

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

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Wet in western Scotland, dry and mild in the southern and eastern areas

A northerly airstream covered the British Isles on the 1st, but during the next five days an intense Atlantic anticyclone moved eastwards over France to affect much of England and Wales and south-east Scotland. The pressure of 1047.9 mb recorded in the Isles of Scilly on the 3rd was the highest March pressure recorded in the United Kingdom this century. A series of fronts moved southwards across Scotland and northern England on the 3rd, while further fronts oscillated over Scotland during the next two days. Pressure remained high over south-eastern areas on the 7th and 8th. A trailing cold front moved south-eastwards across much of Scotland and northern England on the 7th, clearing south-eastwards across England and Wales overnight on the 8th/9th. A warm front moved north-eastwards overnight on the 9th/10th, and a waving frontal system crossed north-west Scotland on the 10th. By the 12th the anticyclone was centred over southern England, but giving way to frontal troughs crossing western areas overnight on the 12th/13th. Persistent high pressure over the Continent affected much of England and Wales from the 14th to 18th; however, a slow-moving waving frontal system over central and north-western Scotland during the 14th and 15th temporarily retreated northwards on the 16th and 17th, while a wave depression ran north-eastwards, affecting central and north-western Scotland on the 18th. The cold front finally moved south-eastwards across much of the United Kingdom overnight on the 18th/19th and weakened. Early on the 19th the front lay across southern counties of England and Wales. The next Atlantic frontal system crossed much of Scotland during the 20th. A deep depression to the north of Scotland affected Scotland on the 21st and 22nd, while a cold front lingered near the south coast of England during the 21st. The next series of fronts crossed Scotland during the 23rd, the cold front moving south-eastwards across England and Wales overnight and early on the 24th. During the rest of the month the Atlantic anticyclone crossed the United Kingdom between the 27th and 30th, moving away during the 31st. Weak fronts affected most of northern and western Scotland from time to time during this period, mostly on the 27th.

Weather

The month was generally wet in western Scotland, but dry and mild in southern and eastern areas. It was very wet at times in the western Highlands but on most days only small amounts of rain reached coastal fringes to the east of the Grampians and Southern Uplands. In Northern Ireland it was mild and dry but rather dull. England and Wales had a good deal of dry weather, but with short unsettled interludes. Thunderstorms, often accompanied by hail, occurred over north-east England and East Anglia on the 1st, locally in the north-west on the 19th, and at Fair Isle, Shetland on the 22nd. On the 25th heavy showers with hail and thunder occurred in south-east England. Scattered hail showers fell in western Scotland on the 2nd, over Scotland and Northern Ireland on the 9th and there were widespread hail showers on the 24th.

Wind

It was windy during the period from the 3rd to 10th and gusts of 76 kn and 71 kn were reached at

Fair Isle and Sumburgh, Shetland on the 5th. It was generally windy again on the 11th, with gusts of 70 kn at Lerwick, Shetland and Kirkwall, Orkney. Gusts of 72 kn were measured at Foyle Bridge, Co. Londonderry and Orlock Head, Co. Down. Wind directions were mainly southerly or westerly until the 25th, then variable.

Temperature

Mean monthly temperatures were above normal everywhere in the United Kingdom, ranging from just over 1 °C above normal in Shetland to 3.5 °C above normal at Leeming, North Yorkshire.

Sheffield (Weston Park), South Yorkshire had the highest mean temperature for March since 1961. Coventry School (Bablake), Warwickshire reported the warmest March this century. Provisional values in the register of Central England Temperatures suggest that it was the warmest March since 1957. After a widespread frost on the 2nd, temperatures rose to exceed 21 °C at a number of places from East Anglia to north Devon on the 17th and 18th. The highest temperature reached during the month was 22.3 °C at Cambridge, Botanic Garden on the 18th, and the lowest was -7.9 °C at Leadhills, Borders Region on the 2nd.

Rainfall

Monthly rainfall totals were below normal everywhere except western and northern Scotland and ranged from more than four times the normal at Fort William, Highland Region to as little as 7% of normal at Worthing, West Sussex.

At Fort Augustus March 1990 was the wettest month in the 100-year record. Provisional figures suggest that, over England and Wales as a whole, it has been the driest March since 1961. Parts of Kent had as little as 2 mm of rain. Charing and Ulcombe, both in Kent, each recorded only 2.2 mm of rain over the whole month. Sheffield (Weston Park) had the lowest March rainfall total since 1973. Among heavy daily falls were 80 mm at Kinlochewe on the 3rd and 15th, 79 mm at Black Mount, Strathclyde Region and 78 mm at Onich, Highland Region on the 15th.

Snow

On the 1st winds turned more northerly and many areas had snow showers, though the Midlands and southern England escaped most of them. On the 8th northern Scotland had wintry showers. On the 9th there were a few wintry showers, mostly over Scotland. Showers were of hail or snow and accompanied by thunder in places on the 24th.

Sunshine

Monthly sunshine amounts were above average in central and eastern areas but below average in western coastal areas from Scilly to Orkney, ranging from more than 150% of average in the east Midlands to less than half the average at Benbecula, Western Isles.

Sheffield (Weston Park) had the highest March sunshine total since 1978. Coventry School (Bablake) reported the sunniest March since 1967. Most sunshine during the month was 191.3 hours at Herne Bay, Kent and the highest daily sunshine amount was 11.7 hours at Terrington St. Clement, Norfolk on the 31st.

Fog

Patchy overnight fog formed over parts of southern England and South Wales on the 12th and 13th. Overnight fog patches formed over central and southern England on the 20th with some thick fog in the south-east by morning, and again over England and Wales on the 30th, with further patchy fog over Wales and central and southern England on the 31st, clearing early in the morning. Coastal fog occurred on southern coasts and coasts in south-west England and South Wales on the 9th and 10th, 16th, between the 18th and 21st and on the 29th. Hill fog occurred over the South Downs on the 16th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

There were reports of deposits of coloured dust on the 19th at Llanymawddy, North Wales, Northwood, Greater London and Woodley, Berkshire.

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	16.1	-3.7	+1.6	+1.9	+1.7	+1.2	+7	324	69
1 Scotland E	18.6	-4.4	+2.8	+3.0	+2.9	+2.1	-2	126	117
2 England E & NE	21.0	-4.8	+3.5	+2.9	+3.2	+2.3	-6	41	132
3 East Anglia	21.9	-3.7	+3.5	+2.4	+2.9	+2.4	-8	36	141
4 Midland Counties	21.7	-6.6	+3.3	+2.5	+2.9	+2.5	-7	31	139
5 England SE & Central S	22.0	-2.2	+3.0	+2.5	+2.7	+2.4	-9	15	131
6 Scotland W	15.9	-6.2	+1.7	+2.8	+2.3	+1.9	+6	211	78
7 England NW & Wales N	20.2	-3.0	+2.3	+3.0	+2.6	+2.4	-3	53	91
8 England SW & Wales S	19.5	-4.7	+2.2	+2.7	+2.3	+2.4	-4	31	102
N Ireland	16.4	-2.3	+2.1	+3.1	+2.6	+1.6	+3	85	79
Scotland	18.6	-6.2	+2.0	+2.6	+2.3	+1.7	+4	249	88
England & Wales	22.0	-6.6	+3.0	+2.7	+2.8	+2.4	-6	36	123

* Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations