

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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Mostly sunny and dry in north, dull and wet in south

On the 1st a ridge of high pressure from the Atlantic to Scandinavia lay across the United Kingdom. A complex area of low pressure from the Bay of Biscay, across France, to West Germany was moving slowly northwards until, on the 3rd, it joined up with a depression pushing in from the Atlantic. On the 4th a weak ridge of high pressure formed across northern districts and, as the anticyclone in the Atlantic intensified, the low pressure moved away south-eastwards, leaving the whole of the United Kingdom under anticyclonic influence until, during the 10th, a shallow low tracked across the North Sea and became centred over south-west England before filling rapidly. For the next few days the whole of the British Isles was influenced by a ridge of high pressure until on the 15th a further complex depression, originating in southern Europe, moved northwards to merge with a low moving eastwards from south of Iceland. The whole of the United Kingdom was then covered by this complex low pressure area until briefly on the 18th a temporary ridge built, which was itself replaced on the 20th by a further depression which became centred over south-east England on the 22nd before moving away southwards and filling. For the rest of the month northern and western areas were influenced by the Atlantic ridge of high pressure, but until the 28th south-east England was still affected by mainly shallow lows over the Low Countries and northern France.

Weather

With high pressure dominating the weather in the north and west of the United Kingdom for most of the month it was mainly sunny and very dry in those areas. In southern and eastern England, which came under the influence of low pressure from the continent, it was cold throughout the month and very dull and wet in the last ten days. Isolated thundery outbreaks occurred during the first week, those on the 3rd affecting many western areas from southern Scotland to Devon. Central England had quite a few outbreaks on the 10th. Isolated thundestorms occurred here and there during the last ten days. However, the last three days were generally dry and sunny in England and Wales, but cloudy with a little rain in Scotland.

Wind

This was a mostly quiet month with mainly light or moderate breezes. However, strong or even gale force winds were reported here and there, notably in the northern isles of Scotland on the 6th, in parts of southern England on the 7th, parts of Scotland and north-east England on the 10th, south-east England on the 12th, most western areas, especially around the Irish Sea, on the 22nd and in Northern Ireland and northern Scotland on the 31st. The highest gust recorded during the month was 57 kn at Great Dun Fell, Cumbria on the 22nd. There were reports of two fishing boats being overwhelmed by massive waves off Flamborough Head, Humberside in high winds and heavy seas on the 8th with some loss of life. Winds were predominantly northerly or north-easterly during the month, becoming variable and then south-easterly in the last three days.

Temperature

Mean temperatures were generally below the monthly average in the whole of the United Kingdom except for parts of central and south-

west Scotland and southern parts of Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland, which were around or just above normal. Most of England and Wales, apart from western coastal areas, had temperatures between 1 °C and 2 °C below average and the greater part of East Anglia as much as 2 °C below average.

The highest temperature of the month was 25.5 °C, recorded at Onich, Highland Region on the 23rd. In the south, Weymouth, Dorset had a maximum of 24.6 °C on the 24th. The lowest temperature in the north was -7.2 °C on the 15th at Carnwath, Strathclyde and the lowest minimum in the south was -6.1 °C at St Harmon, Powys on the 14th.

Rainfall

Most areas south of a line from Humberside to South Wales had above-average rainfall amounts except for parts of the south-western peninsula, which had around average rainfall. Apart from some places in the Edinburgh area which had above-average rainfall, most places north of the line were very dry. Eskdalemuir, Dumfries and Galloway experienced its driest May since records began there in 1911, with only 4 mm being recorded, which is 4 per cent of average.

On the 10th most of England and Wales, apart from extreme western areas, had outbreaks of thundery rain. A depression brought heavy rain to much of England and Wales overnight on the 21st/22nd in the east and during the day of the 22nd in the west, when most places had at least 20 mm of rain, the first significant fall in some places for over seven weeks. Penzance, Cornwall had 47.5 mm on this day. A further depression brought a record dull, wet Spring Bank Holiday weekend over most of southern and eastern England with 40.5 mm being recorded at Liphook, Hampshire on the 26th and 33.3 mm at Skegness, Lincolnshire on the 27th.

Snow

Wintry showers were reported occasionally between the 5th and the 10th, mostly in Scotland

and north-east England. Further showers were reported on the 26th in Scotland. There were fresh falls of snow in places and a depth of about 10 mm was recorded at Achnagoichan, Highland Region on the 17th. Snow was lying in the higher levels of the Scottish Highlands, a few patches above 750 m persisting throughout the month. Snow was reported lying above about 1000 m in Snowdonia, North Wales on the 27th.

Sunshine

Monthly sunshine totals were below normal south of a line from North Yorkshire to South Wales with less than 75 per cent in most of East Anglia and Kent and parts of central southern England and as low as 52 per cent in eastern coastal areas. In most of Wales, northern England, Scotland and Northern Ireland the sunshine was above average, the sunniest area being the southern part of Co. Antrim with around 150 per cent of average. Over 12 hours bright sunshine was recorded on the Sunday and Monday of the Spring Bank Holiday in Northern Ireland and western Scotland, but in south-east England an exceptionally dull weekend was experienced. However, the last three days of the month were sunny in the south.

Fog

Fog occurred rather frequently during the first and third weeks of the month. Overnight fog was widespread in most areas of the United Kingdom between the 3rd and 5th and again between the 16th and 20th, when it was mainly confined to central and southern areas. Fog formed in coastal areas from time to time during the month, mostly in the north and east of Scotland and north-east England. It was persistent for a time in northern Scotland on the 23rd and 24th. There were patches of hill fog reported on high ground in southern and central England.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

None reported.

Table 1 District values

District	air temperature °C					mean 30 cm soil temp °C	rain- days	rainfall	sun- shine
	Highest Max*	Lowest Min*	max.	min.	mean				
	difference from average					% of average			
0 Scotland N	25.5	-4.9	+0.2	-0.9	-0.3	+0.8	-6	24	113
1 Scotland E	23.3	-4.0	+0.2	-1.0	-0.5	+0.4	-6	37	115
2 England E & NE	22.1	-4.0	-1.3	-1.4	-1.4	+0.2	-4	75	95
3 East Anglia	21.0	-2.0	-2.7	-1.2	-1.9	-1.1	-1	164	64
4 Midland Counties	23.5	-2.8	-1.2	-1.4	-1.3	-0.6	-3	100	89
5 England SE & Central S	23.2	-0.5	-2.0	-1.2	-1.6	-0.9	+1	150	72
6 Scotland W	24.5	-7.2	+0.9	-1.1	-0.1	+0.9	-8	20	125
7 England NW & Wales N	22.8	-3.2	0.0	-1.5	-0.8	-0.2	-6	46	114
8 England SW & Wales S	22.9	-4.5	-0.9	-1.0	-0.9	-0.2	-4	81	96
N Ireland	20.4	-6.5	+0.5	-2.0	-0.8	+0.5	-7	31	134
Scotland	25.5	-7.2	+0.4	-1.0	-0.3	+0.7	-7	27	118
England & Wales	23.5	-4.5	-1.3	-1.3	-1.3	-0.5	-3	92	88

*Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations