1919.

**Fog.** Early morning fog was frequent and occurred at one place or another in England and Wales on every day except 1st, 20th and 21st and was widespread in the Midlands and south-east England on 8th–11th. In Scotland it occurred on 21 days, being most widespread on the 4th and 5th and around the 11th.

**Miscellaneous Phenomena.** The aurora was seen on 18 nights in Scotland. It was observed at many places in England and Wales on the night of the 3rd/4th, being seen as far south as Chivenor. The next night also it was seen over a wide area as far south as Kew.