

Monthly Weather Report

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August 1959—*Warm, sunny and very dry apart from outbreaks of thundery rain*

Anticyclones dominated the weather over the British Isles for most of the month, except during the second week when weather was weakly cyclonic at first and then more markedly so on the 13th and 14th when an exceptionally deep depression for the time of year moved northward off the coast of Ireland.

North-westerly winds brought rather cool showery weather to most districts during the first three days of the month with periods of more continuous light rain in some places. On the 3rd a high cell developed at 500 mb. level over mid-Atlantic. The next day a ridge of high pressure spread over the British Isles and weather became fine and sunny in the Midlands and south although weak troughs gave some rain and drizzle in the north. The ridge was transferred northward during the next few days and by the 8th the fine warm weather had spread to most districts and temperatures in southern England had exceeded 80°F. at a number of places.

The ridge of high pressure covered northern districts on the 9th but meanwhile an upper trough had developed west of the British Isles and small thundery depressions moved northwards from France. Thunderstorms developed in Wales and southern England and were exceptionally severe on the 10th in south-west England where rainfall exceeded 4 in. at a number of places and some "very rare" falls were recorded. Thundery outbreaks continued on the 11th, but on the 12th there was fairly widespread rain in southern England associated with a small depression in the English Channel.

Another upper trough moving eastward over the Atlantic intensified considerably on the 13th as a rapidly deepening depression moved northward near the west coast of Ireland. The depth attained by this depression was almost a record for this region and season and the southward penetration of cold air was considerably more than usual. Winds reached gale force in many western districts. The rain associated with the depression cleared the British Isles on the 14th and was followed by brighter but cooler and showery weather. On the next day the showers were mostly confined to western districts and temperatures were mainly about or a little above average.

In the second half of the month the weather was dominated by anticyclones, two moving over or near our southern districts at first and one further north towards the end of the month. In most places the weather was predominantly fine and warm and on 21st temperatures rose to 88°F. locally in England and to 83°F. in many places in Scotland. Parts of Scotland, chiefly the west and north, had rain or drizzle at times. In parts of England and Wales there was a brief break in the weather on 20th/21st when thunderstorms developed in association with a shallow depression. On 21st in southern England and the Midlands these thunderstorms were widespread and locally heavy.

The anticyclone moving eastwards into Scotland at the end of the month gave fine weather in most places, but it became cooler and there were scattered showers.

Pressure and Wind. Mean pressure was everywhere above the 1921–50 average, the excess at 9 h. ranging from 5.9 mb. at Dyce to 3.8 mb. at Plymouth. Winds were predominantly north-westerly during the first five days becoming mainly light and variable until the 12th, subsequently veering from south or south-east on the 13th to south-west by the 15th, after which southerly winds predominated until the 19th. Winds were generally light and variable from 20th to 22nd becoming south-westerly until the 25th and mainly north-west to north from then until the end

of the month. Gales were reported from Scotland on the 13th–17th, 24th, 25th and 27th (8 days) and on the 13th, 14th and 24th in England and Wales where they were widespread in the south-west on the 14th. Gusts of 55 kt. and 58 kt. were recorded on the 14th at Aldergrove and Tiree respectively.

Temperature. Mean temperature has been above the average every month so far this year except January, the excess during August being 2.7°F. in England and Wales, 2.6°F. in Scotland and 2.4°F. in Northern Ireland. In north-east England mean maximum temperature was more than 4°F. above average. In England and Wales there have been only four warmer Augusts this century, those of 1955, 1947, 1933 and 1911. Ground frost occurred at several places, chiefly towards the end of the month and slight air frost was recorded locally in northern England on the 29th.

Extremes included: (England and Wales) 88°F. at Bromley, Farningley and York on the 20th, 27°F. at Alwen on the 29th; (Scotland) 83°F. at a number of places on the 20th and 21st, 32°F. at Hawick on the 31st; (Northern Ireland) 76°F. at Garvagh on the 25th and at Armagh on the 20th and 27th, 37°F. at Garvagh on the 13th, at Aldergrove on the 29th and at Loughgall on the 13th and 29th.

Precipitation. The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the 1916–50 average was 46 in England and Wales, 52 in Scotland and 33 in Northern Ireland. Less than 10 per cent. of the average occurred in the Isle of Man, the Fylde district and in the lower valleys of the Ouse, Tees and Tyne. Areas with more than the average in England and Wales were confined to localities where severe thunderstorms were experienced, notably south-west England, where more than 4 in. of rain fell at a number of places on the 10th, and to Norfolk. At Newquay, on the 10th, 2½ in. fell in 75 min. (a very rare fall) while that afternoon St. Mawgan had a fall of nearly 1½ in. in two hours and a similar amount in two hours the same evening. Among the remarkable falls recorded during thunderstorms was one of 1.53 in. in 60 min. at Rhoose Airport on the 10th and one of 1.25 in. in 23 min. at Kenley on the 22nd.

Among the greatest falls in 24 hr., apart from the 10th, were:—

- 9th 2.09 in. at Hayling Island, Hampshire.
- 11th 2.50 in. at Cromer, Norfolk.
- 21st 2.38 in. at Victoria Park, London.
- 23rd 2.00 in. at Loch Duich (Ratagan), Ross and Cromarty.

The number of thunderstorms was below the average. They were widespread in Scotland on the 20th and 22nd and in England and Wales on the 9th–11th and 21st–22nd, being very severe locally in south-west England on the 10th; otherwise they were mainly isolated.

Sunshine. The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the 1921–50 average was 122 in England and Wales, 102 in Scotland and 112 in Northern Ireland. In many areas it was the sunniest August since 1947. Sandown, Isle of Wight, had as much as 173 per cent. of the average for the month. In Scotland sunshine was above the average everywhere south of a line from Helensburgh to Aberdeen, but the month was mainly dull in the Western Isles and the north-west.

Fog. Early morning fog occurred at one place or another on 14 days in Scotland and on the 4th, 8th–13th and 21st–25th in England and Wales.

Miscellaneous Phenomena. The aurora was seen on 16 nights in Scotland.