

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

MARCH 1973

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Mostly mild and dry

During the first and last weeks a succession of fronts from the Atlantic alternating with mobile ridges of high pressure crossed all areas. In the intervening period the weather was dominated by an intense anticyclone over the British Isles.

Weather

Periods of rain or showers occurred in many districts throughout the first week. Hail was reported at times and snow or sleet (snow mixed with rain or drizzle) fell, mostly on high ground. Except in north Scotland it was dry in many districts from the 7th to the 23rd with local fog and frost at night and warm sunny days. Changeable weather returned during the last week but most of the rain fell in the north.

Wind

Fresh or strong winds were often reported in Scotland but elsewhere they were less frequent and almost entirely confined to the first and last weeks. Western Scotland and the Irish Sea were the only areas in which the number of gale days exceeded the average. The 6th was a squally day especially in the Midlands and southern England where gusts exceeded 50 kt in a few places. During the last week gales occurred in Northern Ireland and Scotland where a gust of 60 kt was recorded at Stornoway (Ross and Cromarty) on the 29th. Two days later the wind gusted to 61 kt at Duirinish (Ross and Cromarty).

Temperature

In parts of north and east Scotland and north-east England mean temperatures exceeded the average by between 1.5 and 2 degC while in a number of places in the southern half of England mean temperatures were 0.5 to 1 degC below average. Elsewhere, most areas were a little warmer than average. Except for a few cold days during the first half and again towards the end of the month daily temperatures were near or above average. From the 20th to the 25th it was very warm by day inland in east Scotland and in east and south-east England; at East Dereham (Norfolk) a maximum temperature of 19.4°C was recorded on the 23rd. Frost occurred frequently in Scotland and was severe at times; on the night of the 10th/11th the temperature fell to -13.5°C at Buddon Ness (Angus), the lowest temperature measured there since records began in 1941. Frost was also experienced frequently in parts of eastern and southern England and occasionally in other districts.

Rainfall (including melted snow)

In Shetland, most of west Scotland and in parts of north-west England and western Wales rainfall totals were near or above average reaching 175 per cent of average around Ben Attow (Ross and Cromarty). Other districts were much drier especially in the east and south where 10 per cent or less of the average rainfall was received in a few places. Montrose (Angus) with a total of only 4.0 mm had its driest March since records began in 1864. Except in the extreme north of Scotland it was mostly dry from the 7th to the 23rd but during the first and last weeks periods of rain or showers affected many areas although they were heaviest in parts of Wales and in north and west Scotland. Some notable falls occurred towards the end of the month; in the 24 hour period beginning at 09 GMT on the 29th, Broadford (Inverness-shire) had 65.0 mm of rain, and Glenfinnan (Inverness-shire) had 56.5 mm. Snow or sleet fell at times mostly on high ground in the north and there were isolated hail showers. Thunder was reported on one or two occasions.

Snow

On high ground in Scotland and north England, including the Isle of Man, snow or sleet occurred on about the average number of days but in other areas it was only a minor feature of the weather. During the first week snowfall was mostly in the form of scattered showers. On one or two days, however, it was more prolonged and undrifted depths of between 5 and 10 cm were measured at a number of places in Scotland and in the northern Pennines but the snow lay for a short time only. There were more snow showers towards

the end of the month and further accumulations of up to 8 cm were measured in parts of the north-west Highlands on the 31st.

Sunshine

Monthly totals of sunshine hours were generally near or above average except in Shetland and in small areas of Northern Ireland and east England. Wick (Caithness) and Gordon Castle (Moray) both had their sunniest March since 1948. During the second week which was sunny in parts of north and east Scotland, 10.4 hours of sunshine were recorded at Aberdeen on the 10th and 10.2 hours at Cape Wrath on the 12th. In Wales and the southern half of England there were long sunny periods on most days especially during the latter half of the month; on the 29th, Folkestone (Kent) had 11.5 hours of sunshine.

Fog

Overnight fog often developed in south Scotland during the second and third weeks and also in central and southern England from the 8th until the end of the month but elsewhere it occurred less frequently. There were dense and freezing patches and on a few days the fog took a long time to disperse; in Belfast it persisted all day on the 11th. Sea fog occasionally affected small areas on the coasts of East Anglia, south England, and west Wales and patches of hill fog occurred in north Wales at times.

Miscellaneous phenomena

The aurora was observed in Scotland on 18 nights.

Table 1 District values**March 1973**

District	air temperature °C					mean 30-cm earth temp °C	rain-days	rainfall	sun-shine
	Highest	Lowest	max.	min.	mean				
	Max †	Min. †	difference from average						
0 Scotland N	14.5	-5.2	+1.4	+0.5	+0.9	—	-5	102	98
1 Scotland E	15.9	-5.2	+2.2	+0.5	+1.3	+0.6	-8	30	128
2 England N E	18.0	-4.6	+1.7	+0.3	+1.0	+0.8	-6	29	110
3 England E	18.5	-4.0	+0.9	0.0	+0.5	+0.6	-5	41	111
4 Midland Counties	18.2	-4.5	+1.0	+0.1	+0.6	+0.5	-5	40	129
5 England S E	17.5	-6.2	+0.8	-0.5	+0.2	+0.1	-6	36	123
6 Scotland W	14.7	-6.3	+1.1	+0.5	+0.8	+0.6	-4	80	110
7 Eng N W & Wales N	17.8	-5.2	+0.9	+0.2	+0.6	+0.6	-4	63	123
8 Eng S W & Wales S	17.0	-4.5	+0.6	-0.9	-0.2	+0.2	-6	41	128
N Ireland	15.4	-6.9	+0.5	-0.7	-0.1	—	-3	48	107
Scotland	15.9	-6.3	+1.6	+0.5	+1.0	—	-6	73	112
England & Wales	18.5	-6.2	+1.0	-0.1	+0.5	—	-5	42	121

† Highest max. and lowest min. of the District Value Stations