

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

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Warm and dry after a wet start

The month started with a complex area of low pressure covering the British Isles. A sequence of fronts crossed mainly southern areas as the depression moved away south-westwards, and northern and eastern areas were affected on the 6th by a ridge of high pressure situated to the east of Great Britain. During the next few days a shallow depression moved northwards over Great Britain to merge with a low-pressure area to the north-west of the United Kingdom; the associated frontal system crossed all areas from the west. On the 10th a wave depression moved north-eastwards across central areas. As this depression moved away eastwards on the 11th it was replaced by a cool northerly airstream. Fronts moved into the north-west on the 12th and south-eastwards across the United Kingdom on the 13th, weakening as pressure rose to the south of Great Britain. The high pressure affected England and Wales and most of Scotland from the 14th to 17th, but on the 18th some western areas were affected by a trough of low pressure. High pressure then predominated in southern areas of Great Britain, although parts of Scotland were affected by frontal activity on the 22nd and 23rd. On the 29th and early on the 30th thundery troughs moved northwards across southern areas of the United Kingdom, followed later on the 30th by an eastward-moving cold front.

Weather

The weather remained unsettled with almost daily rainfall until the 12th when it became warm and sunny and mainly dry, with some places in central and southern England having no measurable rain for 16 days. It was frequently misty and fog brought offshore visibility down to a few hundred metres. April was a record-breaking month in many areas with a sunny, dry and very warm spell; it remained fine and warm, except in the west and north, from the 24th to 27th with a good deal of sunshine. The fine spell was broken as thundery activity spread northwards during the 28th and 29th and on the 29th thunderstorms occurred locally. Thunder also occurred on the 9th over central and eastern England and there was isolated thunder in places on the 10th. Hail was widespread on the 9th. Hailstones of diameter 10 mm to 20 mm were reported at Widdybank Fell, Co. Durham on the 20th.

Wind

April was a very quiet month with winds mainly light throughout. The few strong winds occurred mainly on exposed western coasts on the 4th, 11th and 19th. The highest gusts recorded at low-level stations were 56 kn at Machrihanish, Strathclyde on the 4th and 60 kn at Sheffield University, South Yorkshire on the 11th. On the 11th St Abbs Head reported gusts of more than 70 kn. On the 14th sea-breezes occurred on eastern coasts. Wind directions were generally mainly southerly or variable during the month.

Temperature

Mean monthly temperatures were above normal in all parts of the United Kingdom, giving a warm month everywhere, mean temperatures ranging from about 3 °C above normal in parts of North Wales and East Anglia to about 1 °C above normal in north-west Scotland.

In early April daytime temperatures in some northern areas generally failed to rise above 6 °C, although means remained about normal because the temperatures did not fall much at night. On the 17th London and Bristol enjoyed one of the warmest Good Fridays since records began in the 1940s, reaching 22.6 °C and 21.5 °C respectively. Most Channel resorts were cooled by winds off the sea keeping temperatures as much as 10 °C less than places only a few kilometres inland. Temperatures again rose above 20 °C on the 23rd, remaining high until the 29th. Highest temperature of the month was 24.9 °C at Kelso and Floors Castle, both in Borders Region, on the 27th. The lowest temperature of the month was -5.4 °C at Carnwath, Strathclyde Region on the 12th. Bidston, Merseyside reported its warmest April since records began there in 1867; Hampstead, Greater London reported the warmest April since 1949 and Oxford the warmest April since 1944. The 27th was a very warm day generally, several long-term records being broken in north-eastern areas. At Aberdeen Airport the maximum temperature of 23.7 °C was a record for April since records began there in 1942 and at Newcastle the maximum of 22.7 °C the highest for April since records began there in 1952.

Rainfall

Most of the month's rainfall fell in the first 10 days of the month with some record-breaking totals, especially in north-east England and the Exeter area of Devon; rainfall amounts ranged from 260 per cent of average in east Devon to 51 per cent in Shetland. Despite the mainly dry month the rainfall generally over England and Wales was just above average as a result of the wet start to the month. A heavy fall of 50 mm in 24 h was recorded at Princetown, Devon on the 2nd. By the 6th some holiday resorts in the south-west had almost twice their average April rainfall. There was considerable flooding in the Exeter area, with other parts of Devon and Cornwall also hit. On the 10th, 48 mm was recorded at Whitcheater, Borders Region with some local flooding.

Snow

Snow fell on the 1st and 2nd in north-east England but did not lie. Later on the 2nd rain,

preceded by sleet over high ground, moved into south-west England and South Wales. On the 10th snow fell above 300 m and 24 cm lay in the Cairngorm Car Park on the following morning. On the 11th wintry precipitation occurred in eastern coastal areas as far south as the Humber.

Sunshine

Sunshine amounts were above average in central and southern England and South Wales, north-east England and eastern Scotland, but below average elsewhere, with amounts ranging from 117 per cent of average at Guernsey, Channel Islands to 59 per cent at Benbecula, Western Isles. The month started generally rather dull, but by the 11th it was sunny in most places and the 14th, 17th and 26th were sunny days over a wide area. In Scotland it was sunny from the 24th to 29th. The highest daily sunshine amounts was 13.7 hours at Cawood, North Yorkshire on the 27th. The highest monthly sunshine total was 220.3 hours at Guernsey.

Fog

Overnight fog formed mainly around mid month in southern areas of England and Wales, but was widespread nearly everywhere on the 27th and was slow to clear from parts of the Midlands. On the 25th fog affected eastern parts of Great Britain and was unusually dense, with visibility down to 20 m in the Edinburgh area around dawn. Sea fog occurred at times during the month, but especially on the 13th on western coasts where it persisted most of the day; on the 28th there was extensive sea fog around western Scotland and again on the 29th around Irish Sea coasts. There were several occasions of hill fog, mainly in central or western areas.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

A dust devil was observed at Towy Castle, Dyfed at 1110 h on the 24th, about 7 m high and lasting for 30 s. On the 29th there were two reports of funnel clouds from near Watford, Hertfordshire, one at 1115 h, moving from west to east, 3 km west of Junction 6 on the M1 Motorway, and another nearby at 1130 h, descending to about 300 m and lasting 5 min before dissipating.

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	23.1	−4.9	+1.7	+1.3	+1.5	+0.6	−7	66	78
1 Scotland E	23.8	−3.2	+1.9	+1.3	+1.6	+0.7	−3	113	87
2 England E & NE	23.6	−2.0	+2.1	+1.9	+2.0	+0.9	−2	119	105
3 East Anglia	23.6	−0.8	+2.5	+1.8	+2.2	+1.0	−1	107	104
4 Midland Counties	22.5	−2.0	+2.8	+2.1	+2.4	+1.1	−2	123	112
5 England SE & Central S	23.4	−1.3	+2.4	+1.8	+2.1	+0.9	−1	121	113
6 Scotland W	23.5	−5.4	+1.1	+1.3	+1.2	+0.5	−1	79	77
7 England NW & Wales N	22.6	−1.9	+2.0	+2.0	+1.9	+1.0	0	87	94
8 England SW & Wales S	23.4	−2.4	+2.0	+1.6	+1.7	+1.1	+1	123	99
N Ireland	22.7	−3.2	+1.3	+1.8	+1.6	+0.6	−3	74	67
Scotland	23.8	−5.4	+1.6	+1.3	+1.4	+0.6	−4	84	81
England & Wales	23.6	−2.4	+2.3	+1.9	+2.1	+1.0	−1	113	105

* Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations