

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL STATIONS AND VOLUNTEER OBSERVERS

PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE. To be purchased directly from H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses: ADASTRAL HOUSE, KINGSWAY, LONDON, W.C.2; 120 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH 2; YORK STREET, MANCHESTER 1; 1 ST. ANDREW'S CRESCENT, CARDIFF; 80 CHICHESTER STREET, BELFAST; or through any Bookseller.

VOL. 51. No. 4.

ISSUED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE METEOROLOGICAL COMMITTEE

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APRIL, 1934.—Dull; excessively wet in the north-east.

The weather of the month was generally unsettled and dull, with rather frequent local thunderstorms. It was excessively wet in a strip extending from the north of Scotland to Durham.

During the first ten days pressure remained persistently high in the neighbourhood of Iceland and low southward of the British Isles, while secondary depressions or troughs of low pressure passed westward across the country. Winds were mainly from between north and east and temperature was, on the whole, rather low. Rain occurred at times and sleet or snow was reported, particularly from the 5th to 10th. On the 11th and 12th a depression over the Bay moved north causing heavy rain, especially in northern districts. Subsequently pressure became low on the Atlantic and weather continued mainly unsettled with southerly winds until the 17th. It was during this period that an unusually warm spell occurred, temperature rising to 75°F. or above locally in the south-east on the 15th. Thereafter from the 18th to the 28th depressions passed across the country, often in a south-easterly direction and local thunderstorms were frequent and were widespread in England on the 24th. Between the 28th and 30th a belt of high pressure moved slowly south-east over the British Isles and fair, warmer weather, with good sunshine records prevailed over most of the country on the last two days.

Pressure and Wind.—The unsettled nature of the month was reflected in the deficiency from the normal of the monthly mean pressure. This deficiency was least in the north and varied at 7h. from 2.4 mb. at Lerwick and 2.6 mb. at Stornoway to 7.8 mb. at St. Ann's Head. In consequence the normal south-westerly gradient was interrupted, the mean pressure distribution being very irregular (see Chart I).

Local gales mainly from between north and east were rather frequent in northern districts between the 4th and 13th, and south-easterly gales occurred in the south-west on the 13th. Southerly gales were registered locally in Scotland and Ireland on the 15th and south-westerly ones in Scotland on the 16th. The latter half of the month was generally free from gales though a few were recorded from isolated stations. Among the highest speeds recorded in gusts were 81 m.p.h. at Lerwick and 77 m.p.h. at Kirkwall on the 16th, 80 m.p.h. at Butt of Lewis on the 7th and 72 m.p.h. at Dunfanaghy (Donegal) on the 15th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature for the month was below the average in west and north Scotland and Ireland and slightly above the average in England, the deviation varying from -1.1°F. in Ireland, S. to +1.0°F. in England, E.

Equatorial air from the Azores region was responsible for the unusually warm spell experienced between the 14th and 17th. At many places in England, temperature rose to 70°F. or above on the 15th, and 79°F. was reached at Cambridge. The nights were also mild, minima of 50°F. or above being registered locally. The 30th was also a mild day, many stations in the west and north recording the highest temperature for the month on that day. The coldest spell was, on the whole, the first ten days, the coldest day as well as the coldest night occurring, as a rule, on one of these days.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 79°F. at Cambridge on the 15th, 20°F. at Rhayader and Houghall on the 7th and at Rickmansworth on the 8th; (Scotland) 66°F. at Kelso on the 15th, 22°F. at Kilmarnock on the 4th, at Wolfelee on the 6th and at Dalwhinnie on the 29th; (Ireland) 64°F. at Phoenix Park (Dublin) and Hazelhatch on the 15th and at Birr Castle, Montmellick, Seskin (Carrick-on-Suir) and Waterford on the 30th, and 24°F. at Birr Castle on the 7th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the normal for the period 1881–1915 was 142, the values for the constituent countries being England and Wales 137, Scotland 182 and Ireland 107. The most striking feature of the rainfall distribution was the large excess in a strip extending from Sutherland to Durham, where more than 200 per cent. of the normal was recorded. Some stations within this area had more than 300 per cent., notably Cockle Park (Durham), Inverness, and stations in a coastal area from Aberdeen to Dundee. In the west of Scotland the excess was not great and at a few places in central and south-west Scotland there was a slight deficiency. More than 150 per cent. fell over a considerable part of the eastern half of England and slightly less than 100 per cent. occurred locally in N. Wales and N.W. England and in a very narrow strip extending north-east from Weymouth to Bedford. In Ireland, more than 100 per cent. of the normal fell in the north-east and south-east; elsewhere falls were, on the whole, below or about normal.

Thunderstorms were rather unusually frequent for April, particularly from the 17th to the 28th, though they also occurred at times during the first half of the month. They were reported on five occasions at Ampleforth and Thetford, and on four occasions at numerous other stations. Among heavy rain in 24 hours are included 87 mm. at Achfary and 58 mm. at Wick on the 7th, 58 mm. at Dyce, 57 mm. at Aberdeen, 52 mm. at Craibstone and 45 mm. at Balmakewan on the 12th, and 43 mm. at Dunmanway, Cork, on the 13th.

Sleet or snow occurred locally from the 3rd to the 12th, particularly from the 5th to 10th. During the latter period some heavy falls were recorded in Scotland, the snow being 10 inches deep at Gleneagles on the 7th, 8 in. at Crieff on the 8th and 6 in. at Balmoral on the 9th.

Sunshine.—One of the principal features of the weather was the almost universal deficiency of sunshine, only four of the stations in Table III for which averages are available showing an excess. A notable exception was Cahirciveen in south-west Ireland with an excess of nearly 34 hours. Among days with good local records may be mentioned the 16th, 17th, 20th–22nd, 29th and 30th.

Fog.—Some local fog occurred frequently (especially in England), particularly from the 7th to 12th, 14th–16th, 21st, 25th, 29th and 30th. It was also reported in the extreme north of Scotland on the 17th and 18th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—Solar halos were noted at Oxford on eleven days. The aurora was observed in Scotland on the 6th, 12th, 16th, 17th, 21st and 28th.