

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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Unsettled, mostly mild; cold spells in second half of month

The month began with a small depression off western Scotland crossing northern areas and its associated fronts crossing all parts of the United Kingdom, followed by a deep Atlantic depression which moved gradually eastwards and crossed England and Wales on the 7th. A depression formed over the Irish Sea on the 10th/11th and deepened quickly as it moved eastwards across central areas. From the 15th to 28th high pressure was to the south and then south-west of the British Isles and from the 20th low pressure was to the east. During the 22nd the Atlantic anticyclone began to develop a ridge eastwards into northern Scotland and by the 24th it had moved further south to affect most of England and Wales. During the 26th and 27th fronts associated with a deepening depression in the North Sea affected Great Britain while the depression moved away, leaving a cold northerly airstream. From the 28th further fronts associated with a complex low-pressure area over Iceland crossed all parts.

Weather

A series of small depressions and their associated fronts gave generally unsettled but mild weather during the month apart from the 20th and between the 25th and 28th when it became colder and there were wintry showers. Later on the 28th it became milder in southern areas as snow turned to rain. Thunderstorms occurred fairly frequently during the first half of the month, but only on the 21st and 30th during the second half. Hail occurred between the 5th and 14th, 20th and 21st, 24th and 28th and on the 30th. Boscombe Down, Wiltshire, Binbrook, Lincolnshire and Penmaen, West Glamorgan reported hailstones between 10 mm and 20 mm in diameter on the 6th, 14th and 20th respectively.

Wind

Although winds were mainly light to moderate during April there were several windy periods, notably the 1st, 7th, 11th and 13th, mainly in the south and west, and the 19th in the north of England and Scotland. Gwennap Head, Cornwall recorded maximum gusts of 67 kn on the 1st and 11th and one of 70 kn on the 7th. The high winds on the 7th combined with a spring tide on the 7th/8th to bring stormy seas and flooding to the south coast. Roads were closed by flood water in several places in Hampshire and West Sussex. Extensive flooding was also reported in the south-west. On the 11th, Culdrose, Cornwall recorded a maximum gust of 67 kn; Worcester (Cornmeadow), Hereford and Worcestershire reported gusts over force 9 around midday and several trees were uprooted in the locality. On the 19th northern areas had gale force winds; Duirinish, Highland Region recorded a maximum gust of 74 kn. On the same day Forth Road Bridge recorded 65 kn, Leith Harbour, Lothian 66 kn and Lynemouth, Northumberland 61 kn. There were quite strong winds in northern areas on the 20th, 26th and 27th. Wind directions were mainly westerly, but southerly between the 4th and 7th and northerly or north-easterly between the 21st and 25th.

Temperature

Mean monthly temperatures were near normal over Scotland and Northern Ireland and about 0.5 °C above average over England and Wales. The month started mild and Cromer, Norfolk reached

an afternoon temperature of 20.2 °C on the 3rd, the first time that 20 °C had been reached in the United Kingdom since the previous October. From the 16th to 19th it was again mild. The highest temperature for the month, 21.4 °C, was recorded on the 19th at London Weather Centre. There was a marked drop in temperatures on the 20th, afternoon temperatures being over 10 °C lower in many places in southern England and Wales than on the previous day; the difference at London Weather Centre was 12 °C. On the 27th the temperature in central London fell nearly 6 °C in one hour during showers and did not recover, so that by dusk the temperature was only 3 °C in a fresh northerly wind. After a cold day nearly everywhere on the 28th, the temperature rose gradually over the next two days to become quite mild by the 30th, with an afternoon temperature of 18 °C in Hampshire.

Rainfall

Amounts were generally above average over England and Wales except in the extreme south and south-east. Scotland was wet with 150 per cent of normal rainfall, while Northern Ireland had 110 per cent.

In Northern Ireland it was the wettest April since 1979 over the Province as a whole. While some parts of Scotland recorded rain every day in the first half of the month, others had rain on 25 or more days. Cwmbargoed, Mid Glamorgan noted that the April total was the highest since the record began in 1967. The 11th was one of the wettest days with many places in southern Scotland, northern and central England and Wales having over 20 mm of rain in 24 hours. The highest fall recorded in Scotland was 75.2 mm at Jura, Strathclyde on the 5th; in Wales 59.6 mm fell at Braich Dinas, Gwynedd on the 10th and in England 52 mm fell at Wendron, Cornwall on the 3rd. The greatest fall in a day in Northern Ireland was 42 mm at Bryansford, Co. Down on the 4th.

Snow

Showers of snow or sleet were reported at times in much of Scotland, especially on the 20th and between the 25th and 28th. On the 28th there was a

general fall as far south as Cheshire, but in the more southerly areas it soon turned to rain. Southern England except the south-west had widespread snow or sleet showers on the 27th. The number of days with snow or sleet falling was below average nearly everywhere. Snow was lying for more than three days at low levels, but at 750 m snow cover remained for a large part of the month and throughout the month above 900 m in the Highlands and Cairngorm Mountains.

Sunshine

April was generally dull everywhere with amounts above the normal only in south-east England, the far south-west and part of the west Midlands. Amounts ranged from only 59 per cent of average at Cape Wrath, Highland Region to over 110 per cent in parts of south-east England.

On the 17th southern England, Wales and much of Scotland were very sunny with more than 10 hours of bright sunshine in many places and as much as 13 hours in the Channel Islands. The sunniest day of the month was the 24th, when many places in England and Wales had 13 hours of sunshine, while over Scotland it was rather dull. The longest daily duration during the month was 13.6 hours, measured at Worthing, West Sussex on the 19th, a day when most of southern England and East Anglia had more than 10 hours of sunshine.

Fog

Overnight fog formed only very infrequently during the month. The 18th and 19th were the most notable foggy mornings: fog on the 18th was fairly widespread, mainly in central areas, and on the 19th was confined to south-east England and East Anglia. There was fog over hills on the 2nd, 15th and 29th. Coastal fog occurred quite frequently during the first week, then at mid-month and towards the end of the month.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

On the 4th dust-laden precipitation was reported at Hampstead, Greater London and Guernsey, Channel Islands.

Table 1 District values

District	Air temperature °C					Mean 30 cm soil temp °C	Rain-days	Rainfall	Sunshine
	Highest Max*	Lowest Min*	Max.	Min.	Mean				
	Difference from average					% of average			
0 Scotland N	16.6	-5.0	-0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	+6	139	75
1 Scotland E	16.9	-3.1	-0.1	+0.3	+0.1	+0.4	+6	137	75
2 England E & NE	18.7	-3.7	+0.2	+0.9	+0.5	+0.6	+4	131	81
3 East Anglia	20.2	-4.3	+0.6	+0.8	+0.7	+0.5	+2	105	93
4 Midland Counties	20.2	-3.6	+0.3	+0.7	+0.5	+0.6	+3	115	94
5 England SE & Central S	20.2	-3.8	+0.7	+0.6	+0.7	+0.5	+2	99	104
6 Scotland W	16.8	-5.8	-0.4	+0.8	+0.2	+0.4	+5	120	81
7 England NW & Wales N	18.2	-3.8	-0.4	+1.0	+0.2	+0.5	+4	140	76
8 England SW & Wales S	20.2	-5.0	+0.3	+0.6	+0.3	+0.5	+3	132	87
N Ireland	17.5	-2.9	+0.1	+1.0	+0.6	+0.5	+3	120	84
Scotland	16.9	-5.8	-0.2	+0.4	+0.1	+0.3	+6	135	77
England & Wales	20.2	-5.0	+0.3	+0.8	+0.5	+0.5	+3	125	89

*Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations