

Monthly Weather Report

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

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August 1952—Wet on the whole; heavy rainstorms in the south.

The weather during the first 19 days was unsettled with heavy rainstorms at times, particularly in the south. The storm on the 15th in the south-west will long be remembered for the great destruction and heavy loss of life sustained at Lynmouth. Over much of the country mainly fair weather prevailed from the 20th onward but in the north of Scotland considerable rain fell at times after the 23rd.

In the opening days a complex depression covered the British Isles; rainfall was fairly heavy in places and thunderstorms occurred, the latter being widespread on the 2nd. From the 6th to the 8th shallow depressions to the south-west of the British Isles and over northern France moved slowly north-north-east giving thunderstorms and heavy rain, notably on the 6th in the London area and the Home Counties, where there was considerable flooding. On the 9th a deep depression off the south of Ireland moved north-north-east over the country causing strong winds in England and Wales and widespread rain, heavy locally, particularly in Northern Ireland, south-west Scotland and north-west England. Subsequently a belt of low pressure extended from south-west of Ireland to Norway, while pressure was relatively high on the continent; rain fell in most districts except the south-east on the 11th and in Scotland and Northern Ireland on the 12th and 13th, but mainly fair warmer weather prevailed over much of England from the 12th to the 14th. During the 15th a small depression moved slowly east-north-east across southern England from a position near Brest and was associated with severe thunderstorms and exceptionally heavy rainfall in the south of England; locally in north Devonshire and north Somerset more than 7 in. of rain fell in the 24 hours ending at 9h. on the 16th, while a fall of 9.00 in. was registered at Longstone Barrow, Exmoor. Floods occurred over a wide area, notably at Lynmouth where the water rushing down from the moors washed away bridges and caused great destruction in the town; many people lost their lives. On the 18th a deep depression off southern Ireland moved south-east to west France and later turned north-east; more heavy rain fell in parts of southern England. On the 19th a ridge of high pressure off our north-west coasts moved slowly south-east and the weather improved; apart from some rain in the north of Scotland mainly fair weather prevailed until the 26th. On that day troughs associated with a deep depression over Iceland moved south-east and rain fell over Scotland, north Ireland and the extreme north of England. Thereafter pressure was high in a ridge from an anticyclone north of the Azores to central Europe and low to the north of the British Isles. Strong winds and local gales were registered in Scotland on the 27th and rain occurred, chiefly in the north-west and north, on the 27th and 28th. In the early hours of the 30th a shallow depression over Brittany spreading north-east caused rain in the Channel Islands and locally on the south coast of England. On the 30th and 31st a deep depression south of Iceland moved slowly north-east and turned east while associated troughs crossed the British Isles giving heavy rain in the north of Scotland on the 30th and mainly slight rain in the west and north of the British Isles on the 31st. A gale occurred in the north of Scotland on the 31st. The last week was warm except in the north of Scotland.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure was somewhat below the average for the period 1901–30, the deviation from the average at 9h. ranging from –1.3 mb. at Lerwick to –3.4 mb. at St. Mary's, Scilly. On the whole winds from between south and west predominated but the direction was more variable in the north of Scotland. The wind reached gale force at times at exposed stations mainly on the 8th–10th, 26th–28th and 31st. Among the highest gusts registered in knots were 51 at Southport and 50 at Plymouth on the 9th, 56 at Durham and 51 at Leuchars and Bell Rock lighthouse on the 27th and 61 at Stornoway and 58 at Lerwick on the 31st.

Temperature.—Mean temperature slightly exceeded the average, the deviation from the average for 1906–35 being +1.0°F. in England

and Wales, +0.4°F. in Scotland and +0.5°F. in Northern Ireland. The period from the 16th to the 21st was cool but low minimum temperatures were registered locally also on the 6th, 22nd and, in the northern half of the country, on the 26th. On the 26th temperature fell to 27°F. at Glenlivet, 29°F. at Glenmore Lodge and 30°F. at Dalwhinnie and Balmoral, while grass minimum temperatures of 17°F. and 20°F. respectively were recorded at Glenlivet and Dalwhinnie. The 18th was a notably cool day; at Marlborough the maximum, 55°F., was the lowest maximum recorded in August in a record going back to 1864. Warm days occurred on the 6th, around the 12th and during the last ten days but there were no really hot days.

Extreme temperatures for the month included:—(England and Wales) 81°F. at Camden Square, London on the 29th, 35°F. at Lincoln on the 21st; (Scotland) 75°F. at Carnoustie on the 22nd, 27°F. at Glenlivet on the 26th; (Northern Ireland) 72°F. at Aldergrove on the 12th, 37°F. at Garvagh on the 26th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915 was 126 over England and Wales, 115 over Scotland and 124 over Northern Ireland. In Scotland less than the average occurred in a central area extending from Mull to Angus and in the south-west around the Solway Firth; more than the average was received at most places elsewhere, particularly in the Shetland Islands where it was the wettest August since records began in 1911. In England and Wales less than the average was registered in an area stretching from Denbighshire across Cheshire to Lincolnshire and north Norfolk and then northward across east Yorkshire and Durham and also on the south coast of England from Weymouth to Worthing. Over most of the southern half of England and Wales it was excessively wet mainly due to the heavy falls of thundery rain during the first eighteen days. More than twice the average occurred over north Devonshire and the neighbouring part of Somerset, and over part of Monmouthshire, Wiltshire and Hertfordshire. In Northern Ireland somewhat less than the average occurred in County Fermanagh increasing to more than 150 per cent. locally in Antrim.

Among the large number of heavy falls in 24 hours or less were:—

- 6th 4.83 in. at Boreham Wood, Hertfordshire, and 2.00 in. in approximately 30 minutes at Wembley and 2.80 in. in 120 minutes at Welldon Crescent, Harrow, both very rare falls.
- 7th 3.49 in. at Dunoon Water Works (Argyllshire).
- 9th 3.70 in. at Carrickfergus, Lough Mourne, Antrim and 3.71 in. at Slaidburn, Yorkshire.
- 15th 9.00 in. at Longstone Barrow, Exmoor, 7.58 in. at Challacombe, Devonshire, 7.35 in. at Simonsbath, Somerset, 4.77 in. at Drewsteignton, Devonshire and 4.10 in. at Birkhall, Deeside.
- 18th 2.71 in. at Freshwater, Isle of Wight and 2.47 in. at Hastings (the heaviest fall in 24 hrs. there since 1875).

Thunderstorms occurred on each of the first 19 days and in east England on the 30th; they were rather widespread during the 1st to the 9th and on the 14th to 16th.

Sunshine.—The duration of bright sunshine expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1906–35 was 101 in England and Wales, 93 in Scotland and 89 in Northern Ireland. A considerable excess was registered in most of north-east England and on the coasts of Fife and Angus but in Wales, north-west England, west and north Scotland most places had less than the average.

Fog.—Fog occurred locally at times, chiefly on the 1st–3rd, 5th–15th and 22nd–31st. It was most frequent in the Shetlands and on the extreme north coast of Scotland.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on three nights. A waterspout was seen at St. Catherine's Point on the 18th.