

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

Summary of observations compiled from returns of official stations and voluntary observers

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April 1968 — Cold until mid-month, then much warmer

Weather was mainly cyclonic in character except from the 7th-15th when an anticyclone was centred first over southern England and later over the North Sea, and from the 24th-26th when another anticyclone moved from southern England to the Low Countries.

The month began dull and wet as a depression moved eastwards across southern Scotland. By the 2nd this depression was centred over the North Sea, and associated northerly winds brought snow and a very sharp fall of temperature, first to Scotland, and then to most parts of the United Kingdom. At Beer, Devon, temperature fell from 9°C to -1°C in two hours, and at Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, the snowfall was estimated to have been the heaviest for early April since 1922. At other places wind reached gale force at times, a gust of 70 kt being recorded at Lerwick. During the next few days a depression moved slowly northwards over Scandinavia while pressure remained high from Greenland to the Azores. Consequently a cold northerly airstream continued over most districts until the 5th and during this period snow, sleet, scattered thunderstorms and severe night frosts were experienced in many places.

On the 6th pressure rose over southern England and weather became bright and sunny in England and Wales; more than 11 hours of sunshine were recorded in many places and the snow showers were again confined to Scotland. By the 7th an anticyclone covered most of the country, and as this development drifted slowly north-eastwards to the northern North Sea, weather continued generally cold, dry and sunny for about a week. In Scotland afternoon temperatures rose to values above average after the 9th, but in southern England easterly winds maintained below average temperatures until the 14th.

A week of warm unsettled weather began on the 15th as a deep depression, then about 500 nautical miles to the south-west of Ireland, moved northwards. The associated frontal troughs crossing the country brought rain, which was heavy at times, and also scattered thunderstorms, to most districts. The southerly winds persisted, and on the night of the 21st heavy thunderstorms led to flooding in the West Country. The 22nd was unusually warm in central and eastern England in the afternoon, temperatures reaching 25°C in some places.

Pressure rose steadily on the 23rd and the next day an anticyclone covered most districts. Dry sunny weather continued until the 25th, but temperature fell rapidly, on the 23rd and day maximum temperatures in southern England were about 7°C lower than on the previous day. There was a good deal of sea-fog along western coasts and in the English Channel.

On the morning of the 26th light frontal rain, associated with a depression to the south of Iceland, reached Devon and Cornwall, and as the front became slow-moving occasional rain spread to many other parts of the country and continued for about two days. The 28th was a generally showery day with scattered thunderstorms, but by the 29th a complex low-pressure system covered the country, and the last two days of the month were cold and wet; on the 29th 42 mm of rain were recorded at Brawdy.

Pressure and Wind — Mean pressure was mainly above the 1931-60 average in the north and east, but below average in the south and west of the country. The deviation at 0900 GMT ranged from +2.6 mb at Lerwick to -1.7 mb at Chivenor. Surface winds, northerly for most of the first week, were followed by easterlies and then south-south-easterlies from the 16th until the end of the month apart from spells of light variable winds from the 7th-9th and from the 20th-24th. Gales were reported on 7 days in Scotland and on 4 days in England and Wales; they were fairly widespread on the 1st and 2nd.

Temperature — The first two weeks were cold with hard night frosts, but temperature was well above average during the third and fourth weeks. The 21st was the warmest day with afternoon temperatures in central and eastern England reaching 25°C.

Extremes included: (England and Wales) 25.6°C at Santon Downham and Camden Square on the 21st, -11.4°C at Great Dun Fell on the 2nd; (Scotland) 20.6°C at Kinlochewe and Fyvie Castle on the 26th, -10.6°C at Achnagoichan on the 2nd; (Northern Ireland) 17.7°C at Ballykelly on the 25th, -6.1°C at several places on the 2nd and 8th.

Rainfall — In England and Wales rainfall was above average over much of western England and South Wales, in a broad corridor extending from the south coasts of Devon and Dorset north-eastwards to the Humber and Wash, and in parts of south-east England and the Thames Valley. Elsewhere it was below the average. In Scotland rainfall was below the average in the west but above in the east. Rainfall was 150 per cent of the average in parts of Sussex, the Severn and Avon valleys and in east Scotland, but was less than 50 per cent of the average in parts of Norfolk.

Snow and sleet (snow with rain or drizzle) was mainly confined to the first week. Snow-cover was not extensive or prolonged, but snow lay about 5 cm deep in parts of the Midlands on the 2nd.

Thunder was reported on 10 days in Scotland and on 14 days in England and Wales. Thunderstorms were fairly widespread on the 17th and 18th in eastern England and on the 30th in Scotland.

Sunshine — Sunshine was above the average over the whole of Scotland except for a few places near the east coast. Excesses of 40 to 50 hours were recorded in the Central Highlands and in many western districts. Sunshine was also mostly above the average over England and Wales, except in the south-west. Percentage of average amounts ranged from 82 at Sidmouth to 138 at Ringway.

Fog — Localized fog at 0900 GMT was reported on 18 days in Scotland and on 21 days in England and Wales. It was mainly confined to the last week of the month and was fairly widespread on the 25th. There was a great deal of sea fog along the south coast on the 22nd and 23rd.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — The aurora was seen in Scotland on 14 nights.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES, APRIL, 1968

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE °C					EARTH TEMP. °C		RAIN DAYS	RAIN-FALL	SUNSHINE
	*Highest Max.	*Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 30 cm.	Mean 122 cm.			
	Difference from Average									
0 SCOTLAND, N.	16.9	-8.6	-0.2	-0.6	-0.5	+0.1	-0.5	-5	92	111
1 SCOTLAND, E.	19.4	-6.7	-0.6	-0.6	-0.6	-0.2	-0.5	-1	131	112
2 ENGLAND, N.E.	20.9	-5.6	+0.2	-0.6	-0.2	+0.6	+0.1	-2	117	133
3 ENGLAND, E.	25.0	-6.1	-0.1	-0.2	-0.2	+0.2	-0.1	-1	87	116
4 MIDLANDS	23.3	-7.2	-0.1	-0.4	-0.2	+0.3	0.0	0	105	111
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	23.9	-4.4	-0.3	-0.6	-0.4	-0.2	-0.2	0	122	108
6 SCOTLAND, W.	17.7	-8.6	-0.1	-0.5	-0.3	-0.2	-0.4	-3	75	114
7 ENGLAND, N.W. and N. Wales	19.9	-7.2	+0.4	-0.5	0.0	-0.3	-0.2	0	114	117
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S. Wales	20.0	-4.4	-0.9	-1.1	-1.0	-0.9	-0.5	0	125	97
N. IRELAND	17.7	-5.6	+0.1	-1.0	-0.4	-	-	+1	88	113
SCOTLAND	19.4	-8.6	-0.3	-0.6	-0.5	-	-	-3	89	112
ENG. and WALES	25.0	-7.2	-0.1	-0.6	-0.3	-	-	-1	109	114

* Highest Max. and Lowest Min. of the District Value Station.