

By the 23rd two areas of low pressure lay to the north and north west of the country with a weak frontal system just clearing into the North Sea. This gave a short spell of rain during the next hours with humid conditions giving way to somewhat fresher weather, afternoon temperatures peaking at 18.5C with a period of 5.4 hours sunshine. Frontal systems continued to cross the country on the 24th though the main brunt of the associated rain area lay over Scotland and northern England. The Midlands had a good day with no rain at all and 9.6 hours of sunshine bringing afternoon temperatures to a warm 19.6C under the influence of a weakish ridge of high pressure tonguing from the Azores high over southern districts.

This weak ridge gave another good day on the 25th when 7.6 hours of mainly morning sunshine brought temperatures to 21.0C. By early on the 26th further Atlantic lows were beginning to influence the weather over the UK as a warm front approached Ireland and western Scotland, heralding a further spell of heavy rain for these areas. Further south the main rain belt did not arrive until late evening, a fall of 3.7 mm occurring from 2250 and 2345 UTC, the day itself producing little in the way of sunshine, just 1.7 hours being recorded. The 27th was a much sunnier day over the Midlands, as the low to the north of Scotland moved north eastwards and a further Atlantic low approached from the west. Over 8 hours of sunshine was recorded with a maximum afternoon temperature of 22.5C, the highest of the month to date. Radiation temperatures peaked at 53.2C, also the maximum of the month so far, a weak frontal system bringing a spell of light rain to the area in the late evening.

With one area of low pressure over the Hebrides and a weak frontal trough running along the south coast, the 28th began cloudy, and dry. Though the day produced only 3.5 hours of sunshine it did remain warm, afternoon temperatures rising to 22.2C, as well as continuing dry. An approaching warm front brought continuous and light rain to the area from 1911 to 2135 UTC with further intermittent rain from midnight to 0300 UTC on the 29th. The rather unsettled theme continued, weak frontal troughs crossing the north of the country bringing heavy rain to parts of northern Scotland and the north east of England. The Midlands remained predominantly dry and warm, temperatures peaking at 18.7C with 4.4 hours of sunshine.

Bands of showery rain crossed the area on the 30th as the parent depression of north west Scotland continued to dominate the weather over the entire country. The north westerly winds became blustery in the showers, which continued for most of the day, some being quite heavy. It remained rather cool though good sunny spells occurred between the showers. Winds veered from west to north west with the passage of a cold front at 16.30 UTC, skies then clearing somewhat for the evening.

The final day of the month was again showery and predominantly dull. Frequent light showers occurred throughout the day in the rather unsettled west to north west air stream, maximum temperatures reaching 17.6C with a mere 18 minutes of sunshine. Late in the evening more general rain arrived in the area, persisting overnight and giving a 24 hour fall of 2.5mm by 09.00 UTC on August 1st.

SUMMARY OF THE MONTH OF JULY 1998.

The month did not live up to its summer status, being cool and dull though relatively dry in terms of rainfall totals. The mean maximum temperature of 19.6C was 1.3C below normal and the worst since 1988. The highest maximum of 22.5C was almost 5 degrees C below expectation and the lowest figure since 1966. For comparison 9 from the last 10 July's have produced maximum temperatures above 25C (77F) making this year's value seem even worse.

The month was also dull, the total of 152 hours of sunshine ending at 83% of expectation and the worst figures since 1988. Although every day had some sun, the highest total of 12.3 hours on the 18th was over an hour below average for July. The month as a whole was well below the record of 289.7 hours totalled in July 1990.

Rainfall was well below normal, just 66% of the expected fall occurring. Rain fell on 15 days, with only 1 really wet, the 22nd with 7.4mm. Precipitation in some form was noted for a total of 68.5 hours. No thunder was noted, nor any hail in a month which added to the gloomy summer initially begun by a miserable June.