

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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Unsettled; a cool dry period around mid month.

During the 1st a small depression over the North Atlantic between Iceland and Scotland deepened and moved quickly across Scotland and into the North Sea, with the associated frontal system crossing all areas of the United Kingdom. From the 3rd the Azores anticyclone moved gradually north-eastwards over the British Isles, where it intensified and remained centred until the 9th. Late on that day a shallow low moved from Norway across the North Sea and by the 11th had formed a north-south oriented trough of low pressure over Great Britain, before sliding southwards to the Bay of Biscay on the 12th. The Azores high then built a ridge to the north of the British Isles with a small high centred over the Faeroes. From the 14th the high drifted slowly northwards, while shallow lows appeared near the British Isles. By the 17th a ridge was re-established over the southern part of the United Kingdom and remained for most of the rest of the month, until displaced by a complex low pressure area from the north-west. A weak ridge on the 19th was in its turn replaced on the 31st by another area of low pressure which moved over the Bay of Biscay and a high centred near the Faeroes.

Weather

It was a mostly unsettled month with rain or snow at times. For about a week between the 13th and the 20th it was generally dry and fairly settled in most parts. Then around the 20th the weather again became unsettled and remained so for the rest of the month. Hail occurred in many places during the month, notably on the 2nd, 12th, 13th and again towards the end of the month when the weather became very changeable with periods of rain or snow accompanied by hail and thunder.

Wind

For most of the month it was fairly quiet, with light or moderate breezes, but on the 2nd winds were strong everywhere, increasing to gale force in many areas and to storm force in places. Here and there gusts exceeded 60 kn, with 66 kn recorded at Point of Ayre, Isle of Man and 67 kn at Spurn Head, Humberside. At St Abb's Head, Berwick a gust of 78 kn was reported in the late afternoon. In Bournemouth 120 ft of scaffolding was reported to have collapsed, badly bruising a passer-by, while an airliner was caused to overshoot the runway at Aberdeen Airport by strong crosswinds. A further period of strong winds occurred over the 23rd/24th, mainly in the north and west of Scotland, over Wales and Northern Ireland. The highest gust recorded in this period, notably 102 kn, was at Cairngorm, Highland Region on the 24th. Winds were mostly westerly or variable until the 12th, then easterly or north-easterly until the 21st, south-easterly until the 26th and northerly for the rest of the month.

Temperature

Temperatures were below normal almost everywhere, although in Cumbria and parts of south-western and eastern Scotland it was slightly less cold with temperatures around normal. The coldest area was south-west England, generally 1 °C below average, but more than 1.5 °C below average in east Cornwall.

Temperatures on the 1st were very variable with the highest maximum of 15.2 °C occurring at

Liphook, Hampshire and the lowest maximum of 0.9 °C at Lerwick, Shetland. There followed two days of colder weather with temperatures everywhere remaining below 10 °C. Three mild days followed, including the month's highest temperature of 16.1 °C at the Lizard, Cornwall, but thereafter temperatures became a little lower each day until by mid month it was generally rather cold. For the rest of the month it became less cold in the south, though remaining cold in the north. Scotland showed a wide variation on the 18th with a maximum of only 9.3 °C, recorded at Dalcross, Highland Region and the lowest minimum was -8.4 °C at Tummel, Tayside. At the same time the lowest minimum on the grass, -12.5 °C, was recorded at Glenlee, Dumfries and Galloway.

Rainfall

Monthly rainfall totals were below normal over western areas of Great Britain and above normal in eastern areas. Northern Ireland had a similar pattern. The below-average rainfall in the west of Scotland ended a series of wet Marches which started in 1976. The series continued, however, in the east of Scotland: Leuchars, Fife had its wettest March since 1958 and Dunbar, Lothian its wettest since 1930. The very wet area extended from the Grampian Region, taking in the coastal areas of Tayside, Fife, Lothian and the Borders, to the English Borders and into Northumberland, all of which had well over 200 per cent of the average monthly rainfall.

Rainfall amounts over the four days from the 23rd to the 26th were above 50 mm in many places in Scotland, typical examples being 91 mm near Banchory, Deeside, 94 mm (out of a month's total of 119 mm) at Dundee and between 60 mm and 70 mm at Stanhope Farm and Leadhills in the Border hills. The 23rd produced many large falls over southern England and Wales, with 46 mm at Velindre, Powys, 45 mm at Okehampton, Devon, 44 mm at Bastreet, Cornwall and 43 mm at St Johns, Cornwall and Martyr Worthy, Hampshire. Many places in Hampshire and Wiltshire across to West Sussex had in excess of 30 mm. The greatest fall in Northern Ireland on the 23rd was 65 mm at Banagher, Co. Londonderry.

Snow

Apart from about a week between the 4th and the 11th, when there were only isolated showers, snow or sleet showers were frequent throughout the month and heavy in places. On the 2nd sleet and snow showers occurred in all areas. On the 24th there was sleet and snow in many places, especially over high ground. In southern England there were temporary accumulations of snow over high ground during the morning. Snow was reported lying in parts of Scotland in the first four days and again around mid month.

Sunshine

It was a rather dull month over most areas, only south-west England having above-average sunshine. East Anglia and most of the Midlands, South Yorkshire and the coastal area of North Yorkshire all had below 50 per cent of average, as did a strip along the Anglo-Scottish border.

The 3rd was the brightest day of the month with most places in England and Wales having between three and nine hours sun, about ten hours being reported at Bristol, Avon and Bournemouth, Dorset. The maximum duration overall was 11.2 hours at Benbecula, Western Isles on the 31st. Shanklin, Isle of Wight had 10.9 hours and Guernsey 10.8 hours on the 30th.

Fog

Patchy overnight fog formed at times in all areas during the month. On the 21st it was fairly widespread in many central, southern and south-eastern areas of England, spreading to some eastern areas during the evening and persisting in central and eastern areas until the 23rd. There was fog again in many parts of England, Wales and Northern Ireland on the 28th and 30th. There were a few reports of coastal fog patches, mostly in the south and south-west. There was occasional hill fog around mid month, mainly in the south-west.

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	11.1	-9.4	-1.0	-0.1	-0.6	+0.2	0	84	66
1 Scotland E	13.5	-7.6	-1.1	0.0	-0.6	+0.5	+1	177	69
2 England E & NE	12.9	-5.2	-1.4	+0.2	-0.6	+0.2	+2	125	47
3 East Anglia	12.8	-2.7	-1.5	0.0	-0.8	0.0	0	107	47
4 Midland Counties	13.2	-3.6	-1.5	-0.1	-0.8	0.0	0	95	48
5 England SE & Central S	13.8	-2.5	-1.1	-0.4	-0.8	-0.2	-1	132	61
6 Scotland W	13.0	-8.5	-0.8	+0.1	-0.4	+0.4	-3	74	66
7 England NW & Wales N	12.7	-3.3	-1.2	+0.1	-0.5	+0.1	-3	66	57
8 England SW & Wales S	15.0	-2.7	-1.0	-0.7	-1.0	-0.2	-4	63	80
N Ireland	13.2	-5.4	-1.1	-0.7	-0.9	+0.3	0	98	70
Scotland	13.5	-9.4	-1.0	0.0	-0.5	+0.4	-1	104	67
England & Wales	15.0	-5.2	-1.3	-0.1	-0.7	0.0	-1	92	57

*Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations