

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

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Dull and wet, but mostly sunny and dry in north-east.

A small depression moved south-eastwards past south-west England during the night of the 1st/2nd and a ridge of high pressure followed across all districts. On the 3rd a deep depression came south-eastwards from west of Scotland into the North Sea, the associated frontal system crossing areas to the south-west of its track. For much of the next three weeks pressure was low to the west and south-west while at times depressions, some of them deep, moved northwards near the west of the British Isles with their fronts crossing all areas. However, a shallow depression drifted from Germany to northern France on the 11th and 12th before moving across the south-west of Britain to Northern Ireland on the 13th.

On the 25th a depression moved north-eastwards over South Wales and the Midlands and for the next three days a complex, but flat area of low pressure covered the United Kingdom. Further fronts moved north-eastwards across all parts during the last three days of the month but pressure had started to rise and a small anticyclone was centred over the English Channel late on the 31st.

Weather

Unsettled, occasionally windy weather with showers or longer periods of rain persisted throughout the month in most areas. In the north of Scotland, however, it was dry and sunny for much of the time. The first five days were cool generally with night frost and wintry showers, mainly over northern districts; otherwise it was on the warm side, especially in the north. Thunderstorms, occasionally with hail, were frequent particularly in East Anglia and south-east England while during the second half of the month they occurred widely on several occasions. Lightning set fire to a yacht (the crew of two were rescued) to the south of the Eddystone Lighthouse on the 20th and killed a climber on Snowdon on the 26th and a golfer at Prestwick (Strathclyde) on the 27th.

Wind

Until the 24th winds were fresh at times and occasionally strong or gale force, particularly over exposed southern and western areas on the 3rd, 5th and from the 16th to the 19th. Gales were severe locally along the coasts of south-east England on the 3rd and south-west England on the 18th when gusts of 57 kn and 59 kn were recorded respectively at Shoreham-by-Sea (West Sussex) and Scilly, St Mary's. On the 3rd a large wave swept a youth to his death at Maryport (Cumbria) and two people were drowned when their yacht capsized in the Solent. During the last week of the month winds were lighter generally. Winds were from a northerly point for the first four days. Thereafter they were mainly southerly, although from the 9th to the 11th they were generally north-easterly and between the 25th and 28th rather variable with sea-breezes developing daily in many coastal areas.

Temperature

Mean temperatures for the month were within 1 °C of average almost everywhere. Over Wales except the extreme north, the southern half of England except parts of the Midlands, East Anglia and south-east England and over the Channel Islands they were below normal. In all other areas they were near or above average, being 1.0 to 1.6 °C above in parts of northern Scotland. Apart from over Scotland average maxima were generally below normal while average minima were above.

The first five days of the month were cool and most areas, except the extreme south, had some night frost. Frost was severe at a few places in Scotland early on the 5th when the temperature fell to -7.7 °C at Kinbrace (Highland Region). It became warmer generally on the 6th; during the rest of the month most parts, particularly the north, had some warm days, although southern districts were again rather cool during the fourth week. Several places in the north-west were very warm between the 11th and 13th, the temperature rising to 25.5 °C at Achnasshellach (Highland Region) on the 12th.

Rainfall

Rainfall was above average except over much of northern Scotland, parts of southern Scotland and North Wales and at a few places in the north and east of England where it was below average. Most parts of the Channel Islands and some parts of Northern Ireland, North Yorkshire, East Anglia and the south of England had more than twice the average while parts of northern Scotland had less than 50 per cent of average.

All areas had showers or longer periods of rain which were heavy and thundery at times, although amounts were often small over the north of Scotland. Except in parts of north and east Scotland and north-east England rainfall occurred more frequently than usual with at least 27 'rain days' (daily totals of 0.2 mm or more) being reported at some places in Northern Ireland, South Wales, south-west England and the Channel Islands. On the 13th rainfall was particularly heavy over Northern Ireland where at Derrynoyd Forrest (Co. Londonderry) 56.2 mm fell in 10¼ hours from 1700 GMT while on the 27th violent thunderstorms with hail over western Glasgow caused severe flooding and gave 60.4 mm at Abbot-sinch. Throughout the month cricket was badly hit by the rain and wet grounds while on the 23rd the Three-day Event at Windsor, racing at Fontwell (West Sussex) and Sandown Park (Surrey) were all cancelled because of waterlogged courses.

Snow

Sleet and snow, mostly in the form of showers, fell in parts of northern Britain on each of the first six days of the month whilst on the 2nd and 3rd it was reported in a few places as far south as Dartmoor. The last report of drifts remaining from the snowfall of late April was over the Brecon Beacons on the 11th and by the end of the month snow remained only on the highest peaks of northern Scotland.

Sunshine

Total sunshine for the month was below average in all districts except eastern parts of Britain from the Highland Region of Scotland to northern Humberside. Values ranged from over 120 per cent of average on the east coast of the Grampian Region to less than 80 per cent over Shetland, the Isle of Man, much of Northern Ireland, Wales, central and southern England and at a few places in the south of Scotland. The Channel Islands and some places in the Midlands and the south of England were particularly dull with less than 60 per cent of average sunshine. Central London had its dullest May since 1932 with only 117.5 hours of sunshine being recorded at the London Weather Centre.

Due to the unsettled nature of the weather southern and western parts of the United Kingdom had few sunny days. However, most northern and eastern areas of Britain were often sunny during the first five days of the month and from the 11th to the 19th.

Fog

Overnight fog patches formed on a number of occasions but cleared quickly after sunrise. Hill and coastal fog occurred at times, particularly in south-western and north-eastern districts, being rather persistent over Shetland on several occasions.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

None reported.

Table 1 District values

District	air temperature °C					mean 30-cm soil temp °C	rain-days	rainfall	sunshine
	Highest Max*	Lowest Min*	max.	min.	mean				
	difference from average					% of average			
0 Scotland N	25.5	-2.6	+1.0	+0.6	+0.8	+0.5	+1	69	91
1 Scotland E	22.6	-7.1	+0.9	+0.7	+0.8	+1.0	+1	84	108
2 England E & NE	23.1	-4.9	+0.3	+0.7	+0.6	+0.6	+5	105	94
3 East Anglia	23.1	-1.4	-0.3	+0.5	+0.1	-0.3	+8	149	73
4 Midland Counties	22.1	-1.4	-0.5	+0.5	0.0	-0.2	+7	132	66
5 England SE & Central S	23.1	-1.3	-0.9	+0.8	-0.1	-0.3	+8	162	67
6 Scotland W	24.6	-6.1	+0.6	+0.5	+0.6	+0.5	+6	117	85
7 England NW & Wales N	24.1	-3.3	-0.4	+0.6	+0.1	-0.2	+7	110	78
8 England SW & Wales S	21.2	-0.5	-1.1	+0.2	-0.5	-0.6	+9	154	62
N Ireland	23.2	-1.8	-0.3	+0.5	+0.1	+0.2	+8	189	72
Scotland	25.5	-7.1	+0.8	+0.6	+0.7	+0.7	+3	90	95
England & Wales	24.1	-4.9	-0.5	+0.5	0.0	-0.2	+7	135	73

*Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations