

First and last weeks, mostly dry; middle period unsettled.

High pressure systems affected many parts of the United Kingdom at times during the first half of the month. They also dominated the weather from the 23rd to 31st. In the intervening periods depressions and troughs of low pressure were active, mostly in western and northern districts.

Weather

Mostly dry, settled weather with fog in places prevailed generally during the first few days and in England and Wales from the 23rd to 31st but drier weather was delayed until the 28th in Scotland and Northern Ireland. In the interim, outbreaks of heavy rain occurred generally and there were thunderstorms in England and Wales. During the second and third weeks showers of hail, snow or sleet (snow mixed with rain or drizzle) were reported, mostly from Scotland.

Wind

At first winds were mostly light or moderate but occasionally fresh or strong on exposed coasts and over high ground. On the 12th and 13th, however, easterly winds reached gale force at times in south-west England. The third week was much more windy in all areas and gales were experienced on a number of days. On the 20th and 21st north-westerly gales were severe locally in the Irish Sea area and along the north-east coast of England where gusts exceeding 60 kt were reported. Winds moderated generally during the fourth week but continued strong for a time in parts of western and northern Scotland.

Temperature

Most monthly mean temperatures were between 0.5 and 1.5 degC below average, although temperatures were nearer average in a few places in south-western England. Mild weather predominated until the 9th except occasionally in parts of eastern and southern England and there were a few warm days during the first week. Day-time temperatures exceeded 20°C widely on the 2nd, reaching 23.7°C at Dundee (Angus) and at Kirkcaldy (Fife). On the 10th and 11th colder air spread to all districts and from then until the 22nd temperatures were mostly below average except at times in Wales and south-west England. Nights were very cold and frost was frequent and widespread. At Lagganlia (Inverness-shire) a minimum temperature of -8.5°C was recorded on the 12th. During the last 8 days temperatures remained mostly near the average but there were a few frosty nights towards the end of the month.

Rainfall

Many districts were drier than average but there were large variations in rainfall over small areas. Rainfall was near or above average in a few places in northern and

eastern Scotland, in North Wales and in northern and south-western England but in small areas of southern England and South Wales rainfall was less than a quarter of average. Except for scattered slight rain or drizzle the first 4 days were dry generally but outbreaks of heavy rain and thunderstorms spread into south-western districts on the 5th and affected much of England and Wales on the 6th. Rainfall was especially heavy in south-eastern England and a 'very rare' fall of 40.9 mm occurred in 35 minutes at Taplow Court (Berkshire). Floods were reported from a number of places and lightning damage to power lines interrupted electricity supplies in parts of Sussex and Kent. As thundery outbreaks died out on the 7th, heavy rain or showers spread to northern Ireland and Scotland from the west and subsequently to northern and central parts of England and Wales. On the 10th showers were wintry over Scotland with hail, snow or sleet at times and on the following day these conditions spread southwards into northern parts of England and Wales behind a belt of rain. Between the 11th and 14th heavy rainfall occurred in the south-western half of the country and in the 24 hours from 09 GMT on the 12th, a fall of 96.0 mm was measured at each of the stations at Trengwainton House, Penzance (Cornwall) and at Trewidden (Cornwall). These falls are classified as 'remarkable'. During the third week periods of rain occurred more generally with a little thunder in England and Wales and frequent showers of hail, snow or sleet in Scotland and northern England between the 16th and 19th. From the 23rd to 31st rain or drizzle was slight and scattered in England and Wales but more significant rainfall continued in Northern Ireland and Scotland until the last few days when it became mostly dry.

Snow

Snow fell on the 10th and 11th and at times

during the third week. Scotland was the most affected but there were sleet or snow showers also in Northern Ireland and in parts of northern England and North Wales. Undrifted depths were generally small but at a few high level stations in north Scotland, 8 to 10 cm. of snow were measured between the 18th and 20th and snow lay for a few days on ground above 450 m.

Sunshine

Northern Ireland had about average sunshine. In Scotland, except for some south-eastern areas which were rather dull, many places were sunnier than average and the following had their sunniest October since 1939; Strathy (Sutherland) with 154 per cent of average, Greenock (Renfrewshire) with 136 per cent of average and Helensburgh (Dunbartonshire) with 137 per cent of average. Western districts of England and Wales had between 75 per cent and 110 per cent of average but the east was a little sunnier except for a few places in the extreme north-east which were rather dull. There were frequent sunny periods but no prolonged spells of sunshine.

Fog

Overnight fog developed in places during the first week, around mid-month and again from the 20th to 31st. It occurred most frequently in central and southern Scotland and in England and Wales. During the last week fog was particularly dense and persistent in the Midlands and in eastern and southern England where surface and air transport were disrupted for a time. Patches of hill fog were reported on one or two days during the month and on the 2nd, sea fog affected northern Scotland and encroached on Irish Sea coasts.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

The aurora was observed in Scotland on 11 nights.

Table 1 District values

October 1973

District	air temperature °C					mean 30-cm earth temp °C	rain-days	rainfall	sunshine
	Highest	Lowest	max.	min.	mean				
	Max †	Min. †	difference from average			% of average			
0 Scotland N	23.0	-2.0	-0.6	-1.9	-1.3	—	-4	55	126
1 Scotland E	23.7	-1.0	-0.6	-0.9	-0.8	0.0	-2	59	93
2 England N E	20.6	-3.2	-1.3	-1.1	-1.2	0.0	0	68	78
3 England E	21.8	-1.0	-1.1	-0.9	-1.0	-0.3	-2	66	100
4 Midland Counties	20.5	-1.5	-1.1	-1.1	-1.1	-0.2	-4	59	94
5 England S E	21.4	-2.4	-0.9	-0.8	-0.9	-0.7	-4	48	101
6 Scotland W	21.0	-4.2	-0.4	-1.2	-0.8	-0.3	-6	43	113
7 Eng N W & Wales N	21.0	-3.3	-0.7	-0.9	-0.8	+0.2	-4	69	93
8 Eng S W & Wales S	18.8	-4.1	-0.9	-1.2	-1.1	0.0	-4	58	93
N Ireland	19.5	-3.6	-0.5	-1.1	-0.8	—	-5	53	98
Scotland	23.7	-4.2	-0.5	-1.3	-1.0	—	-4	52	11
England & Wales	21.8	-4.1	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	—	-3	62	93

† Highest max. and lowest min. of the District Value Stations