

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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July 1968 — *Dull and wet in the south, dry in the north.*

Weather was mainly cyclonic in character until the 17th after which it was generally anticyclonic.

On the 1st the British Isles lay between a depression over Iceland and another over the Bay of Biscay. During the early hours rain brought down a fine multi-coloured dust over an area extending from Devon to Essex and northward to Derbyshire. The dust varied in colour from almost white to dark red and was probably borne northwards by high-level winds from Spain or North Africa. The afternoon of the 1st was hot in south-east England with temperature at many places exceeding 30°C. In the south-west, on the other hand, frequent thunderstorms were accompanied by torrential rain, and the thunderstorms spread northwards to most other districts on the 2nd and 3rd, as the depression over Biscay deepened and moved to the north of Scotland. At Leeming 35.7 mm of rain were recorded in 8½ min. Flooding was widespread over the West Country and Midlands as many rivers overflowed their banks. Devon was very badly hit; every town and village in the county was flooded and damage to crops and property in south-east Devon amounted to a major disaster. At Slapton, Devon and also in South Wales hailstones up to 7 cm in diameter added to the havoc.

From the 4th to the 6th weather was sunny and dry as a ridge of high pressure spread over the country, but on the 7th a small depression moved from Cornwall to the Midlands, and rain, heavy at times, accompanying this depression was still falling over much of eastern England throughout the 8th. The 9th was a fine day, but a deepening depression moved across southern England on the 10th accompanied by frequent thunderstorms and exceptionally heavy rain. The resulting floods were reported from areas as far apart as Exeter, Birmingham and Peterborough; seven people are known to have been killed by the floods and hundreds of bridges were washed away. The occasion was remarkable for the large area covered by heavy rain. Among the "very rare" falls recorded during these storms was one of 175 mm at Chaw Stoke, Somerset, and there were several falls of more than 125 mm in the Bristol, Bath and Gloucester areas. The rain cleared East Anglia on the 11th. Fronts associated with another deepening depression approaching south-west Ireland gave occasional rain or showers on the 12th and 13th, and thunderstorms which accompanied the passage of the depression across southern England led to local flooding in the Midlands and East Anglia. Northerly winds behind the depression brought cooler weather with occasional rain or showers to all areas on the 15th and 16th.

By the 17th the British Isles was under the influence of an anticyclone which remained near or over the country until the end of the month. The 18th and 19th were fine with temperatures increasing to about average, but troughs moving round the anticyclone gave some rain in Scotland on the 20th and 21st, and thundery rain spread to many other districts on the 22nd and 23rd. This rain was followed by a spell of dry cool weather with east to north-east winds, but on the 31st thunderstorms associated with a depression over northern France moved into southern England. Heavy rain led to flooding in Essex.

Pressure and Wind — Mean pressure was above the 1931-60 average everywhere, the excess at 0900 GMT ranging from 10.3 mb at Kirkwall and Stornoway to 3.4 mb at Eastbourne. Surface winds were very variable in direction though frequently from a northerly or easterly point. They were mostly light but reached gale force at times in the west and north on the 2nd and 3rd, and in eastern districts on the 10th and 11th.

Temperature — Mean monthly temperatures were well below the 1931-60 average particularly in north-east coastal areas.

Extremes included: (England and Wales) 33.3°C at Camden Square on the 1st, -0.6°C at Alwen on the 6th and at Moor House on the 25th; (Scotland) 24.4°C at Glen Etive on the 28th - 1.1°C at Fyvie Castle on the 19th; (Northern Ireland) 23.5°C at Somerset Forest on the 20th and at Carrigans on the 27th, 0.7°C at Loughermore Forest on the 5th.

Rainfall — Amounts were very variable. In Scotland rainfall was above average in all eastern districts and also in Ayr, Lanark and Wester Ross, but was below average elsewhere. Parts of East Lothian and Berwick had 200 per cent of their average but many western districts had only 50 per cent. In Northern Ireland July was a dry month with rainfall only 50 per cent of average in the east and less than 25 per cent of average in the west. In England and Wales rainfall was mostly above average, but below in north west England, over much of South Wales and in parts of central and southern England. Some of the heaviest falls occurred along a wide corridor running through the counties of Devon, Somerset and Gloucester to Northampton and thence northwards to the Humber. Many places in this general area had more than 250 per cent of their average rainfall. Most of the rain fell during the first half of the month in thunderstorms which were exceptionally violent on the 1st/2nd and 10th/11th.

Thunder was heard almost daily in England and Wales on the 1st—16th and on the 31st. Thunderstorms were widespread in Scotland on the 1st—3rd.

Sunshine — Over most of Britain sunshine was below average, but it was above average in the extreme north and west of Scotland, in west Wales and in south-west England and also in Northern Ireland. Percentages of average sunshine ranged, in Scotland from 146 at Duntulm to 51 at Perth and in England and Wales from 135 at Scilly to 42 at Sheffield. It was the dullest July at St. Andrews since records began in 1913.

Fog — Fog at 0900 GMT was reported from one place or another in Scotland on 10 days and in England and Wales on 18 days.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — The aurora was visible in Scotland on 2 nights.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES, JULY, 1968

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE °C					EARTH TEMP. °C		RAIN DAYS	RAIN- FALL	SUN- SHINE
	*Highest Max.	*Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 30 cm.	Mean 122 cm.			
Difference from Average								% of Average		
0 SCOTLAND, N.	22.7	3.4	-0.8	-1.0	-0.9	+0.1	-1.0	-6	77	98
1 SCOTLAND, E.	21.7	4.4	-2.6	-0.6	-1.6	-0.8	-0.4	+0	133	73
2 ENGLAND, N.E.	29.0	3.5	-2.9	-1.1	-2.0	-0.5	-0.1	-1	147	63
3 ENGLAND, E.	31.1	5.6	-2.0	-0.9	-1.5	-0.6	-0.3	+2	132	71
4 MIDLANDS	33.1	5.6	-2.0	-0.8	-1.4	-0.2	+0.1	-1	203	69
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	32.2	5.0	-1.2	-0.7	-0.9	-0.8	-0.7	-2	94	82
6 SCOTLAND, W.	21.8	2.6	-0.9	-0.8	-0.9	-0.7	-0.5	-7	64	92
7 ENGLAND, N.W. and N. Wales	22.8	3.9	-0.9	-0.8	-0.9	-0.5	-0.1	-4	112	90
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S. Wales	28.3	3.4	-0.8	-0.7	-0.8	-0.8	-0.3	-4	155	115
N. IRELAND	22.8	2.2	-0.4	-2.1	-1.2	-	-	-11	41	119
SCOTLAND	22.7	4.4	-1.5	-0.8	-1.1	-	-	-4	100	88
ENG. and WALES	33.1	5.6	-1.6	-0.8	-1.3	-	-	-2	133	81

*Highest Max. and Lowest Min. of the District Value Stations.

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