

Aug 80

# Fifth worst summer since 1956 — report

Record books are not needed to show the summer of 1980 as a poor one. People's own experiences can do that. If rainfall, average temperature, bright sunshine and air pressure are analysed, then 1980 ranks as the fifth worst summer since 1956.

At Halesowen Climatological Station rainfall has been up by 16 per cent, the number of days with rain up by 18 per cent, bright sunshine down by 17 per cent, air pressure down by 0.3 per cent, with temperatures marginally above normal.

In the last 25 years only 1963, 1966, 1956 and 1958 have been worse in general weather conditions, than the summer just gone.

## COOLER

This poor showing stems mainly from the dreadful June rather than from a poor July and August, though neither month was brilliant.

June was exceptionally wet throughout with 188 per cent of the normal rainfall. A warm beginning gave way to cooler conditions, with bright sunshine a mere 76 per cent of expected values.

July was to produce only 91 per cent of the normal rainfall, though days on which rain fell were well up on average. After a very cool beginning temperatures rose steadily, but did not approach seasonal levels until near the month's end. For the second month in succession bright sunshine was below average at only 80 per cent of the usual level.

## SHORT

August began with warm weather, the pattern continuing through the month. Rainfall was again down, at 85 per cent, though days with rain amounted to 17, two in excess of expectation. For the third successive month bright sunshine was down at 94 per cent of expected values.

The month of August was

nowhere near as bad as in many past years. Temperatures were decidedly above expectation by as much as 2C in some areas, though the mean daily at 16C (61F) was 1C in excess of the average.

The first week was quite warm, daily maximum being in the region of 20C (68F) and rainfall, though occurring each day from August 3 to August 8 was small in amount and of short duration.

The middle of the month, though more unsettled, produced high temperatures, the warmest night being August 14 when the air temperature never fell below 15.6C (60F).

Rain fell on the five days from August 10 to August 14 with the heaviest fall of 18.2 mm (0.72 in) on the fourteenth.

## GROUND FROST

The weather improved considerably from then on and rainfall was to remain fairly infrequent until August 29. The spell of six dry days from August 21 to August 26 was, in fact, the longest period without rain since the third week in May.

However, the clear skies did lead to a fall-off in temperatures as the nights lengthened and local ground frost occurred around dawn on August 24 and 25.

The final five days saw more unsettled conditions and the heaviest intensity of rain was recorded on August 29 at 20mm (0.79in) per hour. The last day saw pressure building over the country and air temperatures in the mid twenties C (mid seventies F).

Total rainfall at 67mm (2.63in) was 85 per cent of expectation, though the number of rain days, at 17, was 12 per cent above usual.

With only a single thunderstorm the month saw half of the number anticipated.

## CLOUD

Winds were predominantly southerly and light, hence the higher than average temperatures. The maximum gust of 25kt (29 mph) was on August 29, but morning values were generally in the range of 1 to 11kt (1-13 mph).

Mean cloud cover at 69 per cent was rather better than expectation, and there were ten days when the sky was completely overcast at 8 am.

So, though the summer as a whole has been far from good, the month of August was pleasantly warm and drier than usual — at least in this area!