

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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April 1969 — Sunny but cold

High pressure dominated the weather over the British Isles during the first week of the month and from the 17th to 19th. At other times low pressure over or near the British Isles resulted in changeable, occasionally stormy, conditions.

Weather — It was a very sunny month except in east Scotland and on the coasts of eastern England. However, despite the sunshine, it was also a rather cold month. A mainly dry first week included Easter (4th-7th) when it was fine in most places except in coastal areas of east Scotland and north-east England. The four days of Easter were reported to be the sunniest in Manchester since at least 1902 while in the south some areas had their second sunniest Easter this century. Farmers in south-west Scotland said that the cold dry weather of the last few months had resulted in a shortage of grass which had adversely affected the lambing season. Water stocks in reservoirs in west Scotland were seriously depleted.

Wind — The frequency of gales was about average. They occurred locally on 10 days in the south and on 6 days in Scotland and were widespread on the 12th. Winds were strong on the south and east coasts of England on the 5th and 6th and reached gale force at times; on the 6th the cross-channel hover-craft service was halted. The period 9th-16th was stormy with squally west or south-west winds in all areas. On the 9th, a gust of 60 kt was recorded at Cairngorm (1090m), Inverness-shire, and on the 11th a gust of 61 kt occurred at the Forth Road Bridge. The 12th was very windy everywhere with gales in many areas; trees were blown down and minor damage to property was reported. On the same day, strong gusts were reported at places as far apart as Earls Hill, near Stirling (75 kt) and Yeovilton, Somerset (72 kt). Easterly gales occurred in Scotland on the 22nd and a gust of 52 kt was reported at Wick. Gales also occurred on the 25th and 26th in south-east England and East Anglia and a gust of 53 kt was reported at Eastbourne on the 26th.

Temperature — April was colder than the normal in most areas with the exception of a few places in Devon and Cornwall. Monthly mean temperature was generally about 1 deg C below average but in some places in the south it was near normal. The first and third weeks were particularly cold in most districts. Minimum temperatures recorded included: -8.3°C at Moor House (Westmorland) on the 2nd; -7.8°C at Alwen (Denbighshire) on the 3rd and 20th; -7.8°C at Grantown-on-Spey (Nairnshire) on the 19th; -7.2°C at Murlough Forest (Co. Down) on the 20th.

There was a short mild spell at the beginning of the second week when most of the maxima for the month were recorded. These included: 23.9°C at Southend (Essex) on the 9th; 21.1°C at Kelso (Roxburghshire), Rhyl and Prestatyn (Flintshire) and 18.5°C at Aldergrove (Co. Antrim) all on the 8th.

Rainfall — It was drier than normal in west Scotland and in central and southern England. In a few areas in west Scotland less than half the average rainfall (including melted snow) was recorded and April was the sixth consecutive month with a rainfall deficit at many places in west Scotland. In the Thames estuary rainfall was less than a quarter of the normal. In sharp contrast, parts of east Scotland and most of northern England were wetter than average and nearly two and a half times the normal amount of rain fell in north Lincolnshire.

Most districts were dry until the 8th and there was also very little rainfall from the 17th to 20th. On the 14th, local flooding occurred in Lancashire and Cheshire following heavy rain; heavy falls were also recorded in west Scotland. All districts had changeable weather from the 21st to 28th with heavy rain at times. On the 21st over 51 mm were recorded at Glen Tanar, on Deeside, and more than 50 mm fell at Skerry Hill North in the Antrim Hills. Widespread rain-

fall continued during the next two days and daily falls in excess of 30 mm were recorded in many places. On the 24th and 25th further heavy rain occurred in most areas; 39 mm fell at Lake Vyrnwy (Montgomeryshire) on the 24th and there were heavy falls in Devon and Cornwall on the same day.

Thunder was heard on 14 days in England and Wales and on 6 days in Scotland. During the period 21st to 28th the rain was often thundery and thunderstorms accompanied by hail were reported in many places.

Snow — In some places in the Northern Isles and on high ground in Scotland, snow or sleet (rain or drizzle and snow) fell on eight or nine days during the month and wintry showers occurred widely in Scotland during the second week. However, snow was generally light and did not lie to any extent except on high ground. Sleet or snow showers occurred in East Anglia on the 18th and 19th.

Sunshine — Sunshine amounts exceeded normal nearly everywhere and many places had their sunniest April for over 15 years; sunshine was particularly abundant during the first week especially in the south. The exceptions were on the east coasts of England and Scotland and in the Northern Isles but, even so, monthly totals in these areas were mostly only slightly less than average. Excesses of over 50 hours occurred in some areas and Rothesay (Mull of Kintyre) recorded 146 per cent of average. Further south, 139 per cent of normal was recorded at Oxford where it was the sunniest April since 1914. At Ross-on-Wye it was the sunniest April since sunshine records began in 1915. At the other extreme, Kirkwall (Orkneys) recorded only 78 per cent of average.

Fog — Sea fog affected coasts in east Scotland and north-east England on the 7th and 8th and drifted well inland at times. On the 10th there was coastal fog in south and south-west England. Sea fog returned to the coasts of east Scotland and north-east England on the 22nd and persisted until the 24th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — The aurora was observed on 11 nights in Scotland mainly during the third week.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES, April 1969

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							% of Average		
0 SCOTLAND, N.	18.3	-3.3	-0.3	-1.2	-0.8	-0.6	-0.7	-1	90	107
1 SCOTLAND, E.	19.4	-2.8	-1.1	-1.1	-1.1	-1.1	-0.8	+1	108	103
2 ENGLAND, N.E.	19.4	-3.9	+1.3	-1.1	-1.2	-1.2	-1.4	+4	82	114
3 ENGLAND, E.	22.8	-3.3	-0.7	-1.2	-1.0	-0.9	-1.0	+1	77	122
4 MIDLANDS	21.1	-4.4	-0.5	-1.2	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1	101	130
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	22.2	-5.6	-0.4	-1.1	-0.8	-0.7	-0.7	-3	46	119
6 SCOTLAND, W.	20.2	-5.5	-0.5	-1.3	-0.9	-0.9	-1.0	-3	66	125
7 ENGLAND, N.W. and N. Wales	20.5	-1.9	-0.7	-1.1	-1.0	-1.2	-0.8	-1	129	128
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S. Wales	20.6	-3.9	-0.1	-0.9	-0.5	-0.9	-0.5	-2	90	123
N. IRELAND	18.5	-5.6	-0.1	-1.7	-0.9	-	-	(-3)	69	124
SCOTLAND	20.2	-5.5	-0.6	-1.2	-0.9	-	-	(-1)	73	113
ENG. and WALES	22.8	-5.6	-0.6	-1.1	-0.9	-	-	(0)	58	123

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