

August 2009

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1971-2000.

UK overview

Mean temperatures ranged from close to the 1971-2000 normal in western England, Wales and Northern Ireland to around 1.0 deg C above normal in many eastern areas. Rainfall was above normal for the UK as a whole (136%) but very variable. It was very wet in parts of western Scotland, Northern Ireland and Cumbria, with many areas recording over twice the normal August rainfall. It was the wettest August on record in western Scotland, and Dumfries and Galloway. Conversely it was dry over much of Wales, the west Midlands, southern England and, especially, East Anglia with some places receiving less than half the normal amount. Sunshine totals were close to or below normal across much of the UK, eastern areas faring best with around 110% of normal.

A maximum temperature of 30.3 °C was recorded at Gravesend (Kent) on 19th. A minimum temperature of 3.0 °C was recorded at Strathdearn, Dalarossie (Inverness-shire) on 8th. Blaenau Ffestiniog (Gwynnedd) recorded 97.4mm of rainfall in the twenty-four hours ending at 0900 on 31st. A wind gust of 67 mph was recorded at Capel Curig (Gwynnedd) on 20th.

England diary of highlights

A generally unsettled month, with cloudy conditions to the west and north while the east and south enjoyed some fine warm days. Rainfall was near to or below the 1971 to 2000 average, but there were significant variations. It was a very wet month over much of Cumbria, with about twice the normal August rainfall. In contrast, less than a third of the normal amount fell in east Norfolk and close to the Thames estuary. Mean temperatures were close to normal in the west but above normal further east, by up to 1.5 deg C in East Anglia. Sunshine totals were close to normal, ranging from about 15% below average in many western areas to 10% above towards the east coast.

1st to 6th: Generally unsettled for the first few days of the month, although one or two dry days occurred across the south-east. Some heavy rain on the 1st with some hourly rainfall totals of 10 to 15 mm being recorded across the Midlands and Lincolnshire, but the wettest day was the 6th with 60.4 mm at Holbeach (Lincolnshire) and 47.8 mm at Boscombe Down (Wiltshire). Maximum temperatures over the south-east through this period were generally around 24 °C, and on 5th reached 28.9 °C at Gravesend (Kent). Between the 4th and 6th temperatures overnight did not fall below 18 °C in central London.

7th to 10th: Quieter and drier weather during this period as a ridge of high pressure extended from the Azores, although a few weakening weather fronts did affect the north-west. After a rather cold night on 7th where the minimum temperature fell to 5 °C in parts of the north and west, it became warmer again with the maximum temperature 25 to 26 °C in the London area on the 8th and 9th.

11th to 17th: There was still a good deal of dry and bright weather in the south and east, with maximum temperatures generally between 23 and 26 °C. It became more unsettled across northern and western parts, the wettest day being 14th when 43.4 mm was recorded at Shap (Cumbria).

18th to 23rd: The north-west / south-east split continued through this period with the driest and brightest weather in south-east England and more unsettled conditions persisting in the north and west. A few very warm days occurred across the south-east, with maximum temperatures reaching 30.3 °C at Gravesend on

the 19th and 28.4 °C at Weybourne (Norfolk) on 23rd. A mild night on 20th with temperatures falling no lower than 19 to 20 °C in parts of the west, but there were also a few cold nights with the temperature falling to 4.0 °C at Santon Downham (Norfolk) on 22nd. No large daily rainfall totals were recorded, but heavy showers on the 21st gave hourly totals of around 10 mm in parts of the north.

24th to 31st: Rather more unsettled generally through this period with some rain at times in all parts, although amounts across East Anglia were still small. A few warm days still in the south-east with maximum temperatures of 28.2 °C at Norwich on 24th and 27.1 °C at Santon Downham on 31st. Heavy showers affected parts of the north-west on 27th and there was a report of a tornado in the Crosby area of Liverpool during the evening. Some heavy rain across Cumbria at times with a total of 63.2 mm at Shap on the 31st, 24.4 mm of this falling in the hour up to 1800.

Wales diary of highlights

A rather unsettled month but relatively dry away from the far north-west. It was a wet month in Anglesey and Snowdonia with about 150% of the 1971-2000 average rainfall. In contrast, parts of east and south Wales recorded less than 75% of normal rainfall. The frequent cloudy conditions meant that temperatures were somewhat below normal by day but slightly above normal at night. Overall, mean temperatures were close to normal. Sunshine totals were typically 10% below normal.

1st to 6th: The month started on rather an unsettled note with low pressure often nearby and some fairly active frontal systems moving across the country at times. The heaviest rain fell on 1st and 4th with some good dry spells in between. There were some very mild nights, particularly 4th / 5th, with temperatures not falling much below 15 °C in many parts.

7th to 18th: Relatively high pressure prevailed through most of this period with a ridge often extending across the country from the Azores. There were brief incursions of lower pressure at times, but the associated frontal systems were relatively weak. Maximum temperatures were near or slightly above the average. Quite a cool night to start this period with the temperature falling to 4.9 °C at Sennybridge (Powys) early on 8th. Some very mild nights also, especially the nights of 16th and 17th with the temperature not falling much below 16 °C along the south coast.

19th to 31st: Low pressure predominated to the north and west of the UK through most of this period maintaining a mostly west or southwest airstream over Wales. There was a good deal of dry weather but some showery days and a few more active Atlantic frontal systems moving east at times bringing heavier rain. Daytime maximum temperatures were often near average. A very mild night to start the period with the minimum temperature 17.2 °C at the Mumbles on 19th before some heavy rain spread into the west on 20th. Some heavy showers on 21st with thunder reported in the west, but skies cleared later and the night of 21st/22nd was quite cool with temperatures in some areas dropping to around 5 °C. Further occasional heavy showers or rain through this period but also a good deal of dry weather. Rain moved east at the end of the month, with 53.2 mm at Capel Curig (Conwy) during the 24 hours ending 0900 on 31st.

Scotland diary of highlights

Unsettled throughout with showers or longer outbreaks of rain, particularly in the west. It was a very wet month in much of western Scotland, where it was the wettest August on record in a series from 1914, with over twice the average August rainfall recorded. Dumfries and Galloway also had its wettest August in this series; for example, at Eskdalemuir the rainfall of 393.0 mm beat the previous record of 345.4 mm (set in August 1985). Most southern and western areas had less than normal sunshine, whereas the Northern Isles and places closer to the east coast fared a little better. Mean temperatures were 0.5 to 1.0 deg C above the 1971-2000 normal.

1st to 7th: On 1st rain cleared northeastwards, becoming confined to Shetland. Sunshine and showers followed from the southwest and this persisted during 2nd. Across the south and west the 3rd was mostly cloudy with patchy rain. Elsewhere, after a cold night with temperatures dipping to 3.2 °C at Cromdale(Highland), it was sunny with Kinloss (Moray) reaching 23 °C. The 4th was mostly cloudy with occasional rain and drizzle but it was brighter in the north, with temperatures reaching 23.8 °C at Lossiemouth (Moray). A breezy day on 5th with sunny spells but also occasional, locally heavy, showers in the west. There were still showers in the west on 6th but also plenty of fine weather, with a maximum of 22.6 °C at Edinburgh. More warm sunshine on 7th but a few heavy showers developed in the north.

8th to 15th: Sunny spells and scattered showers on the 8th, with a maximum of 22.5 °C at Leuchars (Fife). A mainly dry, bright morning on 9th was followed by heavy showers then more persistent rain from the west. This gave a wet night in the south, with 31.0 mm at Eskdalemuir (Dumfries and Galloway). The rain cleared southwards on 10th as sunshine and scattered showers spread from the north. More rain spread east on 11th though the east brightened again later. The 12th and 13th brought some bright weather but with scattered showers too. Rain, heavy in the west, crossed all parts on 14th with 39.0 mm at Glasgow and 46.4 mm at Eskdalemuir. The heavy rain cleared from the southeast during 15th followed by sunshine and showers, these most frequent in the west.

16th to 23rd: The 16th was rather cloudy with showers, some heavy in the north. The 17th also brought a scattering of showers, interspersed with sunny intervals. It was mostly cloudy on 18th and 19th with outbreaks of rain, mostly in the south and west. On 19th, whilst Lossiemouth (Moray) reached 24.0 °C there was persistent heavy rain in the southwest and Eskdalemuir recorded 78.0 mm (a new August record). On 20th the rain gradually cleared northeastwards followed by sunny spells and occasionally heavy and thundery showers, these continuing on 21st. The 22nd was mainly dry with some sunshine but rain reached the west later. This became heavy at times overnight and on 23rd with 37.8 mm at Eskdalemuir on 23rd. Brighter spells in the east allowed temperatures to reach 20.4 °C at Kinloss.

24th to 31st: The 24th was mainly fine but showers reached the west later. It was showery on 25th, most of the showers again in the west. After a bright start on 26th rain spread from the west, drier conditions following. Fine with sunny spells at first on 27th but rain later. A wet start on 28th gave way to sunshine and showers. It was cool and windy with gales in exposed northern areas. 58.6 mm was recorded at Cluanie Inn (Highland) on 27th, with a further 28.6 mm on 28th and 21.4 mm on 29th, although sheltered eastern areas remained fine. The 30th was bright with scattered showers before more persistent rain spread to the southwest. An unsettled end to the month with further heavy rain in parts of the west and southwest, Eskdalemuir recording another 33.0 mm on 30th and 31.8 mm on 31st.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

Unsettled throughout with showers or longer outbreaks of rain. Rainfall totals were typically 180% of the 1971-2000 normal. It was the 8th wettest August in a series from 1914, but August 2008 was much wetter (and ranked 1st). Mean temperatures were slightly above normal and sunshine totals were below normal.

1st to 10th: Rain cleared eastwards early on 1st, leaving sunshine and occasional showers with similar conditions for the 2nd. Mostly cloudy with patchy rain and drizzle on 3rd and 4th. Sunny or clear spells on 5th with showers developing, some heavy. Still some showers on 6th, mainly in the west. Showers on 7th, these mainly in the west, but sunny spells too and the temperature reached 20.9 °C at Helen's Bay (County Down). Sunshine and still a few showers on 8th, the temperature peaking at 21.3 °C at Ballykelly (County Londonderry). Mainly dry and bright for much of 9th but cloud and patchy rain arrived later. This lingered into the morning of 10th before brightening later.

11th to 21st: The 11th started bright but soon clouded over with some rain. The 12th and 13th brought some bright weather but with a scattering of mainly light showers. The 14th was a cloudy day with persistent rain, heavy at times, turning light and patchy later. On 15th the last of the overnight rain soon cleared the County

Down coast, then sunny spells developed along with a few light showers. The 16th was rather cloudy in the morning with showers, then more sunshine in the afternoon. Showers continued on 17th with a few sunny intervals. It was mostly cloudy on 18th with outbreaks of rain, but became drier in the afternoon. The 19th was cloudy with outbreaks of rain. These became heavy and persistent in the evening and early on the 20th bringing 48.2 mm to Aldergrove (County Antrim). The rest of 20th and 21st had sunny or clear spells and heavy, locally thundery, showers.

22nd to 31st: The 22nd was mainly dry with some sunshine before rain spread from the west later. This became heavy at times on 23rd before turning showery later, with Lough Fea (County Tyrone) recording 39.2 mm in 24 hours to 0900 on 23rd. Showers continued on the 24th, some of them heavy and thundery. A bright day on 25th with scattered showers before rain moved in from the west later. Cloudy with outbreaks of rain on 26th, clearing eastwards in the evening. A fine start to 27th but it clouded over with rain and wind later. The 28th and 29th were cool with sunny intervals and blustery showers. A cold clear start to 30th, the temperature at Katesbridge (County Down) falling to 3.3 °C, then cloudy with rain spreading from the west. An unsettled end to the month with heavy rain during the afternoon of 31st over parts of Counties Antrim and Down.

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