

Monthly Weather Report

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OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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October 1959—*Warm, sunny and mainly dry at first; changeable with gales later*

The warm sunny weather which had persisted with only a few breaks since the second week of May continued during the first week of October, but gradually broke up during the second and third weeks and the latter part of the month was generally changeable with strong to gale force winds at times and heavy rain in places.

The month opened with most of the country in the circulation of an anticyclone centred over the Balkans. The centre of highest pressure was transferred progressively northwards, being over the Norwegian Sea on the 10th, but throughout the period surface air reached the British Isles from a southerly point. This resulted in maximum temperatures exceeding 70°F. over a wide area during the first week and 80°F. at a number of places on the 3rd. However a cold front brought thundery rain to Cornwall on the 6th—1.61 in. of rain fell at St. Mawgan in 24 hr.—while lighter rain further east ended a fortnight without measurable rain at Plymouth and Torquay.

A vigorous depression which had originated on the western Atlantic about a week earlier as a tropical storm, moved northwards to the west of Ireland on the 8th, and by the 9th a deep depression was centred near south Greenland with a marked trough extending to Spain. A shallow depression formed over our South-west Approaches and moved slowly north-eastwards into the Midlands of England on the 10th and filled up as a trough of low pressure moving from the Atlantic crossed most areas on the 11th and 12th. These disturbances brought some rain but it was mostly light. In parts of Yorkshire it was the first appreciable rain for nearly two months.

During the period 13th–16th the anticyclone was transferred south-eastwards again from the Norwegian Sea to the Balkans. Fine weather returned to most of the country on the 13th, afternoon temperatures reaching 70°F. locally, but there was fog at night which became widespread and dense in places on the 14th and persisted all day in parts of south-east England and the Midlands and throughout the 15th also in south Yorkshire.

The strong upper westerlies which had extended across most of the Atlantic in the middle latitudes during the previous two days penetrated further eastward on the 16th, and during the night of the 17th/18th a vigorous depression brought severe gales to southern England and rain to most districts as it moved rapidly from Cornwall to the Wash. A gust of 70 kt. was recorded at Culdrose and many places in the west had more than 1 in. of rain in 12 hr.

By the 19th a strong westerly upper flow extended in middle latitudes across the Atlantic from the Great Lakes to Europe and during the next week troughs of low pressure moved eastward across the British Isles. There were frequent showers with fair periods on the 19th, 20th and 25th and periods of more continuous rain on the 21st and 24th.

An intense depression which moved across northern Scotland on the night of the 26th/27th was preceded by exceptionally large falls of pressure, heavy rain and gale force winds. By noon on the 27th pressure at Kew had fallen 40 mb. in 12 hr. Behind the depression northerly winds reached storm force in Scotland; on the Berwickshire coast gusts were reported to have reached 90 kt. The 26th was the wettest day of the month over most of the country; many places had more than 1 in. of rain while some in north-west England and the Midlands had more than 2 in. in 24 hr.

During the last few days of the month weather was changeable with occasional rain or showers but with some sunny periods.

Pressure and Wind. Mean pressure at 9 h. ranged from 2.1 mb. above the 1921–50 average at Lerwick to 0.8 mb. below average at Holyhead. Winds were mainly between south and south-east during the first half

of the month becoming predominantly between south-west and west from the 17th to 26th and then mainly north to north-west until the end of the month. Gales were reported on 13 days in Scotland and were widespread on the 26th–28th; in England and Wales they occurred on the 17th–19th, 21st and 26th–28th, being fairly widespread on the 17th and 27th. On the 27th gusts reached 83 kt. at Rannoch and Tiree and 79 kt. at Nutts Corner and Dover.

Temperature. Mean temperature exceeded the average by 4.3°F. in England and Wales and also in Northern Ireland, and by 4.5°F. in Scotland. Temperature rose to 83°F. at a number of places in the Midlands and south-east England on the 3rd, the highest October temperature recorded in Britain since 1921, when 84°F. was reached in the London area. During the last week of the month temperature in many places was below the average. On the 29th, the coldest day of the month, screen temperature fell to 25°F. locally in Scotland and to 23°F. and 26°F. at Moor House and Kielder Castle respectively.

Extreme temperatures included: (England and Wales) 83°F. at Rugby, Mickleham and Faversham on the 3rd, 23°F. at Moor House on the 29th; (Scotland) 77°F. at Falkirk on the 3rd, 25°F. at Grantown-on-Spey on the 7th and at Leadhills on the 29th; (Northern Ireland) 72°F. at Hillsborough and Ballykelly on the 4th, 33°F. at Parkmore Forest and Loughgall on the 29th.

Precipitation. The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the 1916–50 average was 92 over England and Wales, 105 over Scotland and 122 over Northern Ireland. Less than 75 per cent. occurred in the Upper Thames Valley, over much of East Anglia and around the Wash, but more than 150 per cent. was recorded in eastern Cornwall, western Fermanagh and the southern part of Co. Down. A number of places in eastern England had no measurable rain from August 14 until October 9 or 10. For England and Wales the total general rainfall for the period May to October was the lowest for any such period since before 1870 and probably since 1750.

Among the heavy falls in 24 hr. or less were:—

17th 3.03 in. at Ramsey, Isle of Man.

26th 3.57 in. at Borrowdale and 3.10 in. at Thirlmere, both in Cumberland, 3.25 in. at Llangurig in Montgomeryshire.

Thunder was heard on 10 days in Scotland (18th–22nd and 24th–28th) and on 8 days (10th, 16th, 17th, 19th, 22nd and 26th–28th) in England and Wales. Thunderstorms were widespread in the Midlands on the 27th and in Wales and western districts of England on the 27th and 28th.

Sleet was widely reported in Scotland during the last week of the month and locally over high ground in northern England and North Wales on the 27th.

Sunshine. The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the 1921–50 average was 139 over England and Wales, 128 over Scotland and 115 over Northern Ireland. At Bolton and Manchester sunshine was 173 per cent. of the average and at Skegness 169 per cent. It was the sunniest October in England and Wales since comparable records began in 1909 and at Kew since 1880.

Fog. During the first 17 days of the month and on the 21st, 30th and 31st there was fog every day at one place or another in England and Wales and, except for the 6th, in Scotland as well. Fog also occurred on the 23rd and 26th in England and Wales and the 19th and 22nd in Scotland.

Miscellaneous Phenomena. The aurora was seen in Scotland on 15 nights.