

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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April 1954—Dry and sunny; mainly cool in England and Wales.

A changeable, westerly type of weather prevailed for the first five days but afterwards conditions were mainly anticyclonic.

In the opening days depressions moved along our north-west seaboard and associated fronts crossed the British Isles; rain fell generally and was moderately heavy locally in the north-west on the 2nd. On the 3rd a deep depression westward of Scotland moved north-east giving gales at exposed places in northern districts, and some rain. In the rear of this depression a rather cool north-westerly airstream spread over the British Isles and showers occurred with hail, sleet and thunder in places, mainly in the north and west on the 4th and more generally on the 5th. Snow also fell on some of the high ground, including Dartmoor, on the 5th when a small disturbance moved from north-west Ireland to Brittany. A wedge of high pressure moved in over the British Isles on the 6th and later became part of a belt of high pressure from the Azores across England to Scandinavia which lasted until the 11th. Weak fronts moved east across the country on the 12th but another anticyclone approached south-west Ireland on the 13th and thereafter dominated conditions in most districts until the 19th, though north-westerly winds were strong to gale in places on the 14th and 15th. Subsequently pressure became high to the north of Scotland with a ridge extending southward over the British Isles; persistent north-easterly winds gave cold weather on the east coast up to the 28th but there were sunny periods generally and much sunshine in the west. The dry spell began over England and Wales on the 6th and lasted with small local interruptions until the 29th, amounting to absolute drought over a substantial area. In Scotland and Ireland rainfall was low from the 6th to the 17th, and from the 18th to the 28th the weather was almost entirely dry. On the 29th a slow-moving cold front moved southward over northern districts, with some rain, considerable in amount locally in east Scotland; snow fell locally in Scotland, and thunderstorms occurred at some places in the Midlands and the east of England on the 30th.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure substantially exceeded the average for the period 1921–50, the deviation from the average at 9h. ranging from +9.0 mb. at Lerwick and +9.5 mb. at Lympne to +11.9 mb. at Armagh. The total run of the wind was well below average; at Southport, apart from 1952, it was the lowest on record for April. Gales occurred at times, mainly on the 3rd–5th, and 13th–15th. A mean hourly velocity of 53 kt. was registered at Lerwick on the 4th. Among the highest gusts, in knots, were 61 at Bell Rock and 59 at Stornoway on the 3rd, 76 at Lerwick on the 4th, 57 at Scilly on the 5th, 51 at Durham on the 14th and 52 at Felixtowe on the 15th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature differed from the average for the period 1921–50 by -1.3°F . in England and Wales, $+0.5^{\circ}\text{F}$. in Scotland and -0.1°F . in Northern Ireland. The nights were unusually cold; ground frosts were very frequent and air frost was severe locally at times and occurred more often than is usual in April; at Southport, for example, ground frost occurred on 16 days which equalled the record of 1912. Cool days occurred from the 4th

to 7th, 17th to 28th (particularly in eastern districts of Great Britain) and, in the northern half of the country, on the 30th.

Extreme temperatures for the month included:—(England and Wales) 67°F . at Poole and Weymouth on the 15th, 20°F . at Moor House on the 28th; (Scotland) 66°F . at Muchalls and Stonehaven on the 11th, 20°F . at Glenlivet, Balmoral, and Leadhills on the 23rd and at Glenlivet on the 27th; (Northern Ireland) 61°F . at Armagh and Aldergrove on the 16th and at Armagh on the 28th, 27°F . at Garvagh on the 22nd.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1951 was 29 over England and Wales, 66 over Scotland and 35 over Northern Ireland; it was the driest April over the United Kingdom as a whole since 1938. Only locally in Fife and the Lothians was rainfall more than average; it was more than 75 per cent. of average in the Shetlands, parts of Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty and Inverness-shire and in a belt from the Clyde across Lanarkshire to Fife and the Firth of Forth. It was less than 25 per cent. of average at most places south-east of an irregular line from the Tees to Plymouth except in the neighbourhood of the Wash, in Norfolk and north Suffolk and over most of Sussex; it was also less than 25 per cent. of average over the eastern part of Northern Ireland and at Douglas, Isle of Man. Less than 10 per cent. of the average was registered locally in Monmouthshire, Somerset, south-east Devonshire and Dorset.

There were few daily falls of more than 1.00 in., among the heavier being:—

- 2nd 1.76 in. at Arddarroch Gardens, Garelochhead and 1.38 in. at Ardlussa, Isle of Jura.
- 3rd 1.12 in. at Ambleside.
- 12th 1.50 in. at Kinlochewe, Ross and Cromarty.
- 30th 1.36 in. at Davidson's Mains and 1.30 in. at Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh and 1.28 in. at Harlech.

Thunderstorms occurred locally, mainly on the 3rd–6th and 30th. Snow and sleet showers occurred locally, chiefly on the 4th–6th, 12th–13th and 30th.

Sunshine.—A large excess of bright sunshine was an outstanding feature of the weather of the month; less than average was registered only at a few places in north-east England and the north Midlands. Over Scotland as a whole it was the sunniest April since 1942. On the west and south coasts of Great Britain it was notably sunny; for example, at Oban it was the sunniest April since 1929 and at Southport and Ilfracombe the sunniest since 1914; at Chivenor, on the north-west coast of Devonshire, the mean daily sunshine was as much as 9 hours.

Fog.—There was not much fog; it occurred at times, chiefly in the early morning or at night, mainly on the 1st–3rd, 7th–12th, 19th, 21st, 28th and 29th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on 14 nights. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on nine days.