

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

OCTOBER 1981

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Cold with heavy rain at times, but often sunny in east.

On the 1st a deepening depression moved north-eastwards into the United Kingdom. During the following two days it became complex, with centres over the Irish Sea and the south-east of Scotland, before moving away towards Norway on the 4th. Between the 6th and the 9th four depressions and their fronts advanced north-eastwards across the British Isles, the last being particularly deep and remaining to the north-east of Shetland for a few days. Meanwhile, secondary depressions moved quickly eastwards along the English Channel on the 12th and 14/15th. A belt of high pressure then built eastwards across central districts, but a further low passed up the English Channel on the 17th.

For much of the remainder of the month pressure was low to the north-west or north while frontal systems crossed the United Kingdom about every second day, cold fronts being delayed by waves over central areas on the 19th and 24th. A filling depression came slowly southwards over the North Sea on the 21st and 22nd.

Weather

Apart from a few days around mid-month when most parts had a spell of settled weather it was very changeable and mostly windy with periods of rain or showers and, mainly over high ground in the north, some snow. The showers, thundery at times, were occasionally accompanied by hail. Nevertheless, many eastern areas were often quite sunny during the last three weeks of the month. Temperatures were generally below normal, particularly around mid-month and during the fourth week when frost was frequent in the north.

Wind

Winds were fresh or strong at times with gales or severe gales over exposed coasts and hills, especially in the north, west and south, while early in the month they reached storm force locally over northern areas. Gusts exceeded 60 kn on a number of occasions, 74 kn being recorded at Sumburgh (Shetland) on the 7th, 70 kn at Aberporth (Dyfed) on the 9th and 76 kn at the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh on the 18th. On the 9th many vehicles were damaged and several passengers injured on a ferry off the Isle of Wight; on the 19th three tugs were blown onto rocks in St Bride's Bay (Dyfed) while early on the 20th fallen trees blocked some roads and railways in the south of England. But winds were lighter generally between the 13th and 18th and the 22nd and 25th. Wind directions were mostly between south and south-westerly in the south at first and generally late in the month, but between west and north-westerly from the 10th to the 26th. However, they were mainly from a north or north-easterly direction over northern areas until the 6th and in the south for a few days around mid-month.

Temperature

This was a cold month, indeed a very cold one over Northern Ireland and parts of Scotland (including Edinburgh) where it was the coldest October so far this century although over England and Wales 1974 was colder. Mean temperatures ranged from about 3.5 °C below average over parts of Scotland and Northern Ireland to less than 2 °C below over some central and southern parts of England and in the Channel Islands.

All districts were particularly cold with frequent night-frost inland in the north between the 10th and 26th. At Kindrogan (Tayside Region) the temperature fell to -7.6 °C on the 14th while at Carnwath (Strathclyde Region) a minimum of -7.8 °C was recorded on the 26th. Temperatures were above normal on a few occasions only, notable over the southern half of Britain on the 1st and 31st and in most areas on the 8th or 9th.

Rainfall

Rainfall totals were above the monthly normal over much of the United Kingdom, more than twice the average being recorded in the Channel Islands and in parts of north and east Scotland, north-west and south-west England, Wales, Co. Londonderry, the Isle of Man and East Sussex. Lerwick (Shetland), with 247.8 mm, and Ringway (Greater Manchester), with 159.1 mm, had their wettest Octobers since records began in 1922 and 1942 respectively, the former also being the second highest for any month in the town. At a few places in central and western Scotland and in the southern half of England rainfall was slightly below average.

Periods of rain or showers, heavy at times, occurred frequently, particularly over northern and western areas. Daily totals of more than 50 mm were numerous with flooding in places over southern Scotland, the northernmost counties of England, the Isle of Man and the north-west of Wales on the 1st, Northern Ireland on the 2nd, Wales from the 7th to the 9th and in Cumbria on the 8th. Individual totals included 130.9 mm at Cornaa, near Ramsay (Isle of Man) on the 1st, 55.3 and 116.2 mm at Annalong Valley (Co. Down) on the 1st and 2nd, 97.0 mm at Palnure (Dumfries and Galloway Region) on the 2nd and 103.5, 88.5 and 61.3 mm at Pen-y-Pass in Snowdonia on the 7th, 8th and 9th. Flooding was also reported in parts of south-east England on the 3rd and 20th. Most areas, however, except the south and far north were mainly dry from the 11th to the 18th and it continued so around the Firths of Forth and Tay until the 28th.

Snow

Sleet or snow showers occurred at times throughout the month over high ground in north Scotland and also occasionally over hills as far south as Devon during the third and fourth weeks. In addition, snow fell over some low-lying areas in the north of Scotland on the 2nd, 14th and 16th. Snow covered the higher peaks in northern Scotland all month while the Perth to Braemar road was blocked at the Devil's Elbow on the 2nd.

Sunshine

Monthly sunshine totals were below average over much of Wales and south-west England, the southern half of central southern and south-east England, Channel Islands, at a few places in Bedfordshire and the north of both Northern Ireland and Scotland. Elsewhere sunshine totals were above normal. Values ranged from more than 150 per cent of average over parts of east and north-east England to 60 per cent in Jersey. Durham, with a total of 146.1 hours, had its sunniest October since 1893.

It was particularly sunny over south-eastern Scotland, north-east and east England from the 10th to the 17th or 18th while most eastern districts were sunny at times during the last week of the month. However, it was often dull in the south-west and far north until the 10th and in the extreme south around mid-month.

Fog

Overnight fog patches formed on several occasions, being rather wide-spread over the eastern half of England on the 6th and in the south on the 16th, but clearing by about mid-morning. Hill fog occurred at times throughout the month, often in association with precipitation, while some south-western coasts were also affected by fog from time to time.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

A waterspout was sighted off Beachy Head (East Sussex) on the 3rd.

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	13.1	-2.8	-3.0	-3.3	-3.2	-1.9	+7	151	113
1 Scotland E	15.3	-6.2	-3.2	-3.3	-3.2	-1.4	+2	158	123
2 England E & NE	19.6	-4.7	-2.3	-2.5	-2.4	-1.2	+5	151	149
3 East Anglia	19.6	-2.2	-2.3	-1.9	-2.1	-0.9	+7	132	116
4 Midland Counties	18.7	-3.7	-2.3	-2.0	-2.1	-0.9	+5	135	117
5 England SE & Central S	20.0	-2.4	-2.4	-1.9	-2.2	-1.1	+10	141	99
6 Scotland W	15.6	-6.2	-2.8	-3.6	-3.2	-1.6	+5	139	125
7 England NW & Wales N	17.2	-4.6	-2.5	-2.4	-2.5	-0.9	+7	183	120
8 England SW & Wales S	17.3	-1.6	-2.6	-2.0	-2.3	-1.0	+8	160	85
N Ireland	13.5	-3.3	-2.9	-3.3	-3.2	-1.2	+6	135	117
Scotland	15.6	-6.2	-3.0	-3.4	-3.2	-1.6	+5	149	120
England & Wales	20.0	-4.7	-2.4	-2.1	-2.3	-1.0	+7	150	114

*Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations