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SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL STATIONS AND VOLUNTEER OBSERVERS

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April 1955—Dry, sunny and mild.

From the 10th to the 24th, with an anticyclone almost stationary over the British Isles, there was a drought over the major part of the country; before and after this period a mild west to south-west airstream predominated with rain at times, but with sunny intervals.

On the 1st, an anticyclone, which gave a fine sunny day, moved slowly away eastwards and on the following day an active trough to a depression near Iceland crossed the British Isles accompanied by widespread rain. An influx of milder air into our south-western districts on the 3rd was marked by locally heavy rain, but in the north there were good sunny periods, though with scattered thunderstorms. During the next three days a mild south-westerly airstream predominated. Occasional, mainly slight, rain accompanied minor troughs as they crossed the country, but skies were variable and there were good sunny periods, particularly in Scotland and Ireland; Tisee recorded 10.5 hr. of sunshine on the 6th, though none on the previous or following day. Temperature was generally above average and exceeded 60°F. in places: there were patches of fog in the English Channel and Irish Sea, hill and coast fog in our south-western districts and patches of early morning fog elsewhere. Still warmer air spread in from the south-west as the fronts of a deep depression near Iceland crossed the British Isles on the 7th and 8th, with widespread and locally heavy rain. A marked decrease in frontal activity occurred the following day as an anticyclone off our south-west coasts increased in intensity. This anticyclone commenced to move north-eastwards on the 12th, became centred over the British Isles on the 14th and thereafter persisted in the neighbourhood until the 20th. During this period the weather was dry, sunny and warm by day, but ground frost occurred most nights; it was the warmest Easter Monday at many places on the south coast for six years and on the 14th more than 12 hr. sunshine was widely recorded. As the anticyclone receded slowly westward on the 21st, cooler air spread southward over the eastern side of the country; grass minimum temperatures at Kew fell to 20°F. early on the 20th and 22nd and snow was reported in places in Scotland from 21st to 24th. A return to a westerly type of weather for the last week of the month gradually brought to an end the drought which had developed over much of England.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure everywhere exceeded the average for the period 1921–50, the excess being least in the north; the deviation from average at 9h. ranged from +6.2 mb. at Lerwick to +10.0 mb. at Oxford. Winds were west to south-west light to moderate for the first 10 days, then light and variable, but became mainly south-westerly again during the last week. Winds rose to gale force in Scotland on the 2nd, 12th, 13th and 25th and also locally on the west coast of Ireland, but it was a quiet month generally.

Temperature.—Mean temperature almost everywhere was above the average for the period 1921–50, the excess being 1.8°F. in Eng-

land and Wales and 2.8°F. in both Scotland and Northern Ireland. The warmest day was the 29th when temperature was above 70°F. over a wide area in south-east England; the most extensive air frosts occurred in the midland and eastern counties on the 1st, 2nd and 25th. Extreme temperatures for the month included:—(England and Wales) 77°F. at Herne Bay and Margate on the 29th, 21°F. at Kielder Castle on the 2nd; (Scotland) 74°F. at Stirling on the 19th, 20°F. at Buddon Ness on the 19th; (Northern Ireland) 65°F. at Castle Archdale and Garvagh on the 18th and 19th respectively, 24°F. at Ballykelly on the 24th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915 was 65 over England and Wales, 76 over Scotland and 103 over Northern Ireland. Rainfall was more than average in the extreme west of Great Britain, values reaching 150 per cent. only locally in Wales. Over much of Great Britain there was less than 75 per cent. of the average, with less than 50 per cent. in the east from Aberdeen to West Hartlepool, over the southern part of the West Riding of Yorkshire, the country adjacent to the Humber, over most of the country south-east of a line approximately from the Wash to Tor Bay, Devon and over the southern Wye Valley. Over much of south-east England less than 25 per cent. was recorded with as little as 12 per cent. at Felixstowe and Edenbridge. It was the driest April since 1938 at Balmoral, and since records began in 1920 at Shoeburyness.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hours or less were:—

- 7th 2.60 in. at Polnish Lochailort, 2.24 in. at Arisaig House, both in Inverness-shire, 2.06 in. at Kellan, Isle of Mull, Argyllshire.
- 9th 3.32 in. at Snowdon (Llydaw Intake), Caernarvon.
- 27th 3.04 in. at Blaenau Festiniog (Oakley Quarries), Merionethshire.

Thunderstorms occurred mainly on the 6th but were also reported on the 3rd, 7th, 23rd and 29th in England and Wales, and on the 30th in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Snow fell locally in Scotland from 20th to 24th.

Sunshine.—Sunshine was above the average almost everywhere except locally on the east coast. The percentage of average for the period 1921–50 was 111 over England and Wales, 124 over Scotland and 121 over Northern Ireland. At Arbroath, Dundee and Edinburgh it was the sunniest April since 1942.

Fog.—Fog occurred chiefly in the early morning on 9 days in Scotland; in England and Wales fog occurred somewhere or other on most days but most frequently before the 7th and after the 26th of the month.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on the nights of the 10th, 12th–14th, 19th, 23rd–29th.