

Monthly Weather Report

M.O. 672

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

Volume 77 Number 9

Published by HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

© Crown copyright 1960

September 1960—*Changeable. Wet and cool over central and southern England.*

The first week was changeable with frontal systems moving east across the country, but the second week was predominantly anticyclonic. Low pressure systems lay over or near the British Isles during most of the third week, but thereafter weather was again mainly anticyclonic until the 26th after which southern and central districts came under the influence of a complex depression centred to the south-west.

The cool thundery weather of late August continued into September. The month began with widespread rain in central and southern England as a trough, associated with a depression south of Greenland, moved slowly north-east across the country; the rain was heavy at times with thunderstorms in the Severn and Thames Valleys. Rain extended to most districts on the 2nd and 3rd and there were considerable falls in Wales and south-west England as a cold front moved slowly south-eastwards over these areas.

Two generally sunny days followed. On the 4th cool northerly winds brought scattered showers to many areas, especially in the east, but these died out the next day as a ridge of high pressure moved eastward across southern England. The ridge was followed by a belt of frontal rain which caused a temporary break in the drier weather on the 6th, but thereafter an anticyclone covered much of England and Wales until the 12th. Winds became light and variable and weather sunny, mainly dry and progressively warmer with afternoon temperatures at many places rising to the upper sixties; there was, however, some slight rain in Scotland on the 8th and in parts of England and Wales on the following day. The 10th and 11th were the warmest days of the month with 10-12 hr. of almost unbroken sunshine in many central and southern districts; afternoon temperatures widely exceeded 70°F. and reached 78°F. locally.

The spell of fair weather ended on the 12th with heavy thunderstorms on the south coast; Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight, had 1½ in. of rain in 50 mins. For the next seven days a complex low pressure system lay over or near the British Isles and rain was frequent and often heavy although there were some bright periods. A frontal wave development brought heavy rain to north-west England, Northern Ireland and Scotland on the 13th and 14th; in western Scotland many places had over 2 in. of rain on the 13th and there was extensive flooding. Heavy rain in south-east England late on the 15th, and in central and northern England the following day, was associated with a deepening depression which moved northward from the Bay of Biscay to southern England. The upper cold low, which had been centred over the British Isles since the 15th, moved southward to France on the 17th, and the next day a trough from the Atlantic moved slowly eastward across the British Isles reaching the east coast by the 19th. That night a shallow depression moving north-east from France to the southern North Sea, deepened, and gave some unusually heavy rain in south-east England; 2 in. fell in 4 hours at Bottisham, near Cambridge, and 1 in. in an hour at Reedham, Norfolk. In contrast most other parts of the country had long periods of sunshine; there was over 10 hr. in many western districts. Another frontal system moved in from the Atlantic on the 22nd and rain intensified during the night to give heavy falls in the Midlands where most places recorded more than 1 inch.

A marked change occurred on the 23rd as a ridge of high pressure began to spread north-eastwards across the British Isles and the weather became sunny and mainly dry apart from some heavy rain in north Scotland on the 24th. Weather remained generally dry and rather cold for three or four days and continued so until the end of the month in

northern England and Scotland but a complex low pressure system off the coast of Ireland, with a trough across south-west England, brought four days of exceptionally heavy rain to a wide area around Exeter resulting in a disastrous series of floods. Some places had 5 inches of rain in these four days.

Pressure and Wind. Mean pressure was above average in the north and below average in the south, the deviation at 9h. ranging from +3.4 mb. at Lerwick to -2.7 mb. at Scilly. Surface winds were mainly north-westerly on the 4th-7th and 19th-20th, light and variable on the 8th-12th, and between east and south-east on the 16th-18th and 23rd-30th; otherwise they were mainly south-westerly. Wind reached gale force on 11 days, gusts of 53 and 52 knots being recorded at Benbecula on the 8th and at Lerwick on the 24th respectively.

Temperature. Mean temperature was below average nearly everywhere except in the extreme north of Scotland, the deficit being 0.9°F. in England and Wales, 0.2°F. in Scotland and 0.3°F. in Northern Ireland. In eastern and midland counties of England the mean maximum temperature was about 2°F. below the average whereas it exceeded the average in west and north Scotland. Air frost was reported locally on the 26th in England and Wales and ground frost was fairly widespread on the 16th and 21st-26th.

Extremes included:—(England and Wales) 78°F. at Santon Downham and Letchworth on the 10th and at Huddersfield Oakes on the 11th, 29°F. at Santon Downham and Moor House on the 26th and also at Alwen on the 16th and 24th; (Scotland) 72°F. at Gordon Castle on the 10th, 23°F. at Cannich on the 28th; (Northern Ireland) 69°F. at Armagh on the 10th and at Loughgall on the 10th and 11th, 34°F. at Garvagh on the 16th.

Precipitation. The general rainfall expressed as a percentage of the 1916-50 average was 147 over England and Wales, 72 over Scotland and 88 over Northern Ireland. Less than half the average rainfall occurred over much of Sutherland and the mid-Tweed Valley, but twice the average was exceeded in south coastal districts from Plymouth to Worthing and in an area of central England extending from Shrewsbury into East Anglia. More than 250 per cent. of the average occurred in the Teignmouth-Exmouth area.

Thunder occurred in Scotland at a number of widely separated places on the 3rd, 14th and 15th, but in England and Wales thunderstorms were reported at one place or another on 14 days. (1st, 3rd-5th, 14th-20th and 28th-30th). They were rather widespread in the Midlands on the 4th and in eastern England on the 19th.

Sleet showers were reported at Oban on the 23rd.

Sunshine. The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the 1921-50 average was 94 in England and Wales, 119 in Scotland and 108 in Northern Ireland. In Scotland sunshine was about average in the east but above average elsewhere, markedly so on the west coast. In England and Wales it was generally below average in the east and Midlands but considerably above average in Cornwall.

Fog. Local morning fog was reported at one place or another on 18 days. Fog formed frequently during the night in south-east England from 9th to 14th.

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