

# MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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## Cold and wet with snow at times, but dry in north-west.

As low pressure over the continent moved away a small polar depression came south-eastwards off the east coast of Britain on the 2nd. Late next day and during the 4th an occluded front moved rather slowly eastwards over all districts, but the associated low remained to the west until the 8th when it advanced across northern England. Meanwhile, a deepening frontal wave passed quickly up the English Channel on the 5th. On the 10th a deep, but filling depression came slowly north-eastwards over southern England. Pressure then began to rise and an anticyclone progressed from south-west of Ireland to central Europe on the 14th and 15th. A cold front then moved rather slowly from the north-west to reach south-east England on the 17th.

For the remainder of the month pressure was low to the south-west of the British Isles; between the 18th and 20th a depression moved northwards off the east coast of Britain while during the night of the 20th/21st another crossed central England from the south-west; between the 21st and 26th two frontal troughs made slow progress northwards over all districts; between the 27th and 29th a depression from the continent filled up over the North Sea while late on the 30th a thundery low reached the English Channel from the south-west.

### Weather

Apart from a brief dry and quite warm interlude around mid-month the weather was unsettled and, during the first three weeks, mainly cold with sleet or snow at times. In the west, however, much of the rainfall was slight. Except in north and east Scotland thunder, often with hail, occurred frequently, particularly between the 4th and 7th and from the 20th, the storms being widespread on the 22nd and 26th.

### Wind

This was mainly rather a quiet month with periods of light or moderate winds. On some occasions, however, they were stronger with gales in places, particularly on the 2nd, 10th, 11th and 22nd. Winds also reached gale force in the Channel Islands on the 5th, with a gust of 59 kn at Guernsey Airport, and on some other occasions in the north, mainly over hill tops. On the 10th a freighter capsized to the west of the Isles of Scilly (the crew were saved), a trawler was abandoned and two yachtsmen were lost overboard in the English Channel. Apart from northerly winds on the 1st and 2nd and about the 11th and 18th directions were mainly from the south-westerly quarter during the first three weeks and from an easterly point thereafter.

### Temperature

This was the coldest April since 1922 or, perhaps, even this century over Northern Ireland, but only since 1966 in Scotland and 1978 over England and Wales. Minima were generally well below those of January as were mean temperatures at many places in the north and west. Mean temperatures ranged from more than 2 °C below average in much of Northern Ireland and in parts of north and east Scotland, north-east England and North Wales to less than 1 °C below at a few places, mostly along the coast from Essex to the Isle of Wight.

was cold, even very cold at times. Frost was frequent, particularly in the north where it was severe locally. On the 3rd the temperature fell to -9.1 °C at Dalwhinnie and Tomatin, both in Highland Region, and on the 7th to -7.9 °C at Murlough, Co. Down, while on the 18th maxima failed to reach 4 °C in some south-eastern parts of England. However, it was briefly warmer around mid-month, especially in the south-east on the 16th when the temperature reached 19.5 °C in Greater London at Enfield and Kew Gardens. Temperatures were mostly near average during the remainder of the month although north-eastern coastal areas were rather cold, while on the 26th a maximum of 17.7 °C was recorded at Onich, Highland Region.

### Rainfall

Over England and Wales generally this was the wettest April since 1920 with more than twice the average rainfall being recorded in most eastern and central parts, and in scattered areas elsewhere. Rainfall was also above average in Shetland, the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands, much of east Scotland and at a few places in Northern Ireland and west Scotland. Elsewhere, including parts of western Wales and the north-west of England rainfall was below average. In north-western Scotland, where it was the sixth consecutive dry April, some places had less than half their average.

Showers or longer periods of precipitation, wintry at times, occurred frequently throughout the month. The rainfall was heavy on several occasions, being particularly prolonged on the 10th in Wales and central parts of England, with 57.1 mm at Bradfield Filters, near Sheffield, on the 17th and 18th over East Anglia and south-east England and on the 28th in north-east England and south-east Scotland, with 60.0 mm at Sourhope, Borders Region. However, rainfall totals were often quite small in western areas, especially in the north-west of Scotland during the second half of the month while, except in the far north of Scotland, it was mainly dry between the 12th and 15th.

### Snow

Showers or longer periods of sleet or snow occurred rather widely until the 12th and between

the 16th and 23rd. The showers were particularly heavy and prolonged on the 2nd over north-eastern Scotland and during the following night from Lincolnshire to East Sussex and Kent; early on the 3rd up to 20 cm of snow were reported to have blocked roads near Dover. During the night of the 3rd/4th snow fell in many areas, but accumulations were mostly slight. While in most areas the snow quickly melted by day extensive snow cover persisted throughout the month over northern mountains.

### Sunshine

Sunshine totals were below normal in most parts of Britain with less than 75 per cent of average being recorded in Shetland, Orkney, at a few places in eastern Scotland and locally in West Yorkshire. But in Northern Ireland and here and there in South Wales and the Midlands totals were rather above average.

While sunshine often varied from day to day it was mostly sunny over Northern Ireland between the 17th and 21st, but particularly dull over the south-eastern half of England from the 17th to the 20th and in the far north-east of Scotland from the 22nd.

### Fog

Patches of fog formed quite frequently overnight, especially in northern districts between the 4th and 9th, over central and southern areas from the 14th to the 22nd, and more generally from the 25th. Coastal fog was rather extensive at times in the north-east of Britain from the 23rd while patches also affected southern coasts on a few occasions, particularly on the 16th. Over hills fog was widespread on a number of occasions, notably in central areas on the 10th and in the north-east during the last ten days.

### Miscellaneous Phenomena

Tornadoes caused some structural damage in a suburb of Derby on the 22nd and at Wirksworth, Cromford and Birchover, all near Matlock, Derbyshire, on the 26th. On the second occasion bar-shaped lumps of quite soft ice, 18 mm long, fell during a thunderstorm with hail at Wingerworth, about 10 km to the north-east of Matlock.

Table 1 District values

District	air temperature °C					mean 30-cm	rain- days	rainfall	sun- shine
	Highest Max *	Lowest Min *	max.	min.	mean	soil temp °C			
			difference from average						
0 Scotland N	17.7	-4.4	-1.7	-1.7	-1.7	-0.6	0	58	90
1 Scotland E	14.8	-6.4	-2.3	-1.3	-1.8	-0.5	+5	119	83
2 England E & NE	17.4	-2.7	-2.1	-1.3	-1.7	-0.7	+6	190	85
3 East Anglia	18.4	-2.8	-1.5	-0.9	-1.2	-0.8	+8	235	88
4 Midland Counties	17.6	-3.7	-1.8	-1.5	-1.6	-0.8	+7	214	88
5 England SE & Central S	18.6	-2.8	-1.5	-1.1	-1.3	-0.9	+9	209	90
6 Scotland W	17.7	-5.5	-1.4	-2.0	-1.7	-0.7	+2	64	97
7 England NW & Wales N	16.1	-3.8	-2.1	-1.5	-1.8	-1.0	+7	119	86
8 England SW & Wales S	17.0	-2.2	-1.9	-1.7	-1.7	-0.6	+7	150	95
N Ireland	14.7	-4.6	-1.8	-2.7	-2.2	-0.7	+1	86	106
Scotland	17.7	-6.4	-1.8	-1.7	-1.7	-0.6	+2	80	90
England & Wales	18.6	-3.8	-1.8	-1.3	-1.5	-0.8	+7	186	89

\* Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations

For much of the first three weeks of the month it