

Monthly Weather Report

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October 1961 — *Rather wet, stormy during second half of the month*

During the first week a blocking anticyclone persisted over European Russia and frontal systems approaching from the Atlantic became slow moving over the British Isles. From 12th-16th a ridge of high pressure extended from Britain to central Europe, but for most of the second half of the month the weather over the country was cyclonic and stormy.

The first two days of October broke, temporarily, the wet spell at the end of September. Apart from some thundery showers, weather was generally mild and dry with 7-8 hours sunshine on both days. Overnight fog in central and eastern England was thick in many places around dawn on the 2nd, but cleared around mid-day. Late that evening another wet spell began, as rain, associated with a complex frontal system over Ireland, spread into western districts. Rain was widespread and often heavy during the next three days, the frontal system remaining almost stationary over the British Isles. With a deepening depression approaching south-west Ireland, the 6th was a day of unusually heavy rain with floods in many parts of southern England. At Princetown 2 in. fell in 12 hours while minor tornadoes at Marazion, Cornwall, and Bournemouth caused considerable structural damage. The depression moved east-north-eastwards and slowly filled over southern England on the 7th; rain was again widespread but not so heavy as the previous day.

On the 8th the blocking anticyclone over Russia moved further eastwards and winds over the British Isles freshened from the south-west in the circulation of a complex low pressure system near Iceland. Weather remained unsettled as troughs moved north-east across the country. There was rain in most districts during the next few days and this was particularly heavy on the 10th in the west, where flooding was again widespread; on that day Camelford had over 1 in. in 9 hr making a total of over 7 in. of rain there in 14 days. Temperatures over much of the east Midlands, East Anglia, and Kent rose to about 21°C, more than 5°C above the October average.

The only generally dry period of the month, began on the 12th with a ridge of high pressure across the country, giving four days of fine, quiet weather. Afternoon temperatures rose to about 17°C and there was 7-8 hr sunshine most days, but fog was widespread in the mornings, and on the 15th it was dense in many areas and persisted all day in the south Midlands and south-east England.

On the night of 15th/16th a deep depression near Iceland moved eastwards and winds over the British Isles freshened, clearing the fog. After a period of more continuous rain during the early hours, the day was generally showery with some good fair periods, but that night a secondary depression moved rapidly south-east across the British Isles bringing a renewal of widespread rain, which was locally heavy in the west, where some places reported falls of more than 2 in. in 24 hr. Three days of cool showery weather with fresh northerly winds followed; temperatures in many places failed to reach 10°C. Snow or sleet was reported in the Pennines on the 18th.

A week of stormy weather began on the 21st, the British Isles being within an intense cyclonic circulation centred in the eastern Atlantic. Pressure had fallen over most of the country continuously since the 18th and continued to do so until the 23rd. Wind reached gale force over much of the country every day from the 17th to the 25th. With a blocking anticyclone near the Baltic intense depressions moved northwards over or near western districts of the British Isles, one on the 22nd and another on the 24th; both gave severe gales and

heavy rain. Strong south-westerly winds reaching gale force locally in southern England continued until the 27th with frequent rain or showers and scattered thunderstorms.

The 28th and 29th were predominantly dry with sunny periods but with fog, locally dense, at night. The month ended with two days of unsettled weather and strong winds in the north.

Pressure and Wind — Mean pressure was below the average generally, the deficit at 9 hr ranging from 4.7 mb at Felixstowe to 8.0 mb at Tieve. Surface winds were light and mainly southerly during the first week, south-westerly on the 8th-11th, mainly light and variable on the 12th-14th, becoming north-westerly on the 15th and 16th and predominantly northerly until the 20th, after which winds were mainly south-westerly until the end of the month. Wind reached gale force in Scotland on 19 days on the 5th, 9th, 17th-20th and 22nd-31st (16 days) in England and Wales where gales were widespread from 18th-24th and severe on the 22nd and 24th. Gusts of 79 kt were reported at Speke on the 22nd, and 83 kt and 84 kt at Stornoway and Benbecula respectively on the 24th.

Temperature — It was the fifth consecutive October with mean temperature in Great Britain above the average generally, the excess being 0.7°C in England and Wales, 0.8°C in Scotland and 0.1°C in Northern Ireland. The warmest day in most districts occurred during the first week but over much of eastern England it was on the 10th. The coldest nights at most places were the 28th/29th and 29th/30th. Air frost was reported at a number of places on the 12th-16th and 27th-31st; it was widespread towards the end of the month.

Extremes included: (England and Wales) 22.8°C at Gillingham, Kent, on the 10th, -3.9°C at Santon Downham on the 29th; (Scotland) 20.0°C at Lossiemouth on the 2nd and at Gordon Castle and Kinlochewe on the 13th, -3.9°C at Balmoral and Logie Coldstone on the 30th; (Northern Ireland) 18.4°C at Ballykelly on the 13th, 0.4°C at Nutts Corner on the 29th.

Rainfall — The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the 1916-50 average was 128 over England and Wales, 121 over Scotland, where it was the wettest October since 1954, and 112 over Northern Ireland. Rainfall was less than the average over much of the west Midlands, over an area extending from the Wirral to the Somerset Plain, locally in the Exe and Thames valleys, in parts of eastern and northern Scotland and in the central part of Northern Ireland. However, at Norwich, it was the wettest October since 1939.

Sunshine — The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the 1921-50 average was 115 in England and Wales, 105 in Scotland and 121 in Northern Ireland. Sunshine was generally below average in northern Scotland and south-west England but nearly 50 per cent above the average locally in the Midlands.

Fog — In Scotland fog was reported on 15 days but in England and Wales it occurred at one place or another every day of the month, except on the 11th, 16th-19th and 21st. It persisted throughout the day at many places on the 15th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — The aurora was visible in Scotland on 16 nights and was seen from most parts of England and Wales on the nights of the 30th/1st and 28th/29th. Minor tornadoes caused considerable damage at Bournemouth and Marazion on the 6th and they were also observed at Burlingham on the 2nd and at Malvern on the 26th.