

# Monthly Weather Report OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

M.O. 652

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

Volume 76 Number 4

Published by HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

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## April 1959—Mild and rather wet

The month began with relatively high pressure over the British Isles but after the first few days depressions approached the country first from the north-west, then from the west and later from the south-west. Pressure rose rapidly over the country on the 17th and an anticyclone dominated the situation for about a week until it was displaced by a westerly type on the 24th. The remainder of the month was mostly cyclonic in character.

The first four days were fine and warm in most districts as a ridge of high pressure moved across the southern half of the British Isles and the North Sea to the Continent, although weak fronts gave some rain in the west and north, and fog was prevalent on the east coast. Ground frost occurred locally at night chiefly in central and eastern districts, but the afternoons were warm and there was a good deal of sunshine; on the 4th temperature rose into the upper sixties in parts of southern England and reached 72°F. in the Channel Islands.

A vigorous depression, associated with a developing upper trough, moved south-east from Iceland on the 6th and strong north-west winds spread over the whole of the British Isles; wind reached gale force in places in the north-west and there were gusts of over 60 kt. in west Scotland. Weather became cool and changeable with rain or showers alternating with sunny periods. Winds moderated on the 8th, but pressure remained low over the North Sea and the showery weather, with local hail and thunder, continued until the 10th. The weather became colder and the showers turned to sleet and snow in many midland and northern districts on the 7th and 8th.

On the 10th an upper level high cell formed in the Denmark Strait and the upper westerlies across the Atlantic were largely confined to the area south of 50°N. The North Sea depression moved away east and on the 11th a depression from the Atlantic brought rain to the whole of the British Isles and a change to milder conditions with south-westerly winds. Temperature remained above 50°F. in many parts of the country throughout the night of the 12th/13th and exceeded 70°F. during the afternoon at several places in eastern England on the 13th and 14th.

On the 14th a vigorous depression from the Atlantic, with severe gales in its circulation, was situated to the south-west of the British Isles, and a belt of rain, heavy and thundery at times, spread north-eastwards over the country during the evening as the depression moved northward off the coast of Ireland. At Scilly and Lizard mean hourly wind speeds were between 22 and 33 kt. for 14 and 16 consecutive hours respectively with a maximum of 32 kt. at both places.

On the 16th a small depression from the south-west became slow moving over France and although weather in Scotland and Northern Ireland was mostly sunny and warm, over a large part of the country it was the wettest day of the month; many places in the Midlands and south-west England had over 1 in. of rain in 24 hr. and in Wales and Somerset there were local falls of more than 2 in. in that time.

Pressure rose steadily over the British Isles during the next two days and, although there were outbreaks of rain on the 17th in the northerly airstream behind the depression, weather gradually became more settled and dry, and on the 19th a belt of high pressure extended north-south over the country. By the 21st an anticyclone moving from the south-west, became centred over southern England and temperatures rose above average everywhere. Morning fog formed in parts of central and southern England on the 22nd and 23rd and continued to affect some coastal districts throughout the day but otherwise weather was generally fine and warm until the 24th.

On the evening of the 24th a trough of low pressure brought rain to all

districts and the following day an active wave depression moved northwards over the Irish Sea giving more than 1 in. of rain in 24 hr. in many parts of south-west England and western Scotland, and gale force winds locally.

The remainder of the month was showery with thunderstorms and outbreaks of rain but with good sunny periods. A developing ridge on the 30th brought a mainly fine end to the month with more than 13 hr. of sunshine at many places.

**Pressure and Wind.** Mean pressure was everywhere below the average, the deficit at 9h. ranging from 6.7 mb. at Stornoway to 3.9 mb. at Shoeburyness. Winds were variable but mainly south-westerly at first becoming predominantly north-westerly from 4th to 10th and then mainly between south and south-west until the 15th. From 16th-19th they were mainly northerly, but variable on the 20th and 21st, becoming mainly south-westerly until the 27th and mostly northerly during the last three days of the month.

Gales occurred in England and Wales on 6th-8th, 10th-15th, 17th, 18th, 24th-26th and 30th, and in Scotland on 4th-8th, 13th-15th, 25th and 26th. On the 6th gusts of 67, 66 and 63 kt. were recorded at Benbecula, Tiree and Bidston Observatory respectively.

**Temperature.** Mean temperature exceeded the 1921-50 average by 2.2°F. in England and Wales, 1.8°F. in Scotland and 1.1°F. in Northern Ireland. The 14th was one of the warmest days of the month with temperature rising to 68°F. at Edinburgh and Kelso and to 71°F. at several places in eastern England. The month was remarkably free from air frosts. Extreme temperatures included:- (England and Wales) 71°F. at Herne Bay on the 13th and at several places in eastern England on the 14th, 20°F. at Moor House on the 30th; (Scotland) 69°F. at Sourhope on the 14th, 21°F. at Dalwhinnie and Kincaig on the 19th and at Carsphairn on the 4th; (Northern Ireland) 62°F. at Armagh on the 21st and at Ballykelly on the 23rd, 28°F. at Loughgall on the 4th.

**Precipitation.** The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the 1916-50 average was 130 over England and Wales, where it was the wettest April since 1935, and 123 over Scotland and Northern Ireland. Less than the average occurred around the Thames estuary, over much of East Anglia and the east Midlands as far north as the Humber, over much of Ayrshire and northern Lanarkshire and in Co. Down and eastern Antrim. Twice the average was exceeded in the Wrexham area and in Lewes.

Thunderstorms were more frequent than is usual during April and occurred on the 6th, 8-10th, 14th, 15th, 27th, and 28th in England and Wales and on the 17th, 21st and 29th as well in Scotland; they were most widespread on the 14th and 27th.

Snow and sleet showers were widespread in Scotland on 6-10th and 28-30th, they were fairly widespread in England on the 7th and also occurred locally on 6-10th, 18th and 19th.

**Sunshine.** The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the 1921-50 average was 98 in England and Wales, 96 in Scotland and 104 in Northern Ireland. It was mainly above average in the Midlands, north-east England and east Scotland but mainly below elsewhere, and ranged from 76 per cent. at Aber to 124 per cent. at Hull and Marchmont.

**Fog.** Fog occurred on 8 days in Scotland and on the 1st-4th, 16th, 17th and 21st-24th in England and Wales.

**Miscellaneous phenomena.** The aurora was observed in Scotland on 20 nights, 1-13th, 23rd, 24th and 26th-30th.