

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

APRIL

VOLUME 105

1988

NUMBER 4

Changeable; mild and rather dull with generally average rainfall

At the beginning of the month a depression off north-west Scotland dominated the weather in western and central areas, but late on the 3rd a ridge of high pressure became established across the United Kingdom. A cold front, associated with low pressure over Scandinavia, moved slowly southwards over all areas during the 8th and 9th followed by a transient ridge of high pressure. During the period from the 9th to 11th a depression, with its associated frontal system, passed to the north of Scotland, following which the United Kingdom came under the influence of an area of high pressure centred over Greenland. By the 13th an anticyclone was centred over north-east England, but as it moved away eastwards the frontal systems associated with an area of low pressure in the Atlantic crossed all areas of the United Kingdom between the 15th and 18th. On the 19th a small secondary depression affected the extreme east and south-east of England. Afterwards the Greenland anticyclone extended south-eastwards, preceded by a weakening trough on the 21st. A small wave depression affected west Cornwall on the 23rd, and another depression moved south-eastwards along the North Sea coast on the 25th and 26th. A further depression developing in the south-western approaches affected south-west and central southern England before filling and was replaced by a more vigorous system extending to all but the extreme east of England by the end of the month.

Weather

The weather in April was changeable with warm and cold spells, rather wet in northern areas but generally rather dry in southern areas, and with below average sunshine in most areas. Thunder was reported over the Midlands, notably over Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, on the 3rd, over a wide area of eastern and southern England on the 18th, over Northern Ireland on the 20th and over much of central southern and south-west England on the 27th. Hail was reported here and there on 6 days during the month and was widespread in the north Midlands and in parts of southern England from Kent to Dorset on the 27th.

Wind

Winds were mainly light during the month. However, some gales were recorded, with mean hourly wind speeds reaching 36 kn on the 10th at Sella Ness, Shetland and 38 kn on the 14th at Butt of Lewis, Western Isles. There were gales in west Cornwall on the 23rd with mean speeds of 34 kn at Camborne and Culdrose and 44 kn at Gwennap Head; gusts of 59 kn and 58 kn were recorded at Gwennap Head and Camborne respectively. Wind directions were mainly southerly or easterly during the month apart from a spell of northerlies between the 4th and 7th.

Temperature

Mean monthly temperatures were above normal everywhere except the far north of Scotland and some east-facing coasts in the south and west where they were below normal, ranging from just over 1 °C above normal in Co. Antrim to nearly 1 °C below normal in the north of Shetland.

April was the fifth month in succession in which temperatures were above normal nearly everywhere.

On the 5th temperatures in the north were well above normal with places in central Scotland having a daily maximum about 7 °C above normal while in southern areas of Great Britain the cold easterly airstream kept maximum temperatures near normal. On the 6th the maximum was 20 °C at Aviemore, Highland Region, but by the 8th temperatures fell markedly behind a cold front with maxima of 5 °C at Aviemore and 2 °C at Lerwick, Shetland followed by a minimum of -7 °C at Aviemore. After a milder period, a cold front moving southwards on the 12th gave southern districts of Scotland maximum temperatures of only 5 °C. Clearer skies further north slowly pushed southwards and by the 13th the minimum temperature at Braemar, Grampian Region was reported as -8.2 °C, the lowest temperature of the month in the United Kingdom. Daily maxima in Northern Ireland were between 2.0 °C and 6.5 °C above normal between the 13th and 24th. The highest temperature during the month was 21.9 °C at March, Cambridgeshire on the 18th.

Rainfall

Monthly rainfall amounts were generally above normal north of a line from about Tyne and Wear to the Isle of Man except for a large part of western Scotland where it remained rather dry. South of the line it was generally rather dry apart from some places in central and south-eastern England and southernmost parts of Cornwall. Rainfall amounts ranged from nearly three times the normal at Arbroath, Tayside Region to less than 40 per cent in Guernsey, Channel Islands.

Rain that started falling in the extreme west on the 13th spread to all but the extreme east of England over the following two days, and Lizard, Cornwall recorded nearly 44 mm in that period. Further rain occurred on the next three days, with northern England and, in particular, southern Scotland having a wet day on the 18th. On the 19th rain fell in the extreme east and south-east of England, and Anvil Green, Kent measured more than 26 mm of rain. It was the driest April since 1984 in parts of Northern Ireland. Sheffield, Weston Park reported the lowest rainfall amount since 1981. Among heavy daily falls measured

during the month were 75 mm at Arbroath, Tayside Region, 53 mm at Stonehaven, Grampian Region and 51 mm at Leuchars, Fife Region, all on the 18th.

Snow

Snow fell on high ground giving 24 cm lying at the Cairngorm Car Park on the morning of the 2nd. A southward-moving cold front became more active as it made erratic progress over northern England during the 8th; arctic air behind the front turned the rain to snow later in the day in many parts of northern England and, as the front moved further south-westwards, much of eastern Wales and central and south-eastern England had a period of snow early on the 9th. A further spell of cold weather on the 12th brought rain and snow to southern Scotland for most of the day.

Sunshine

Sunshine amounts were below average generally, apart from the far north of Scotland, south-east England and South Wales where sunshine was near or just above average, ranging from 115 per cent in east Kent to a rather dull 66 per cent in the Isles of Scilly and the Southern Uplands of Scotland.

Sheffield, Weston Park reported the dullest April since 1978. The sunniest day over a wide area was the 13th with most of England and Wales and eastern Scotland having between 10 and 13 hours of sunshine. The highest daily sunshine total was 14.4 hours at Hastings, East Sussex on the 24th and the highest monthly sunshine amount was 204.7 hours at Hayling Island, Hampshire.

Fog

Patchy fog formed overnight between the 2nd and 6th, around mid month and on the 19th and 20th, mainly in northern areas, and on the 22nd in southern England and Wales. Hill and coastal fog occurred between the 14th and 18th and again on the 30th, mainly in south-west England.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

None reported.

Table 1 District values

District	Air temperature °C					Mean 30 cm soil temp°C	Rain- days	Rainfall	Sun- shine
	Highest Max*	Lowest Min*	Max.	Min.	Mean				
			Difference from average					% of average	
0 Scotland N	17.6	−6.1	0.0	+0.1	0.0	+0.7	−4	79	91
1 Scotland E	17.8	−8.2	0.0	+0.4	+0.2	+1.2	0	117	82
2 England E & NE	19.7	−5.0	0.0	+0.8	+0.4	+1.1	−2	64	83
3 East Anglia	21.1	−4.1	+0.1	+0.4	+0.3	+0.7	−2	79	88
4 Midland Counties	20.5	−5.8	+0.1	+0.4	+0.2	+0.9	−3	70	82
5 England SE & Central S	20.1	−3.6	+0.1	+0.1	+0.1	+0.7	−3	81	103
6 Scotland W	18.8	−5.1	−0.1	+0.4	+0.2	+1.0	0	94	76
7 England NW & Wales N	18.2	−2.8	+0.2	+0.9	+0.4	+1.3	−1	77	91
8 England SW & Wales S	18.2	−4.3	+0.4	+0.3	+0.2	+1.0	−2	71	100
N Ireland	17.2	−2.3	+0.6	+1.1	+0.8	+1.2	−5	62	91
Scotland	18.8	−8.2	0.0	+0.3	+0.1	+1.0	−1	95	83
England & Wales	21.1	−5.8	+0.1	+0.5	+0.3	+0.9	−2	72	91

* Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations