



Exceptional weather events

Type of event:

Rainfall / flooding

Date:

December 1954

Widespread floods of December 1954



The last quarter of 1954 was exceptionally wet, with more than 50% of normal rainfall for the 3-month period recorded in parts of the east and northeast (see map bottom left). Late November and early December brought a spell of particularly wet and windy weather; there were a number of ships sunk or run aground off the Irish coast in what were described in newspaper reports as "mountainous seas".

Flooding was already widespread in many parts of the country before a band of heavy rain moved eastwards late on December 6th, clearing for a while on the 7th before another band of persistent and heavy rain became established in all areas on the 8th. Rain was particularly heavy over eastern counties, with more than 80mm falling in the 3-day period between the 6th and 8th (see map centre left). Dublin Airport recorded a daily total of 49mm on the 8th, a value that has not since been exceeded at the station during December.

Early on the 9th, the swollen river Tolka undermined the foundations of the railway bridge across the river at Fairview (below). The collapsed bridge then formed a barrier across the river, causing water to flow out across a very wide area; approximately 1,500 houses accommodating 2,000 families were affected by the flood waters and several hundred people were forced to evacuate their homes. There was extensive flooding elsewhere across the city, particularly in the Kilmainham area along the river Camac, while the Shannon reached its highest level since 1925 and many thousands of acres of farmland were inundated. There were also reports of widespread power outages on the 8th, with further disruption caused by heavy falls of snow in parts of the midlands and northwest. (pictures Irish Times)

