

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

Summary of observations compiled from returns of official stations and voluntary observers

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April 1966 — Dull and wet with snow at times

Weather was mainly cyclonic in character except during the last week of the month when ridges of high pressure moving eastward across the country gave short fine periods.

In Scotland the first four days were sunny but cold with northerly winds; further south, however, a shallow depression moving from south-west Ireland to the southern North Sea on the 1st and 2nd brought more than a foot of level snow to parts of north-west England and North Wales with drifts up to 5ft. deep. The 3rd and 4th were mainly dry, very cold and generally sunny as a ridge of high pressure moved eastwards across the country behind the depression, although rain persisted in parts of eastern England for much of the 3rd and further rain from the Atlantic reached western districts on the 4th.

About a week of mild rather wet weather followed as a series of troughs and depressions crossed southern and central England from the south-west. After two fairly wet days on the 5th and 7th, Good Friday, 8th, was mainly dry in south-east England though there was considerable rain in the west and more than an inch of rain was widely recorded on Easter Saturday. Easter Day, however, was sunny and warm over much of southern England though there were scattered thunderstorms. In Scotland weather remained cold, high pressure to the north of the country maintaining easterly winds throughout the week.

Temperature fell sharply on the 11th as the high pressure spread southwards and easterly winds became established over most of the country heralding about 10 days of wintry weather: in parts of the Midlands maximum day temperatures were about 10°C lower than the previous day. The easterly airstream brought scattered snow showers to eastern England on the 12th and 13th, but on the 14th troughs associated with a deep depression approaching from the Atlantic brought rain to the south-west and snow to most of the southern half of the country. The snow continued in most places for about 48 hours, covering the ground to a depth of 4-6 inches, but moved slowly northwards giving place to rain as temperatures, which had been near freezing point in many southern districts, slowly increased. Except for high level stations most of the snow had cleared by the 17th. Occasional light rain in southern England on the 17th became continuous and heavy at times during the night and continued with little break for about 72 hours as small depressions moved eastwards from south-west England to the Low Countries.

The cold spell finally came to an end on the 21st as a ridge of high pressure moved eastwards across the country. Winds, which had backed to the north-west the previous day, became light and variable for a time and then freshened from the south ahead of troughs of low pressure approaching the British Isles from the Atlantic. The day was generally sunny but more than an inch of rain fell in many places that night and also during the next day, but the 23rd was showery with good sunny periods and scattered thunderstorms in a south-westerly airstream.

The last week of the month was mainly dry and sunny, and it was very warm during the last three days. The generally showery weather continued on the 24th, but the next day was dry, sunny and warm as a ridge of high pressure moved eastward across the country. A belt of rain on the night of the 26th/27th following the ridge was associated with a deep depression moving northward to the west of the British Isles. On the 27th an anticyclone in our South-West Approaches increased rapidly in intensity behind the depression; it moved slowly north-eastwards across southern England during the last three days of the month. Very warm air from low latitudes moving round the anticyclone raised temperatures in parts of southern England to 22°C during the afternoon of the 30th.

Pressure and Wind—Mean pressure was everywhere below the average except in the Orkneys and Shetlands the deviation at 9hr. ranging from +1.5 mb. at Lerwick to -9.0 mb. at Scilly. Surface winds were north-westerly at first, mainly easterly from the 5th until the 19th, north-westerly on the 20th and then mostly between west and south-west during the remainder of the month. Wind reached gale force on

the 2nd, 4th, 5th, 11th, 13th-18th, 20th, 27th and 29th. Gales were widespread in Scotland on the 27th and 29th, and in England and Wales on the 14th. Gusts of 64 and 62 kt were recorded at Lowther Hill and Great Dunn Fell respectively on the 27th and of 57 kt at the Lizard on the 14th.

Temperature—Temperatures were well below the average especially during the day in the north-east part of the country—in Scotland it was the coldest April since 1922. As during January and February the coldest period was during the middle of the month and temperatures during the last few days of the month were well above the average.

Extremes included:—(England and Wales) 23.3°C at Stonyhurst on the 30th, -8.0°C at Great Dun Fell on the 14th; (Scotland) 22.5°C at Huntly on the 30th, -11.7°C at Cairngorm on the 14th; (Northern Ireland) 20.6°C at Ballykelly on the 30th, -6.1°C at Loughermore Forest on the 3rd.

Rainfall—In Scotland rainfall was less than 25 per cent of the average in parts of Sutherland and Caithness but more than twice the average around the Firth of Tay and locally in Berwick. In England and Wales and Northern Ireland it was above the average nearly everywhere except locally in Londonderry, Cumberland, Cardiganshire and Cambridgeshire; it was more than twice the average in north-east coastal areas of England, along the south coasts of England and Wales west of Brighton, over the whole of south-west England, around the Wirral, over the southern Pennines and in the London area.

Snow and sleet showers were reported in Scotland on the 1st and during the third week and ground was snow-covered over a wide area around the middle of the month. In England and Wales snow was reported at one place or another on the 1st-5th and 13th-20th (13 days); it was widespread on the 14th and 15th and lay to a depth of 3-6 inches in parts of southern England on both days.

Thunderstorms were fairly widespread in east and south Scotland on the 20th and 24th; in England and Wales they were widespread on the 10th in the south and Midlands and on the 23rd in the north-east.

Sunshine—It was a dull month except in the Northern Isles where Kirkwall had nearly three times its average sunshine and Lerwick its sunniest April since records began there in 1922. In England and Wales sunshine was mostly between 50 and 70 per cent of the average and ranged from 46 per cent at Cannington to 82 per cent at Scilly. Southampton had its dullest April this century.

Fog—Fog was observed at one place or another on the 2nd, 6th-20th, 22nd, 23rd, 27th and 29th (20 days); it was widespread on the 8th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena—The aurora was visible in Scotland on 5 nights.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES, APRIL, 1966

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE					EARTH TEMP.		RAIN DAYS	RAIN-FALL	SUNSHINE
	*Highest Max.	*Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 1 ft.	Mean 4 ft.			
	Difference from Average					% of Average				
0 SCOTLAND, N.	16.5	-4.3	-1.7	-1.5	-1.6	-	-	-7	44	118
1 SCOTLAND, E.	19.4	-6.7	-3.0	-1.5	-2.3	-1.6	-1.1	-1	127	80
2 ENGLAND, N.E.	21.1	-1.7	-3.3	-0.6	-2.0	-1.5	-0.9	+6	190	59
3 ENGLAND, E.	21.1	-1.7	-1.6	+0.3	-0.7	-0.7	-0.5	+5	133	58
4 MIDLANDS	21.7	-1.4	-2.8	-0.3	-1.6	-1.1	-0.5	+7	182	57
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	21.1	-1.1	-1.1	+0.7	-0.2	-0.3	-0.1	+7	177	56
6 SCOTLAND, W.	17.5	-4.1	-3.0	-1.1	-2.1	-1.3	-0.6	-1	97	75
7 ENGLAND, N.W. and N. Wales	23.3	-3.9	-2.4	-0.6	-1.5	-1.7	-0.8	+1	155	69
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S. Wales	21.1	-2.2	-1.6	+0.3	-0.6	-0.2	-0.3	+5	198	57
N. IRELAND	20.6	-4.8	-2.4	-0.6	-1.5	-	-	0	139	61
SCOTLAND	19.4	-6.7	-2.6	-1.4	-2.0	-	-	-3	81	91
ENG. and WALES	23.3	-3.9	-2.1	0.0	-1.1	-	-	+5	174	59

*Highest Max. and Lowest Min. of the District Value Stations.