

Dr Ian Phillips PhD MSc BSc

Teaching Fellow

[School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences \(/schools/gees/index.aspx\)](/schools/gees/index.aspx)

Contact details

Telephone [+44 \(0\)121 414 5552](tel:+441214145552) (tel:+44 121 414 5552)

Email i.d.phillips@bham.ac.uk (mailto:i.d.phillips@bham.ac.uk)

School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT
UK



About

Ian Phillips is best known for writing the most comprehensive account of the 1973 Isle of Man Summerland fire disaster. He gained his BSc Geography degree from the University of Birmingham in 1995, before continuing at the University to complete an MSc in Meteorology and Climatology and a PhD in Geography. Ian has been on the teaching staff of the University since September 1999. He is the Chairman of the West Midlands Centre of the Royal Meteorological Society.

Qualifications

PhD in Geography (The occurrence, dynamical structure and prediction of drought events over Devon and Cornwall over a forty year period), 2000

Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society, 1999

MSc in Applied Climatology and Meteorology (Distinction), University of Birmingham, 1996

BSc (Hons) in Geography (First Class), University of Birmingham, 1995

Biography

Ian Phillips was born in Burton-upon-Trent in May 1974. He comes from Tamworth in Staffordshire and was educated at St Elizabeth's Roman Catholic Primary School in Tamworth and St Francis of Assisi RC Secondary School in Aldridge near Walsall. He read BSc Geography at the University of Birmingham between 1992-5. Ian continued at Birmingham University to complete an MSc in Meteorology and Climatology in 1996 and a PhD in Geography in 2000. Ian has been on the teaching staff of the University since September 1999, and lectures on weather, climate and statistics. He is the Chairman of the West Midlands Centre of the Royal Meteorological Society. Whilst Ian is a trained geographer and climatologist, he is best known for writing the most comprehensive account of the 1973 Summerland fire disaster on the Isle of Man.

Teaching

1. BSc Geography
2. BA Geography
3. BSc Environmental Sciences
4. MSc Applied Climatology and Meteorology
5. MSc Environmental Health (Statistics teaching only)
6. MSc Air Pollution, Management and Control (Statistics teaching only)

In addition to teaching meteorology and climatology, Ian Phillips is responsible for nearly all of the Statistics teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences.

Research

The Isle of Man Summerland Fire Disaster

Over the last ten years, Dr Phillips has been researching the Summerland fire disaster, which killed 50 at Douglas, Isle of Man, on the evening of Thursday, August 2nd, 1973. The culmination of his research is a book (approximate length of 100, 000 words). The book has been peer-reviewed by John Webb, who was a member of the Fire Research Station team that investigated the disaster. Read a [summary of the Summerland book including information for contributors \(PDF - 352KB\)](/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/phillips-book-summary.pdf) (/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/phillips-book-summary.pdf)

The Book

From 21st century leisure to 20th century holiday catastrophe: the Isle of Man Summerland fire disaster

- [Contents \(/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-contents.pdf\)](/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-contents.pdf)
- [Chapter 1 \(/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-c1.pdf\)](/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-c1.pdf): Introduction
- [Chapter 2 \(/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-c2.pdf\)](/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-c2.pdf): Continental Attractions / Domestic Solutions
- [Chapter 3 \(/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-c3.pdf\)](/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-c3.pdf): This is to be the dawn of an new era of British Leisure Architecture
- [Chapter 4 \(/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-c4.pdf\)](/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-c4.pdf): 8 pm and the horror started

- [Chapter 5 \(/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-c5.pdf\)](#): The island's aftermath of bitterness
- [Chapter 6 \(/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-c6.pdf\)](#): There are to be no villains, just human error
- [Chapter 7 \(/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-c7.pdf\)](#): Learning the lessons of history
- [Chapter 8 \(/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-c8.pdf\)](#): Summerland survivors tell their stories
- [Chapter 9 \(/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-c9.pdf\)](#): The Summerland site into the 21st century
- [References \(/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/fire-disaster-refs.pdf\)](#)

Climatology

Dr Phillips' current and previous research in this area can broadly be placed in the field of hydroclimatology. The rainfall climatology of the South West Peninsula of England has been the focus of his research for a number of years. This research has three dimensions:

- Understanding variations in precipitation receipt over time: the role of weather types, wind direction, vorticity, water vapour flux, the North Atlantic Oscillation and sea-surface temperatures (SST)
- The predictability of monthly and seasonal Devon and Cornwall rainfall totals
- Spatial patterns: analyses of daily rainfall over Devon and Cornwall; rainfall regionalisations of South West England stratified by season and wind direction

Whilst the rainfall climatology of South West England remains an important focus of ongoing research, Dr Phillips' research interests have diversified over the years into other geographic regions and themes whilst remaining firmly under the hydroclimatology umbrella. Among the MSc dissertations that Dr Phillips has recently supervised include winter rainfall variability over Cumbria; the climatology of cut-off lows in the Mediterranean; and a climatology of lightning strikes over France. Recent MSc and BSc dissertations that he has written up as joint papers with the student include the effect of weather conditions on the Oxford-Cambridge University Boat Race and summer daily rainfall variability over East Anglia.

In the Birmingham area, Dr Phillips has undertaken research on four extreme flood events that affected SW areas of the City between 1998-2000. This research considers the similarities and differences between the events in terms of their effects, geographical extent, rainfall intensities and synoptic-scale weather situation.

Other activities

Chairman of the West Midlands Centre of the Royal Meteorological Society. Ian is responsible of organising a programme of meetings for the Society at the University of Birmingham.

Publications

Key Publications

See a [full list of key publications since 2001\(PDF - 144KB\) \(/Documents/college-les/gees/staff/phillips-publications.pdf\)](#)

Phillips, I.D. (2013) Regional weather and climates of the British Isles – Part 3: The Midlands. *Weather*, 68 (5), 116-121.

Smith, M.J. and **Phillips, I.D.** (2013) Winter daily precipitation variability over the East Anglian region of Great Britain and its relationship with river flow. *International Journal of Climatology*, 33 (9), 2215-2231.

Smith, K. and **Phillips, I.D.** (2012) Autumn and extended winter daily precipitation variability over central and southern Scotland. *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 128 (1), 42-63.

Neal, R.N. and **Phillips, I.D.** (2011) Winter daily precipitation variability over Cumbria, Northwest England. *Theoretical and Applied Climatology*, 106, 245-262

MacDonald, N., **Phillips, I.D.** and Mayle, G. (2010) Spatial and temporal variability of flood seasonality in Wales. *Hydrological Processes*, 24, 1806-1820

Neal, R.A. and **Phillips, I.D.** (2009) Summer daily precipitation Variability over the East Anglian region of Great Britain. *International Journal of Climatology*, 29, 1661-1679.

Morris, B.J. and **Phillips, I.D.** (2009) The effect of weather conditions on the Oxford-Cambridge University Boat Race. *Meteorological Applications*, 16, 157-168

MacDonald, N., **Phillips, I.D.** and Thorpe, J. (2008) Reconstruction of long-term precipitation records for Edinburgh: an examination of the mechanisms responsible for temporal variability in precipitation. *Theoretical and Applied Climatology*, 92, 141-154

Phillips, I.D. and Thorpe, J. (2006) Icelandic precipitation – North Atlantic sea surface temperature associations. *International Journal of Climatology*, 26, 1201-1221.

McDonald, N. and **Phillips, I.D.** (2006) Reconstructed annual precipitation series for Scotland (1861-1991): Spatial and temporal variations, and links to the atmospheric circulation. *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 122, 1-18.

McGregor, G.R. and **Phillips, I.D.** (2004) Specification and prediction of monthly and seasonal rainfall over the South West Peninsula of England. *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society*, 130, 193-210.

Phillips, I.D. (2003) Four South West Birmingham Flood Events. *Weather*, 57, 143-155.

Phillips, I.D. and McGregor, G.R. (2002) The relationship between monthly and seasonal South-West England rainfall anomalies and North Atlantic Sea Surface Temperatures. *International Journal of Climatology*, 22, 197-217.

Phillips, I.D. and McGregor, G.R. (2001b) Western European water vapour flux – South West England rainfall associations. *Journal of Hydrometeorology*, 2, 505-524.

Phillips, I.D. and McGregor, G.R. (2001a) The relationship between synoptic scale airflow direction and daily rainfall: a methodology applied to Devon and Cornwall, South West England. *Theoretical and Applied Climatology*, 69, 179-198.

Expertise

Isle of Man Summerland holiday centre fire disaster and its implications; rainfall variations and drought occurrence over South West England



