

Changeable; wet during the third week.

Pressure was relatively high from the 1st to 10th and during the last 3 days. After the 13th a depression developed and remained to dominate the weather over the British Isles until the 20th.

Weather

The weather was changeable in all areas and mostly colder than average especially in England and Wales during the first week when snow fell over most areas as far south as the Channel Isles. Heavy prolonged rain fell over much of the country during the third week and there were Press reports of swollen rivers and minor flooding in many areas. At the end of the third week there were reports of snowdrifts some 2 metres deep on high ground on the England/Scotland Border and a drift of 3 metres was reported on Snaefell (Isle of Man).

Wind

In almost all areas there were fewer gales than average. They occurred most frequently in north Scotland and north-east England. During the first 4 days there were strong winds in the north and west of the country. North-east Scotland had strong winds on the 9th and 10th. A gust of 58 kt was recorded at Kirkwall (Orkney) on the 10th and at about the same time a gust of 56 kt was recorded at Dounreay (Caithness) during an hour (09-10 GMT) when the mean wind speed was 40 kt. Strong winds occurred over most of the country between the 18th and 21st with widespread gales in the north and west. Hunterston (Ayrshire) recorded a gust of 63 kt on the 18th, St Abbs Head (Berwickshire) had a gust of 67 kt on the 20th and a gust of 68 kt was reported at Whitby (North Riding of Yorkshire) on the 21st. Winds were strong to gale force in many areas on the 25th, and again in north-west Scotland on the 28th.

Temperature

Monthly mean temperatures were near average in the north but below average elsewhere. It was mild during the first week in Scotland and Northern Ireland. On the 5th the temperature reached 15.0°C at Rothesay (Buteshire), the highest recorded there in March since 1957 although it was equalled in 1965. In England and Wales, however, the first week was cold; at Santon Downham (Norfolk) a temperature of -11.7°C was recorded on the 5th, the lowest March temperature there since 1962. From the 8th to 12th it was mild everywhere except in extreme northern and western areas; the temperature reached 16.4°C at Wrexham (Denbighshire) on the 12th. Between the 18th and 20th, whilst the north and west were cold,

eastern and southern England were mild. The 24th was mild in all areas and the temperature rose to 15.6°C at Stonehaven (Kincardineshire).

Rainfall

Over most parts of the country the rainfall was above average. Excesses were mostly small but in the Isle of Man and in small areas of east Scotland and north-east England more than twice the average rain fell. Forglen House (Banffshire), with 102 mm of rain, had its wettest March since records began in 1901, and at West Baldwin (Isle of Man) a total of 286 mm was recorded, the highest for March since records began in 1899. In contrast, rainfall was below average over much of Northern Ireland, in central Wales and parts of north-west England. Parts of Co. Down and Perthshire had less than half the average. There were heavy falls on the 1st in many western areas and further heavy 'daily' falls of over 25 mm occurred in most areas in the second half of the month, but most places in southern and northern England and southern and eastern Scotland recorded their greatest 'daily' falls between the 17th and 20th. At West Hopes reservoir (East Lothian) 112.5 mm fell in the 24 hours beginning at 09 GMT on the 19th. At West Baldwin (Isle of Man) during the 4-day period from 09 GMT on the 17th there was a total of 209 mm. Thunderstorms occurred over the Hebrides on the 13th and in the Midlands and Yorkshire on the 20th. They occurred widely over Scotland on the 24th and by the 25th had spread to many parts of England.

Snow

The number of days when snow fell was a little above average. In Scotland there was snow on just over half the days of the month but over England most of the snow fell during the first week except on the higher parts of the north Pennines where snow fell on most days. Snow occurred widely over England, Wales and much of Scotland on the 1st and over the southern half of England on the 5th. Depths of 5-10 cm were measured on each occasion in several places. Snow was widespread in southern England on the 15th but quickly turned to rain. From the 18th to 20th there was heavy snowfall over high ground in the Isle of Man and on the England/Scotland Border.

Sunshine

Sunshine was below average everywhere except in a few areas in southern England and central Scotland but, even in these areas, excesses were not more than 10 per cent. The largest deficits were in Wales and north-west England where several places had between 60 and 70 per cent of average.

Fog

There was overnight fog in most parts of the country at some time during the month, mostly between the 4th and 17th and, in parts of central and southern England, on a few days in the last week.

Miscellaneous phenomena

The aurora was seen by observers in Scotland on 9 nights.

Table 1 District Values**March 1971**

District	air temperature °C					mean 30 cm earth temp °C	rain days	rain- fall	sun- shine
	High	Lowest	max.	min.	mean				
	Max. *	Min. *	difference from average						
0 Scotland N	12.2	-3.8	+0.4	-0.4	0.0	--	+3	119	90
1 Scotland E	14.2	-3.4	0.0	+0.2	+0.1	+0.5	+1	124	80
2 England N E	13.1	-5.0	-0.7	-0.2	-0.4	+0.6	+4	122	91
3 England E	13.6	-5.3	-1.3	-0.1	-0.7	+0.1	+5	113	86
4 Midlands	13.0	-6.2	-1.3	+0.1	-0.6	+0.2	+2	113	90
5 England S E	13.3	-8.5	-1.5	-0.5	-1.0	-0.4	+1	138	91
6 Scotland W	15.0	-7.5	0.0	-0.1	-0.1	+0.5	+2	89	87
7 Eng NW · Wales N	12.6	-4.9	-1.1	-0.1	-0.6	+0.1	+2	112	72
8 Eng SW · Wales S	13.8	-7.9	-1.3	-0.8	-1.0	-0.3	-1	110	85
N Ireland	14.4	-5.4	-0.3	-0.7	-0.5	--	-1	78	80
Scotland	15.0	-7.5	+0.1	+0.2	0.0	--	+2	110	86
Eng · Wales	13.8	-8.5	-1.2	-0.3	-0.7	--	+2	117	86

*Highest max. and lowest min. of the District Value Stations.