

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

APRIL**1989**

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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Unsettled, cool and wet in most areas, but rather dry in Scotland

April began with a frontal trough trailing from Iceland to the Iberian peninsula and a depression centred to the south-west of Ireland. As high pressure over Scandinavia extended a ridge southwards the low pressure area drifted away southwards. However, pressure remained low over France and an active depression drifted northwards to affect most of England and Wales on the 5th. Over the next few days the whole of the United Kingdom came under the influence of complex low-pressure systems, interrupted temporarily on the 8th and 9th by a transient ridge of high pressure crossing most parts of the United Kingdom, followed by a deep depression moving up the Irish Sea and across Scotland on the 11th. Low pressure continued to be the dominant influence, although on the 16th and 17th a ridge of high pressure over the eastern Atlantic affected western areas, its influence spreading gradually to most parts of the United Kingdom. However, during the next few days weak frontal systems continued to be the main influence on weather in eastern areas of Great Britain. A cold front moved southwards over northern Scotland on the 21st and crossed all areas during the next few days, though not clearing southern England until the 25th. Later on the 25th a depression moved south-westwards over western areas of Great Britain, clearing the south coast on the 27th, before being replaced on the 28th by a ridge of high pressure from the south-west. However, advancing frontal systems affected all areas for the rest of the month.

Weather

April was generally cool and unsettled, with rain or showers at times. Snow occurred in many places in the first week, especially on the 5th, with some reports of blizzard conditions over higher ground. Further snow occurred later in the month in the north. Hail occurred at times, especially in the south, and was accompanied by thunder in southern England on the 7th, 12th and 27th, and in eastern England on the 10th, 13th and 20th. On the 7th a golfer was struck by lightning at Southampton and badly burned. On the 13th Halstead, Essex had a violent thunderstorm with heavy rain and hail between 1830 and 2015, but very heavy rain from 1850 to 1945 and local flooding. Hail lay to a depth of 5 cm for a while.

Wind

Winds during the month were generally not very strong; the 11th was a notably windy day, however, and winds were particularly strong over south-west England and South Wales. A mean wind of 49 kn was recorded at Milford Haven, Dyfed, with a new record gust for April of 84 kn, while Aberporth recorded a gust of 78 kn, the highest April gust there for over 50 years. The strong winds brought chaos to the roads and battered ships in the Irish Sea, blew down trees and caused structural damage to buildings throughout Wales. Thousands of homes in Devon and Cornwall and south-west and central Wales were without power after falling trees brought down overhead power cables. Wind directions were mainly northerly or easterly.

Temperature

Mean monthly temperatures were below normal

nearly everywhere in the United Kingdom, the main exception being Lerwick, Shetland with 0.2 °C above normal; at Exeter, Devon the mean temperature was nearly 2 °C below normal.

Although April was cold generally, it started with a warm day on the 1st in most southern and western areas, with temperatures reaching or exceeding 17 °C at Poolewe, Highland Region with 17.0 °C, Valley, Gwynedd with 17.4 °C, and Little Butser, Hampshire with 17.6 °C. At Oxford the mean monthly temperature was 1.3 °C below the normal; only 1903 and 1972 were lower in 109 years of records. Wingerworth, Derbyshire reported that the mean maximum for April was 2.3 °C below average. Broom's Barn, Suffolk reported that the afternoon temperature of 5.2 °C on the 24th was the lowest maximum recorded in the last 10 days of April since the station opened in 1963. The temperature of 15.1 °C at Hampstead, Greater London on the 1st was the lowest April maximum there since 1972. Halesowen, West Midlands reported the lowest maximum since 1978 and the lowest night minimum since 1968. The lowest temperature during the month was -7.6 °C at Eskdalemuir, Dumfries and Galloway on the 24th.

Rainfall

Monthly rainfall totals were above normal in most places in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, but in many parts of Scotland amounts were below normal, as little as 40 per cent at Kinlochewe, Highland Region. In contrast, Wyton, Cambridgeshire had more than 250 per cent of normal.

One of the heaviest falls of the month was 57 mm at Trassey Slievenaman, Co. Down on the 1st. Frontal rain crossed all areas from the south-west and gave 24 mm at Whithorn, Dumfries and Galloway on the 2nd. On the 9th 32 mm was measured at Lochailort, Highland Region. On the 11th, after a day of heavy rain 24 mm was measured at Clatteringshaws, Dumfries and Galloway while in the area of Goudhurst and Paddock Wood in Kent dozens of houses were flooded. Wingerworth reported the wettest April for 20 years. Coventry School (Bablake), Warwickshire had the wettest since 1920.

Snow

After the 2nd wintry conditions spread to many areas and on the 4th snow or sleet fell over most of the United Kingdom, but did not settle except on high ground in the north. However, on the 5th sleet and snow fell for much of the day with temporary accumulations of 3 cm to 6 cm in south-east England. Holme Moss, West Yorkshire recorded a level snow depth of 40 cm. Snow fell in some northern parts on the 22nd, extending southwards to much of the United Kingdom by the 25th. At the Knockan Nature Reserve north of Ullapool 13 cm was lying on the morning of the 24th, and at Nottingham 10 cm of level snow was lying on the following day.

Sunshine

Sunshine amounts were below average nearly everywhere, the exceptions being parts of central southern England, south-west England and southern and western Wales where sunshine was slightly above average, ranging from about 77 per cent in south-east England to 109 per cent at Plymouth, Devon and Aberporth, Dyfed. The highest daily sunshine amount was 16.3 hours at Inverness, Highland Region on the 1st. Most sunshine during the month was 211 hours at Lizard, Cornwall.

Fog

Patchy overnight fog affected parts of southern and eastern England on the 1st, particularly near the coast, central and eastern England on the 6th and 17th, and southern and central England on the 13th; a few patches developed over southern England and the Midlands on the 27th and eastern England on the 28th. Coastal fog occurred in eastern Scotland on the 16th and in Wales and western England on the 30th. Hill fog occurred in central southern England on the 2nd, in the north-west on the 10th and 14th, with some patchy fog in the north-west on the 15th and in the south-west on the 19th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

None reported.

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	-6.2	-1.1	-0.7	-0.9	+0.1	-1	64	88
1 Scotland E	15.6	-5.8	-1.6	-0.5	-1.1	+0.4	+1	80	89
2 England E & NE	15.8	-6.7	-1.9	-0.7	-1.3	+0.2	+4	133	90
3 East Anglia	15.9	-2.2	-1.9	-0.6	-1.2	+0.2	+5	181	85
4 Midland Counties	16.5	-4.6	-1.9	-1.2	-1.5	+0.1	+5	183	86
5 England SE & Central S	16.2	-2.0	-1.6	-0.5	-1.0	+0.4	+5	166	94
6 Scotland W	15.5	-7.6	-1.6	-1.1	-1.4	+0.2	+3	90	92
7 England NW & Wales N	17.4	-5.2	-1.4	-0.6	-1.1	+0.5	+3	125	95
8 England SW & Wales S	14.4	-5.6	-1.2	-1.3	-1.4	+0.1	+4	125	101
N Ireland	16.4	-4.8	-1.7	-1.5	-1.6	-0.2	+3	164	82
Scotland	16.6	-7.6	-1.4	-0.8	-1.1	+0.2	+1	78	90
England & Wales	17.4	-6.7	-1.7	-0.8	-1.3	+0.3	+4	147	92

* Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations