

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

MET.0.908

UDC 551 506 1(41-4)

APRIL

1977

VOLUME 94

NUMBER 4

Cool, changeable and rather windy.

A depression moved across northern Scotland on the 1st, and on the 2nd and 3rd parts of southern England were affected by a wave depression crossing northern France. An anticyclone to the west then extended a ridge across the British Isles, but on the 6th a cold front moved south across all districts, followed by a cold, northerly airstream. A small depression moved southwards from the Western Isles to Scilly on the 8th. Subsequently, between the 9th and the 13th, a series of fronts and intervening ridges crossed all areas from the north-west. An anticyclone then moved from the Atlantic to south-west Ireland, crossed southern England on the 15th and reached northern France on the 16th. On the same day, northern districts were affected by the fronts of a depression moving eastwards between Orkney and Shetland, and on the 17th the cold front moved south across all areas. A ridge of high pressure followed, and a centre which formed over eastern England on the 18th moved away to the south-east on the 19th. Fronts from the Atlantic then affected all districts from time to time, and on the 28th a deep trough of low pressure crossed the British Isles, its associated depression moving slowly across Scotland on the 29th and 30th.

Weather

April was generally cool, with gales in exposed places, outbreaks of rain or showers, and occasional thunderstorms, but there were also sunny intervals. The showers were sometimes wintry; snow or sleet fell in most districts between the 7th and the 9th, and there were some heavy falls over high ground in Scotland. Fog was widespread at times on coasts and hills in south-west England and Wales in the second half of the month, but seldom formed elsewhere.

Wind

Winds were frequently fresh or strong in the west and north and reached gale force on exposed coasts and hills on the 1st and 2nd, at the end of the first week and on the 12th and 13th. On the 1st, the high-level stations at Snaefell (Isle of Man) and Lowther Hill (Strathclyde) recorded gusts of 88 and 74 kt respectively. Gales also occurred at times between the 22nd and the 27th. Wind directions were mainly west to north-west during the first half of the month, but were northerly around the end of the first week. Directions were rather variable in the third week, but became mainly south-westerly from the 20th, although western and northern districts had north-westerly winds at the end of the month.

Temperature

Monthly mean temperatures were below average in all districts, but were not more than 1°C below in many places along the coastal strips of England, North Wales and eastern Scotland, and also in southern Scotland, extreme northern England and Northern Ireland. Values were between 1 and 2°C below normal in almost all other districts.

In parts of northern Scotland mean temperatures for April were lower than those for the previous month. Most places recorded their monthly minima between the 8th and the 10th, the temperature falling to -7.7°C at Santon Downham (Norfolk) on the night of the 9th/10th; but in northern Scotland lowest temperatures for the month mostly occurred between the 17th and 19th. Daytime temperatures were generally around or below average, although it was sometimes rather warm along eastern and southern coasts. The highest temperatures of the month occurred on the eastern side of England, where Hull (Humberside) recorded 18.6°C on the 22nd. On the 25th, the temperature reached 18.5°C in Cambridge and several places had maxima of at least 18°C.

Rainfall (including melted snow)

Monthly rainfall totals were above average in North Wales, and from the north-west Midlands, along the Pennines, to the Border. Totals were also above average in Northern Ireland, except in the south-east, and over Scotland, other than in the eastern coastal regions from the Border to Tayside. Amounts exceeded 150 per cent of normal over the north-west Highlands and in the Moray Firth area, some places on this coast recording twice their usual rainfall for the month. Almost all remaining areas had less than average rainfall and some places along the south coast of England and in south-east Scotland recorded less than half their normal amount of rain for April. Outbreaks of rain or showers were frequent during the month and were wintry in many districts. Hail lay to a depth of 1 cm, with 'drifts' to 10 cm, after a heavy hailstorm at Long Lawford (Warwickshire) on the 1st. Thunderstorms occurred from time to time, particularly in central and eastern districts of England at the end of the month.

Snow

Showers of snow or sleet, which

occasionally fell during the first week, became widespread between the 7th and the 9th and were reported as far south as the Channel Islands. Maximum snow depths for the month occurred during this period; undrifted depths of 10 to 17 cm were measured in the higher Scottish mountains, and of 6 to 9 cm in northern England. Scattered snow or sleet showers continued to occur, mostly in northern districts, until the 17th and at times between the 23rd and the end of the month. The snow did not lie for long, except on the slopes of the higher mountains, but the occurrence of snow or sleet was noted on an unusually high number of days over high ground in Scotland and in the Northern Isles: the number of days of snow or sleet at Kirkwall (Orkney) was the greatest since continuous records began in 1946, and at Lerwick (Shetland) equalled the greatest number for April since records began there in 1914.

Sunshine

Monthly sunshine totals were generally within 10 per cent of average and were mostly above normal, except in south-west England, in parts of south-eastern England and Northern Ireland, and over much of northern and western Scotland. Values were between 110 and 130 per cent of average in parts of eastern Scotland and north-eastern England, and a few places in the north Midlands had about 140 per cent of their normal April sunshine. Sunny intervals occurred in most districts throughout the month and dull days were infrequent.

Fog

Fog was seldom reported in inland areas in April, but it formed extensively along coasts and on hills in south-west England and Wales between the 20th and the 26th. The fog was often associated with precipitation.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

In Scotland the aurora was observed on 4 nights.

Table 1 District values

District	air temperature °C					mean 30-cm earth temp °C	rain- days	rainfall	sun- shine
	Highest Max *	Lowest Min. *	max.	min.	mean				
			difference from average						
0 Scotland N	13.2	-4.3	-1.6	-1.2	-1.4	-0.6	+7	156	95
1 Scotland E	16.4	-5.2	-1.3	-0.3	-0.8	-0.3	+6	107	107
2 England E & NE	18.6	-5.1	-1.1	-1.0	-1.0	-0.7	+4	86	111
3 East Anglia	18.5	-5.2	-1.0	-1.1	-1.1	-1.1	+2	74	102
4 Midland Counties	18.1	-4.5	-1.7	-0.8	-1.3	-0.9	+3	88	108
5 England SE & Central S	17.0	-4.0	-1.6	-0.9	-1.3	-1.1	+1	70	100
6 Scotland W	14.0	-5.2	-1.4	-0.5	-1.0	-0.4	+5	121	97
7 England NW & Wales N	16.2	-3.8	-1.7	-0.2	-0.9	-0.9	+5	111	101
8 England SW & Wales S	17.2	-3.7	-1.6	-0.6	-1.1	-0.5	+4	79	100
N Ireland	15.4	-2.9	-1.5	-0.4	-0.9	-0.4	+7	106	99
Scotland	16.4	-5.2	-1.4	-0.7	-1.1	-0.4	+6	128	100
England & Wales	18.6	-5.2	-1.5	-0.8	-1.1	-0.9	+3	85	104

*Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations.