

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

MARCH 1993

VOLUME 110

NUMBER 3

Mild and dry, but a wet final few days.

On the 1st a deep low pressure area was centred over the western Mediterranean with high pressure over Scandinavia and a strong easterly flow over the whole country. By the 3rd, the high had linked with another in the Atlantic to form a ridge over the northern half of the country, but during the 4th and 5th a weak warm front moved south-eastwards across all areas. The whole country was then covered by a large anticyclone. By the 7th, this high had slipped eastwards, and a shallow depression had formed off south-west Ireland, resulting in a south-easterly flow. A weak cold front moved north-westwards over southern Britain before dissipating, whilst a more active front affected north-western Scotland. On the 9th, the shallow low affected many western districts, but during the 10th high pressure formed between Iceland and Scandinavia. This moved south-eastwards during the next few days, allowing weak fronts to cross many parts. A mild south-westerly flow became established over all areas by the 13th with the high covering most of central Europe. By the 15th, the Continental high had spread to affect the southern half of Britain, but a cold front travelled south-eastwards that day to introduce a more mobile westerly regime on the 16th, with a deep low over Iceland. Fronts crossed all areas from the west during the 17th and 18th, but by the 19th a ridge had built over southern England, confining frontal activity to the extreme north. During the 20th, 21st and 22nd, the high dissipated, to allow frontal systems to cross all parts from the north-west, although by the 23rd a new high pressure area was building over the Atlantic. This became the dominant feature over the next few days, but on the 26th, a cold front approached Ireland and the Western Isles. During the 27th and 28th, this front and a following one made rather laboured progress eastwards against the high, but on the 29th and 30th, a more active series of troughs crossed all areas. On the 31st, a wave formed on the final front and crossed southern and central regions, whilst an occlusion affected the north-west.

Weather

There were widespread wintry showers over many parts on the 1st; these became restricted to the north-east of Scotland on the 2nd. Patchy rain and drizzle, with sleet or snow in places in the north, spread southwards on the 3rd and 4th. A dry spell, with little significant rain, then began, and this lasted until the 11th when a band of rain, with sleet or snow over the hills, spread eastwards across Northern Ireland, Scotland and northern England. There was a little further rain in these northern parts on the 12th and 13th, and more significant rain on the 15th, 17th, 18th and 20th, but in southern Britain the mainly dry weather continued. During this spell, there was occasional patchy fog night and morning in places, whilst in north-east Scotland there were scattered wintry showers on the 19th. Substantial

rain moved southwards across England and Wales on the 21st and 22nd, whilst scattered wintry showers developed over Scotland and Northern Ireland, and these spread into eastern England and East Anglia on the 23rd. By the 25th it had become dry everywhere, and it remained so with widespread overnight frost on the 26th. Outbreaks of mostly light rain or drizzle affected northern and western parts of the United Kingdom over the next few days, but an area of persistent and at times heavy rain moved south-eastwards across Northern Ireland and Scotland during the 29th and 30th. The month ended with many parts of England and Wales having a very wet day on the 31st.

Wind

The two windiest days of the month were the 16th and the 30th, with gales in northern and western Britain on both days. The highest reported gust of the month was one to 111 knots at Cairngorm, Highland on the 16th, whilst Great Dun Fell, Cumbria recorded two gusts to 88 knots on the 30th. The majority of gusts over 42 knots reported at low levels occurred at Scottish or Northern Irish stations between the 16th and the 20th, on the 22nd and 23rd, and on the 29th and 30th. Gusts over 50 knots were almost exclusively confined to Scotland on the 16th and 30th.

Temperature

Monthly mean temperature was above average throughout the United Kingdom, in many parts of England and Scotland markedly so, and values ranged from 1.4°C above average at Kinloss, Grampian to only just above average in parts of East Sussex. The highest temperature reported was 19.8°C at Barbourne, Hereford and Worcester on the 15th, and the lowest was -12.2°C at Braemar, Grampian on the 4th.

Rainfall

Monthly total rainfall was below average throughout England and Wales, and in much of Scotland, but above average over parts of the Southern Uplands and the Highlands. The monthly total falls reported varied from being 137% of average in the hills to the north-east of Loch Lomond, to only 13% in parts of east Kent. The highest daily rainfall of the month occurred on the 29th at Clatteringshaws, Dumfries and Galloway, when a total of 86 mm was measured, whilst 82 mm was reported at Bargrennan in the same region on the same day. The other notably wet day in Scotland was the 16th, when a total daily fall of 75 mm was reported at Ardentinn, Strathclyde. The highest daily fall in Northern Ireland was 54 mm at Trassey Slievenaman, Down, on the 29th. In England and Wales the highest daily total reported was 49 mm at Poole, Dorset on the 31st.

Snow

Wintry showers occurred widely over the United Kingdom on the 1st, in northern and western parts on the 3rd and 4th, and in Kent and East Anglia on the 5th. On the morning of the 1st, depths of up to 10 cm were reported in East Anglia, and up to 20 cm in the Aberdeen, Grampian area. Elsewhere that morning, depths of between 1 and 5 cm were reported in parts of north Wales, northern England and over higher ground in Scotland. Some patchy sleet and snow was reported over higher ground in northern England and in Scotland on the 10th and 11th, and scattered wintry showers affected parts of north and north-east Scotland on the 19th. The month's final burst of wintry weather occurred on the 22nd, when snow and hail showers affected parts of Scotland, Northern Ireland and northern England, and these extended to southwards into England and Wales on the 23rd. Southern counties of England remained unaffected. Accumulations of lying snow were entirely confined to Scotland, with depths of 1 to 5 cm reported on the mornings of both days, mainly on higher ground and in the north-east. On the 22nd, Cairngorm, Highland reported a depth of 19 cm.

Sunshine

In north-eastern and southern Scotland, and in much of England it was a sunny month, though it was duller than average in western Britain and in Northern Ireland. The highest monthly total was 130% of average at Bognor Regis, West Sussex, whilst the lowest was 73% of average at Culdrose, Cornwall. The highest daily total was 11.8 hours on the 25th at Sellafield, Cumbria, and the highest monthly total was 165.6 hours at Bognor Regis, West Sussex.

Fog

Coastal fog affected parts of west Wales and south-east Kent on the 5th, and of north-east England on the 6th and 7th. A few short-lived fog patches formed over north-east and some central parts of England early on the 9th, and over southern England on the 10th. Extensive fog patches formed during the small hours of the 11th, the worst-affected areas being south-east England, the north Midlands and north-east England. Hill fog and drizzle affected much of south-west England on the 15th and at first on the 16th, by which time these conditions had spread to the Sussex coast. Much of central and southern England was affected by hill fog on the morning of the 31st.

Miscellaneous phenomena

Two reports were received of dusty rain: the first in the Birmingham area on the evening of the 10th, and the second near Presteigne, Powys on the 12th.