Generally Dry and Warm

Although it was not a spectacularly good month, this July proved the best summer month since 1984. It was notable for two very fine spells: during the first eight days of the month and from the 20th to the 24th. Pressure was high enough to hold off any significant amounts of rain from 1st to 8th as westerly or southwesterly winds prevailed. During 9th conditions became close and humid and during Friday the 10th rain affected all areas. Westerly winds backed southerly between 11th and 13th and as a high pressure centre developed to the east of Ireland, amounts of rain were small. An active front brought rain to the west during the later part of the 14th and the period 15th to 17th was very disturbed as low pressure centres moved eastwards across Ireland; these contributed to the formation of the deep depression which caused the atrocious conditions at the British Open.

Conditions picked up after this as winds over the country swung from northwesterly to northeasterly and amounts of rain were small. Towards the end of the month, as people in Greece and Turkey died from the severe heat of up to 48°C, we were in a more modest, humid, west to northwest airflow from the Atlantic giving us maximum temperatures of around 22°C.

TEMPERATURES ABOVE NORMAL

Both maximum and minimum air temperatures were above normal. Maximum air temperatures for the month ranged from 20.1°C at Kilkenny and Shannon Airport to 16.9°C at Malin Head and Balmullet. Values in excess of 21°C were recorded in the period 3rd to 6th, 9th/10th, 13th/14th, 20th to 23rd, 26th to 29th and on 31st. Highest air temperature for the month was 25.6°C recorded at Casement Aerodrome (Baldonnel) on Friday the 10th. Mean minimum air temperatures for July varied between 11.0°C at Casement Aerodrome and 12.8°C at Shannon Airport. Lowest air temperatures were recorded on the first two days of the month and between 7th and 9th when both Claremorris (4.6°C) and Cahirciveen (7.0°C), recorded their lowest July temperature in seven years.

DRY SPELLS BUT SOME HEAVY RAIN

Monthly totals ranged from 121.8mm at Malin Head (152% of normal) to 15.5mm at Rossclare (26% of normal). The general pattern was of high rainfall on coasts in west Ulster and north Connaught but a sharp decrease in rainfall with distance inland, as the totals for Balmullet and Claremorris illustrate. The general pattern was complicated by...
St. Swithin's day superstition proved wrong

MET 15 JUL 1987 1230 VIS 1.8 Г

Surface Chart 1200-15-07-87

St. Swithin's day, the 15th of July, is remembered in a rhyme dating back to the 10th century: "St. Swithin's day if thou dost rain, for forty days it will remain." This did not hold true this year for although the frontal system about to clear the country was followed by a series of low pressure areas on subsequent days, the weather soon picked up again. St. Swithin lived in the ninth century and was made bishop of Winchester in 852. He was canonized in the tenth century and tradition has it that when he was due to be transferred from the churchyard where he had been buried to the cathedral, heavy rain delayed for forty days the consecration, which was to have taken place on July 15th, 971.
The satellite picture shows a band of cloud over the northwest of Ireland extending into Scotland. Most of the country basked in 12 to 15 hours sunshine and temperatures of up to 25°C on one of the nicest days of the year, but in the northwest it was generally dull, with the sun only appearing from time to time through breaks in the cloud. The strong high pressure area which kept mainland Europe virtually cloud-free, had blocked the progress of this band of cloud for some days, with the result that the north and west were the only parts of the country that missed the continuous sunshine and actually had some rain that weekend.

Also of note in the picture is the swirling vortex of the depression to the north of the country and the confusion of cloud around it. Over Europe a band of orographic cloud hangs over the Pyrenees and in southern France and Spain plenty of cumulonimbus cloud can be seen indicating shower, thundery activity. Notice also, just north of Italy the snow on the Alps. The picture was taken at 1445 GMT by the American satellite NOAA 9 and is reproduced by courtesy of the University of Dundee.
locally heavy falls chiefly on 10th, 16th and 17th
when thunder was reported at some stations. The
44.9 millimetre fell at Balmulet on Friday the 10th
was the highest daily total ever recorded there
in July and constituted almost 50% of the monthly
total. On Thursday the 16th, thundery showers
devoured as a complex area of low pressure moved
slowly eastwards over the county. Kilkenny recorded
nearly 32 millimetres and while Castletown Roremore
had a fall of 16.7 millimetres. Dublin Airport nearby,
only had a trace of rainfall.

Near northern coasts, in the humid
westerly airflow which prevailed from Sunday the
26th ( the day Stephen Rocha rode to victory in the
Tour de France ) to the end of the month. Melin
Head recorded some 30 millimetres of rain. Mullingar
had 8 millimetres while Kilkenny had less than 0.5
millimetres. The number of days with rainfalls of
at least one millimetre ranged from 23 at Molin Head to
8 at Rossalere and Rocha’s Point. Greatest spells were
1st to 8th, 12th/13th and 20th to 25th.

SUNSHINE
Totals varied from 70-2 hours at
Cleremore to 194-6 hours at Rosslare. In west
Wexford and north Carlow, many areas had less
than 6% of normal sunshine while near the east,
south and southeast coasts totals were normal or
just above. Sunniest days were Wednesday the 22nd
and both Saturday the 4th and Sunday the 5th, the
two weekend of the month weatherwise for the
whole county, except the northwest (see centre
page). Totals of over 14 hours were recorded at a
number of stations around the country on all three
days.

The highest daily sunshine for the month
was 15.2 hours recorded at Cork Airport on the 4th
and again the day after at Birr and Casement
 Aerodrome on the 5th. For both Birr and Cork
Airport, it was the highest daily total for July since
the early seventies. Notably dull days were the 9th,
21st and 30th but all in all it was a reasonably good
month for sunshine especially compared with last
year when we had our dullest July on record.

WINDS
Windiest days were the 19th, 26th, 27th
and the 31st. Highest gust of the month was the 49
knots recorded at Melin Head on the 31st.

FOG
Although fog was reported on over half
the days of the month it was very scattered and
usually light. It was most widespread on the 5th,
10th and 23rd.

HAIL AND THUNDER
Hail was reported at Kilkenny on Thursday
the 16th and thunder was reported on 10th and on
16th/17th.

4th of July 1862

The story of Alice in Wonderland was first told on a boating
expedition from Oxford to Godstow, on
the River Isis on this date. Present
were Lewis Carroll, his friend Robinson
Duckworth and of course the real Alice,
Liddell and her two sisters. In the
verses before the book Lewis Carroll
refers to the "golden afternoon" and
the "dreamy weather". Alice Liddell and
Duckworth have also left statements
about the weather on record. The
former wrote of the "burning sun" and
"that blazing summer afternoon with
the heat haze shimmering over the
meadows". The latter referred to
"that beautiful summer afternoon...
described in the introductory verses to
the story."

The same day this year in
Ireland, seems to have been very
similar to the one described above,
with the exception of the northwest.
The same band of cloud seen in the
satellite picture on the centre page,
made for a rather overcast 4th of July
there, while the rest of Ireland had up
to 15 hours sunshine. So 'Alice in
wonderland day' 125 years on, proved
not so wonderful for the northwest of
the country.

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