

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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Unsettled, generally wet and rather mild

The month started with a weak transient ridge of high pressure affecting most parts of the United Kingdom while a deepening Atlantic depression moved eastwards across all parts to become centred over East Anglia early on the 3rd. Frontal systems associated with a complex area of low pressure in the Atlantic crossed the British Isles from the 4th to 10th, with a temporary interruption on the 7th as an anticyclone to the south-west of the British Isles extended a ridge of high pressure north-eastwards to affect all parts of the United Kingdom. An anticyclone centred over the English Channel on the 11th extended temporarily to most parts of the United Kingdom, before giving way to a depression on the 12th. On the 13th pressure was low to the north of the British Isles and high to the south, but further Atlantic depressions moved rapidly eastwards across the United Kingdom over the next few days. A transient ridge of high pressure on the 17th gave way to a series of fronts associated with depressions centred to the north of the British Isles. On the 20th a depression moving eastwards along the English Channel affected South Wales and southern England. Between the 22nd and 24th vigorous depressions moved eastwards close to Scotland. High pressure gradually became established over the near Continent, moving eastwards on the 25th and extending a southerly flow to all parts of the United Kingdom. However, a trough of low pressure crossed all areas during the 27th, allowing an anticyclone to become centred over South Wales on the 28th. Although pressure remained high to the south and east for the rest of the month northern areas were affected by a trailing front associated with low pressure in the Atlantic.

Weather

After a somewhat cool, windy but bright start to the month, the weather continued unsettled and became generally milder, with rain, persistent and heavy at times, and brighter showery interludes. Between the 20th and 23rd wintry conditions with snow and sleet and some hail pushed southwards from Scotland, temporarily reaching as far south as east Kent. After the 23rd the rest of the month became gradually more settled as the high pressure over the near Continent became established. Thunder was reported on 15 days, mostly in Scotland. Hail was confined to northern areas generally, although hail showers occurred as far south as the north Midlands on the 17th.

Wind

March was a rather windy month with winds reaching gale force on six occasions. On the 6th Benbecula, Western Isles measured a gust of 69 kn; on the 13th Aberporth, Dyfed had a gust of 63 kn. Winds were strong in the south-west on the 14th, with many places having gusts of over 50 kn and reaching 65 kn at Gwennap Head, Cornwall. On the 22nd and 24th many areas had strong winds with notable gusts of 68 kn at Leith, Lothian Region and 70 kn at Salsburgh, Strathclyde Region on the 24th. Wind directions were mainly south-westerly or southerly.

Temperature

Mean monthly temperatures were generally

above normal, ranging from near normal in the north and west of Scotland to more than 2.5 °C above normal just to the north of London.

Much of East Anglia and south-west England had a very warm day on the 6th, one of the warmest early March days this century. On the 7th it became a few degrees colder nearly everywhere and as much as 9 °C colder in parts of East Anglia. The 26th was a warm or very warm day over most of England and Wales with 17.3 °C at St Helier, Jersey, being the highest temperature reported; on the 27th the temperature reached 19.3 °C at Easthampstead, Berkshire; temperatures locally reached about 4 °C or 5 °C above average in parts of southern England and East Anglia on the 29th, becoming very warm in extreme south-east England. On the 31st London Weather Centre measured 19.9 °C, the highest March temperature there for 21 years. The highest temperature of the month was 20.7 °C at Elmstone, Kent on the 28th. The lowest temperature of the month was -8.8 °C at Cairngorm Chairlift, Highland Region on the 17th.

Rainfall

Monthly rainfall amounts were above normal in most parts of the United Kingdom with as much as 265 per cent of normal rainfall at Glasgow, Strathclyde Region. In contrast some eastern coastal areas of England and Scotland were rather dry and Newcastle upon Tyne had less than a third of its normal rainfall.

Rain fell in all areas on the 8th and 9th, but in western parts of England and Wales it was heavy and persistent, giving heavy falls of 65 mm at Nantmor, Gwynedd on the 8th and 53 mm at Eskdalemuir, Dumfries and Galloway and 59 mm at Kielder Castle, Northumberland on the 9th. On the 14th many places had heavy rain, with a heavy fall of 54 mm at Princetown, Devon. Further heavy rain in all areas on the 23rd once again gave the heaviest falls in western parts, including 59 mm at Holme Moss, West Yorkshire and 58 mm at Moel Cynedd, Powys.

Snow

Snow showers were fairly widespread over Scotland on the 7th, 13th and 15th. Some sleet and snow fell on the 16th over England and Wales. On the 18th rain spread to all parts with some snow in the north; over several days from the 20th onwards there were wintry conditions in all areas with some sleet and snow at times.

Sunshine

Sunshine amounts were generally above normal in Scotland, Northern Ireland and northern England but below normal in southern areas. The brightest area was eastern Scotland and north-east England with more than 120 per cent while south-west England and South Wales were generally dull with less than 80 per cent of average sunshine.

The highest daily sunshine total was 11.6 hours at Leuchars, Fife Region on the 17th. The highest monthly sunshine total was 148 hours at Dunbar, Lothian Region.

Fog

A few overnight fog patches formed early on the 1st, mainly in Scotland, but patchy fog formed again later on the same day and on the 2nd in parts of East Anglia, northern England and Northern Ireland. Further fog patches formed on the 4th in eastern areas, on the 26th in the south-east and on the 30th mainly in southern England and South Wales. On the 31st fog formed in the Midlands, south-east England and southern and central Scotland. Coastal fog occurred in south-west England and South Wales on the 10th, 14th, 18th and 19th. The south coast from Dorset to Essex was foggy at times on the 26th. There was hill fog over central England on the 14th, north-west England on the 18th and south-west England and South Wales on the 19th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

There were reports of grey dust on cars at Keyworth, Nottinghamshire on the 21st and 'Saharan' dust at Chagford, Devon on the 31st.

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	16.2	−7.4	+0.7	+0.2	+0.4	+0.4	+7	191	104
1 Scotland E	16.1	−4.8	+1.3	+0.5	+0.9	+1.1	+3	158	126
2 England E & NE	17.4	−5.6	+2.2	+1.2	+1.7	+1.4	+3	115	114
3 East Anglia	19.2	−4.9	+2.6	+1.9	+2.3	+1.6	+2	116	93
4 Midland Counties	18.6	−4.8	+2.4	+1.8	+2.1	+1.7	+4	110	104
5 England SE & Central S	19.2	−4.0	+2.4	+2.3	+2.4	+1.9	+4	135	88
6 Scotland W	13.2	−7.9	+0.7	+0.3	+0.5	+1.0	+8	198	102
7 England NW & Wales N	17.0	−4.4	+1.4	+1.6	+1.4	+1.7	+6	192	95
8 England SW & Wales S	18.7	−4.5	+1.7	+1.9	+1.7	+1.7	+6	157	79
N Ireland	15.4	−5.0	+1.0	+0.1	+0.6	+0.6	+8	164	103
Scotland	16.2	−7.9	+0.9	+0.3	+0.6	+0.8	+6	192	111
England & Wales	19.2	−5.6	+2.1	+1.8	+1.9	+1.7	+4	143	95

* Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations