

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

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

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APRIL, 1926: MILD AND DULL, EXCEPT IN IRELAND. WET IN EASTERN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND.

General.—The outstanding features of the weather of April were the two short spells of fine warm weather, one at the beginning of the month and one around about the 12th, and the wetness of the eastern districts of England.

During the first few days of the month the British Isles lay between an anticyclone over the continent and an Atlantic depression: light southerly winds prevailed and temperature rose to 70°F. and over in many places (*see* Temperature Section). A secondary depression moving north-east from the Bay of Biscay caused heavy local rain and thunderstorms on the 3rd and 4th, 47mm. (1·85 in.) being measured at Guernsey on the 3rd and 38mm. (1·49 in.) at Kelvedon (Essex) on the 4th. Subsequently temperature fell gradually but on the whole remained above the average until the middle of the month. Further secondary depressions caused a moderate amount of rain in southern England on the 7th and 8th. On the 9th an anticyclone moved slowly eastwards across the British Isles and during the next few days quiet sunny weather with local ground frosts at night prevailed. The approach of a depression from the Atlantic caused a renewal of unsettled weather about the 14th. Much rain fell, 130mm. (5·13 in.) being measured at Snowdon (Carnarvon) and 64mm. (2·50 in.) at Dungeon Ghyll (Westmorland) on the 14th. Pressure soon became low to the north and east of the British Isles giving more northerly winds and changeable showery weather with local thunderstorms and hail. On the 25th a depression over France caused high winds and gales in and near the southern part of the North Sea and considerable rain in eastern England and Scotland on the 25th and 26th. From then until the end of the month the weather continued unsettled and rainy with sunny intervals but a low temperature.

The general character of the month is illustrated by the following remarks taken from observers' notes:—Southport—A very warm and rather dry but dull and equable month. Mean minimum temperature especially high. Unusual excesses of night (and early morning) over afternoon rainfall and of afternoon over forenoon sunshine. Worksop (Notts.)—The dullest April in my records except 1920 and the warmest except April, 1914. Copdock (Suffolk)—Mild, wet and gloomy. The mean temperature for the month, 48·9°F. is higher than in any other April, except April, 1904 when the mean temperature was 49·5°F. Berkhamsted—A warm and wet month. The warmest April since 1914. The number of thunderstorms was above normal. Cheltenham—A quiet month with little wind. Total rainfall has been exceeded only three times since 1867. Dublin—A spell of beautiful weather during the opening days of the month. A change came on the 7th, the remainder of the month more closely resembling a typical April of showers by day, clear skies and low temperatures by night. The closing days of the month were remarkable for a dense cloud canopy and gloom as well as much haze and fog.

Pressure and Winds.—The mean pressure was everywhere below normal. The deviations of monthly means of pressure at fixed hours varied from -3·4mb. at Cahireiveen to -1·2mb. at Lerwick. Up to about the 19th winds were generally between south-east and west; thence onwards they were mainly from the north-east quadrant. Wind force was as a rule moderate and gales were infrequent. High winds occurred locally between the 5th and the 10th, about the 15th, between the 18th and 21st and on the 25th. The tracks of most of the depressions affecting our weather lay across the south of the British Isles and over the North Sea.

Temperature.—Unusually high temperatures occurred during the first week of the month, maximum temperatures of 70°F. and above being recorded at several stations, especially in the central and eastern districts of England. At Richmond (Kew Observatory) the maximum temperature on the 2nd, 72°F. is the highest temperature recorded there since 1871 for the first fifteen days of the month of April, at Geldeston the maximum temperature on the 4th, 76°F. is the highest on record there for April, while the maximum temperature at Norwich on the 4th, viz., 74·5°F. is the highest temperature recorded at that station so early in the year since April 4th, 1892, when the maximum temperature was 75°F. In all Districts the mean temperature for the week ending April 10th was well above normal, the excess in England E. amounting to as much as 7·9°F. Low screen minima with ground frosts at night were recorded in many places from the 8th to the 13th. A screen minimum of 25°F. was recorded at West Linton (Peebles) on the 12th and a grass minimum of 15°F. at Rounton (Yorkshire, N. Riding) on the same date. During a period of northerly winds between the 20th and the 25th

lower day temperatures were recorded generally; during this period the thermometer did not rise above 53°F. at Richmond (Kew Observatory). Screen minima of 32°F. and below were recorded at a few places while ground frosts occurred locally. At Rhayader a grass minimum temperature of 17°F. was recorded on the morning of the 24th.

For the third consecutive month the mean temperature for the month was above normal in all Districts, the greatest excess 3·5°F. occurring in Scotland N. and England E. (Mean temperatures 46·4°F. and 49·1°F.) and the least excess 1·4°F. in the Channel Isles (Mean temperature 50·1°F.). In Scotland the mean temperature of the month was the highest recorded in April since 1914.

The extreme temperatures for the month were:—(England and Wales) 76°F. at Geldeston on the 4th, 21°F. at Houghall on the 12th. (Scotland) 70°F. at Logie Coldstone on the 5th, 23°F. at Wolfelee on the 12th. (Ireland) 67°F. at Killarney on the 27th, 26°F. at Markree on the 27th.

Precipitation.—An outstanding feature of the month's precipitation was the wetness of the midland, eastern and southern counties of England and the eastern counties of Scotland. In the eastern and south-eastern counties of England, precipitation exceeded generally twice the normal and in the Chelmsford and Shoeburyness districts (Essex) more than three and half times the normal. In the south-western districts of England, precipitation was about normal. In Wales and over most of the northern districts of England there was a decided deficiency, little rain falling during the first half of the month. In the Runcorn district (near Liverpool) and in the Thirsk district (Yorkshire, N. Riding) the month's total amounted to less than half the normal. At Meltham (Yorkshire, W. Riding) no measurable rain fell during the first 13 days of the month.

In Scotland aggregates were in general appreciably above the normal in eastern districts, but deficient in the western and southern districts. From the 1st to the 13th the only rains of importance occurred on the 3rd and the 8th. On the 14th heavy rains spread from the west and considerable areas had more than 25mm. on that day. At some places, fully half the month's rainfall was accounted for on the 14th and 15th. In western districts there was a speedy improvement; towards the south-west there were only one or two trifling falls during the last two weeks of the month. In the eastern districts, on the other hand, many places had rain on every day from 14th onwards though frequently the falls were very small.

In Ireland precipitation was below normal except in the western districts where there was a moderate excess.

The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the normal 1881–1915 was 118; the values for the several countries were:—England and Wales 134, Scotland 108, Ireland 88.

There were frequent thunderstorms, accompanied by hail in many instances, during the month; they occurred generally on the 4th, 7th and between the 17th and 22nd. In Scotland sleet occurred around the 16th and snow at high levels on the 23rd and 24th.

Sunshine.—The mean daily duration of sunshine was below normal in all districts except in Ireland and Scilly. The greatest deficiency 1·87 hrs. occurred in England E. (mean daily duration of sunshine 3·68 hrs.). Although sunshine totals were deficient in most places there were many bright intervals. The sunniest period generally was the 8th to the 13th when records between 10 hrs. and 13 hrs. were obtained at several stations. Thus 12·1 hrs. were recorded at Lerwick on the 8th, 12·6 hrs. at Aberystwyth and Bude on the 12th and 12·9 hrs. at Aspatria and 12·7 hrs. at Jersey on the 13th. From the 25th to the 28th little sunshine was recorded in the eastern and central districts of Great Britain. During the week ending on May 1st less than five hours sunshine were recorded at most places in the Midland Counties. At Copdock (Suffolk) no sunshine was recorded on five consecutive days, viz., from the 24th to the 28th inclusive, the longest period without sunshine on record at this place.

Fog.—Fog occurred locally during the first week, on the 13th and 14th and from the 27th to the 29th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—Solar and lunar halos were observed at several stations on various dates. Aurora was seen at Aberdeen on the 7th and at Dublin on the 8th. Auroral glows were observed in Shetland on every night from the 8th to the 13th and on the 15th and 16th. The Zodiacal Light was seen at Ross-on-Wye and Stonyhurst on the 4th and at Oxford on the 4th, 5th and 9th. A parhelion was observed at London (Greenwich) on the 20th. Intense gloom occurred in London from 10h. to 11h. on the 28th.