



Weather Front August 2018

Observers Notes

Derby: A very warm start; early August was the fifth warmest for that period since 1952. The maximum temperature of 29.0 C was the highest for the month since 2004. There were seven days with maxima equal to, or higher than, 25.0 C; the most in August since 2003.

Ely: An unremarkable month after the searing heat of July, although the first week was often hot. After this it was, at times, quite wet and temperatures close to normal for the month, but most of the heavy rain was limited to the second week.

Coton-in-the-Elms: After the intense heat of June and July, August was much cooler, with temperatures closer to the average. After an initial hot start, it cooled down significantly with some very cool nights. It was a more changeable month, with some welcome rain.

Mickleover: The third warmest August since 2004, and an August mean temperature equal to 2013.

Middleton: The grass minimum temperature, of 1.4 C on the 30th, was the lowest on record for August since 1998.

Central England Mean Temperature (Provisional): 16.6 C

August 1918.

MWR: Warm, dry and moderately sunny.

Observers Notes.

Derby/Burton on Trent: Rainfall varied between 45 mm and 75 mm over the local gauges. The 3rd appears to have been the wettest day with over 30 mm. The highest temperatures were around 28 C to 29 C over a three-day period (20th to 22nd), while the lowest were around 7 C on the 16th. The overall mean was about 15.5 C.ⁱ

Allan's Green, Northumberland: August has been, on the whole, good for getting the crops ripe, and a deal of corn is already cut in the valleys, and most of it in good ripe condition. Roots have also grown well, especially the early-sown ones. There has been an abundance of grass and aftermath in the meadows, and cattle and sheep have had a full bite, and are doing well.

Ipswich, Suffolk: Up to the 25th, when it turned wet, there was a magnificent spell of harvest weather, and most of the crops are now in fine condition. The rapid rise to the

very brief spell of heat, 20th to 22nd, was remarkable, culminating as it did, after no previous warmth worth mentioning, with the highest maximum [32 C] since 1911.

Weston Turville, Bucks: The drought covering the second and third weeks of great value for securing corn. Subsequent rains equally valuable and welcome for pasture and roots.

Rochford, Worcester: Very dry, warm month, but with cooler nights towards the end, one or two nights having quite a frosty air. Great dearth of apples, pears, plums, and damsons; not a dozen pounds weight in an orchard here of nearly three acres.

Tenbury, Worcester: A remarkably fine, dry and warm month, and – but for the heavy rain on the 25th, when 32 mm fell in 3 ½ hours, bringing to an end a drought of 18 days – the driest August on record. Splendid weather for the harvest, which began on the 7th. The crops are the best for many years.

Bromyard, Hereford: Splendid weather for the corn harvest. The best crop for years.

Dublin (City): A warm, changeable month, with preponderating winds from westerly points, often blowing freshly. The mean temperature was [0.8 C] above the normal.

Carrigoran, Co. Clare: Most gloomy, showery weather has prevailed throughout the month. The total rainfall about normal, but it was distributed in an aggravating sort of way all through the month, with only an occasional dry, hot day. Violent and cold northerly winds blew on many days.

Fethard, Waterford: The driest August for many years. The precipitation figures however, hardly represent the moisture for the month, as fog and overcast skies prevailed to such an extent that the absence of rain was not felt, and the ground was seldom dry. Strong winds from South West to North West predominated, only one day being recorded as calm.ⁱⁱ

The Board of Agriculture Report for England and Wales, quoted in the MWR, noted that, “the fine weather which prevailed through most of August was everywhere very favourable to harvest operations, and a great deal of corn was got in under excellent conditions...”ⁱⁱⁱ J M Stratton notes, “August, changeable and dry on the whole, with fair periods of sunshine.” He also notes that the price of wheat per cwt was 17 shillings, a price that had increased markedly since the start of the First World War.^{iv} This then was how others saw August 1918.

Temperatures were generally slightly above average, ranging from [+ 1.2 C] in northern England and the midlands to [+ 0.3 C] in the vicinity of the English Channel. The highest individual temperatures were at Canterbury [34 C] and at Cambridge and Norwich [33 C] on the 22nd. These temperatures were associated with a southerly wind ahead of a depression. This may well have been an occlusion, as the temperatures fell rapidly with the onset of a northerly to the rear of the depression. Lowest recorded values were at Garforth in Yorkshire [2 C] and at Gwernyfed in Breconshire [4 C]. Local effects had a marked influence on temperature ranges; at Cambridge and Wokingham the range was as much as [27 C], but

at Pembroke, Portland Bill, and Scilly it was only [9 C].^v The coastal influence was very much in evidence.

Rainfall, except in northern Scotland where 135% of average was reported, was below average in all remaining areas of the country, ranging from –37 mm in southern Ireland to -11 mm in the area of the English Channel. There were some heavy falls of rain, examples of which are: 48 mm at Princetown on the 5th, 45 mm at Darwen (Lancashire) on the 5th, 42 mm at Scilly on the 2nd and Wick on the 31st. The MWR also noted that, in the extreme north, "... the month, following a July which had been the wettest on record, appears to have been the wettest August since 1889".^{vi}

The mean daily amount of sunshine was below average in all districts, ranging from -1.23 hours in southern Ireland to -0.15 hours in north west England. The sunniest area was the English Channel, with an average of 7.02 hours, and the dullest was Scotland North with an average of 3.29 hours per day. While completely overcast days were rare all stations experienced some sunshine every day.^{vii}

Apart from northern Scotland and, some locally heavy falls of rain in parts of England, most of the country experienced a warm, dull month with below average rainfall. This contributed to a good grain crop but poor fruit production.

Central England Data:

Mean Maximum Temperature: 20.4 C, Average: 19.4 C.

Mean Minimum Temperature: 11.8 C, Average: 11.0 C.

Mean Temperature: 16.1 C, Average: 15.2 C.

England and Wales Rainfall: 62.9 mm, Average: 85.9 mm.

Midlands Mean Maximum Temperature: 20.5 C.

Midlands Mean Minimum Temperature: 11.0 C.

Midlands Mean Temperature: 15.7 C.

Midlands Rainfall: 49.7 mm.^{viii}

ⁱ D J Stanier, by email.

ⁱⁱ Monthly Weather Report, August 1918, HMSO, 1919, Summary.

ⁱⁱⁱ MWR, August 1918, HMSO 1919, Summary.

^{iv} Agricultural Records, Whitlock R, John Baker, 1978.

^v MWR, August 1918, HMSO, 1919, Summary.

^{vi} MWR, August 1918, HMSO, 1919, Summary.

^{vii} MWR, August 1918, HMSO, 1919, Summary.

^{viii} Meteorological Office, www.metoffice.org.uk/climate.