

Monthly Weather Report

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April, 1948—A warm and generally sunny month.

The weather of the month was warm and sunny on the whole. The general rainfall over Great Britain was not very different from the average, though the percentage of the average varied considerably in different parts of the country. Thunderstorms occurred frequently in the unsettled spells, particularly from the 17th–22nd.

During the opening days a very deep and complex depression over north-west Scotland moved slowly north-north-east and became somewhat less deep. Strong winds and gales prevailed over the British Isles and moderately heavy rain was reported locally. On the 2nd an associated secondary depression moved rapidly north-east from the south-west of Ireland, on the 4th a small secondary moved across southern England and later turned north-north-east to the south of Norway and on the 5th yet another secondary moved quickly east along the English Channel. During this period occasional rain or showers occurred, while thunderstorms were reported locally but there were also long, sunny spells. A gale was reported locally on the 3rd and 4th. On the 7th and 8th a vigorous Atlantic depression moved rapidly eastward off the north of Scotland causing widespread strong winds and gales in the British Isles; considerable rain fell in the north and west on the 7th, while thunderstorms were widely reported in the southern half of the country on the 8th. A ridge of high pressure moving east was associated with a fair day generally on the 9th.

Subsequently a belt of high pressure extended from the Azores across England and Wales to Germany or the southern Baltic and maintained fair weather until the 16th, apart from slight rain in the north and west.

On the 16th a shallow low over the south of France moved slowly north and then west and some rain fell in the southern districts of England and Wales. Subsequently a spell of warm, thundery conditions persisted until the 22nd.

Thereafter the Azores anticyclone spread north and anticyclonic conditions were re-established over the British Isles, maintaining fair, sunny weather until the 26th, when some rain fell in the north of Scotland due to a weak trough of low pressure moving east between Scotland and Iceland.

On the 27th a trough of low pressure moved south over Scotland causing heavy rain in north and west Scotland and north-west Ireland. During the closing days of the month shallow depressions moved south-east across the British Isles; temperature fell considerably and showers and local thunderstorms occurred, particularly in England and Wales, on the 29th and 30th.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure was somewhat below the average, the deficiency at 9h. ranging from 3.3 mb. at Lerwick to 0.4 mb. at Lympne and Scilly. The range of pressure during the month was exceptional for the British Isles in April; pressure fell to 953 mb. in the Hebrides at 3h. on the 1st and rose to 1043 mb. over Ireland on the 26th, a range of 90 mb. Gales occurred locally on the 1st–4th, 7th–9th, 23rd and 28th. Among the highest speeds registered in gusts were 74 m.p.h. at Bell Rock, 73 m.p.h. at Scilly and 72 m.p.h. at Southport on the 1st, 78 m.p.h. at St. Ann's Head on the 2nd and 75 m.p.h. at Bidston on the 8th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature exceeded the average by 2.5°F. in England and Wales, 2.3°F. in Scotland and 2.9°F. in Northern Ireland. In England and Wales this was the thirteenth successive month with a mean temperature above the average for 1906–35. So long a series of consecutive mild months has not occurred since comparable statistics are available, that is since 1901, the next longest being 11 months, namely February to December, 1945. It was relatively cold at the beginning and end of the month and low

minimum temperatures were recorded locally also from the 10th–12th. The warmest week was that ending on the 24th; the night of the 21st–22nd was exceptionally warm, the minimum at Southport, 54°F., being the highest in that locality in April since 1874.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 74°F. in London (Camden Square) on the 19th and at Mildenhall, Wye and Hankham on the 21st, 19°F. at Santon Downham on the 10th; (Scotland) 68°F. at Prestwick Airfield on the 21st and Stonehaven on the 26th, 19°F. at Glenlivet on the 30th; (Northern Ireland) 67°F. at Armagh on the 26th, 30°F. at Aldergrove on the 5th, Ballykelly on the 11th and Ballykelly, Garvagh and Aldergrove on the 30th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915 was 96 over England and Wales, 115 over Scotland and 90 over Northern Ireland.

In Scotland less than the average occurred in east and south-west coastal districts and more than the average elsewhere; more than 150 per cent. of the average occurred in an area stretching southward to the Caledonian Canal from a line extending roughly from the Kyle of Lochalsh to the Moray Firth and in another area over the Southern Uplands. In England and Wales percentages of the average showed considerable variability, partly due to heavier local falls during thunderstorms. Broadly speaking less than the average occurred in most of the south-east and north-west districts and along the greater part of the east coast from the Tweed to Suffolk. On the other hand over most of an inland area stretching south-south-east from the Scottish border to Essex, in the neighbourhood of the Humber and over much of south-west England and south Wales rainfall exceeded the average. In Northern Ireland also percentages of the average were variable; more than the average occurred around Londonderry and Armagh, while less than 75 per cent. of the average was received over part of Antrim and the north-east of County Down as well as at Newtownbutler, County Fermanagh.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hours were:—

- 1st 1.31 in. at Glenbranter (Argyllshire).
- 19th 1.30 in. at Parkend (Gloucestershire).
- 27th 1.91 in. at Loch Monar (Ross-shire), 1.88 in. at Achna-shellach (Ross-shire) and 1.37 in. at Inverness.
- 29th 1.67 in. at Cleethorpes.

Thunderstorms occurred fairly frequently, mainly on the 1st–4th, 8th, 17th, 19th–22nd and 29th–30th. At Aldershot two people were killed by lightning during a thunderstorm on the 19th.

Snow or sleet fell at times during the first eight and last three days. On the 30th snow lay to a depth of 3 in. at Bellingham, Northumberland.

Sunshine.—The duration of bright sunshine expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1906–1935 was 127 in England and Wales, 107 in Scotland and 112 in Northern Ireland. The excess was general except locally in western districts of Scotland. In the south-east the excess was noteworthy; for example, at Sprowston, Norfolk, and at Croydon it was the sunniest April since records began in 1926 and 1922 respectively, while at Hampstead it was the sunniest April since 1914 and at Worthing since 1921.

Fog.—Fog occurred chiefly at night or early morning, mainly on the 6th–7th, 10th and 12th–29th. It was most widespread on the 18th, 19th, 21st and 22nd.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed from stations in Scotland on 12 nights; the display on the 3rd was seen as far south as Prestwick. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on 13 days.