

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL STATIONS AND VOLUNTEER OBSERVERS

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APRIL, 1944.—A Warm Month.

The first three weeks were unsettled but from the 25th onwards fair, sunny weather prevailed over most of the country. The general rainfall somewhat exceeded the average but a deficiency occurred over considerable areas.

During the opening days a large Atlantic depression moved slowly north-east to the west of Ireland while secondary troughs of low pressure moved north-east over the British Isles; weather was unsettled, and rainfall was heavy at times. On the 5th and 6th a wedge of high pressure off our south-west coasts moved eastward to Denmark and increased in intensity: a spell of mainly fair weather occurred on the 6th and 7th except in the extreme north of Scotland.

On the 8th a deep Atlantic depression moved north-east to the south-west of Iceland where it remained with little movement until the 12th, while secondary troughs moved round it in an anti-clockwise direction over the British Isles. Unsettled weather prevailed with some rain or showers but long bright periods; local thunderstorms were reported on the 11th. On the 13th and 14th a new and vigorous Atlantic depression moved south-east to the north-west of Spain and became less deep while troughs of low pressure moved north-east over the British Isles; mild unsettled conditions persisted. On the 15th and 16th the main depression moved north-east across the English Channel to Denmark; almost general rain occurred on the 15th and scattered rain, with local thunder in south-west England, on the 16th. During the 17th and 18th a belt of relatively high pressure moved eastward over the British Isles giving mainly fair weather in England, but rather scattered rain occurred in Scotland and Ireland on the 17th and more general rain in Ireland and west and north-west Scotland on the 18th. Another deep depression was centred south of Iceland on the morning of the 19th and during that day an associated trough moved east over the British Isles. Rainfall was general and heavy in many places and gales were reported in the north-west and north. The main disturbance moved away east-north-east and the Azores high moved north-east; showers were reported in the northern half of the country on the 20th. Subsequently pressure was high to the south-west and south of the British Isles, while troughs of low pressure moving east caused rain in the west and north.

By the 25th the anticyclone was centred immediately off south-west Ireland and henceforth dominated conditions over most of the country. There was little or no rain apart from small amounts at times in parts of Scotland. This period was sunny on the whole except in north Scotland.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure exceeded the average, the excess ranging from 1.1 mb. at Stornoway to 4.9 mb. at Portland Bill. The chart shows a region of high pressure over south-east and south England and an area of low pressure off north-west Scotland. The month was less windy than usual in England. The chief periods of gale were the 19th–20th, 24th and, in the Orkneys and Shetlands, the 27th: local gales occurred outside these periods. Among the highest speeds registered in gusts were 67 m.p.h. at Lerwick on the 27th, 62 m.p.h. at Tiree on the 20th, and 60 m.p.h. at Edinburgh on the 19th and at Aberdeen on the 24th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature was very high: the deviation from the average for the districts ranged from +3.4°F. in Scotland, N. to +4.9°F. in Northern Ireland. Although this month was not so warm as April 1943, as far as can be estimated it was warmer

over the country as a whole than any other April since 1914. The opening days were cold, particularly the 1st, screen minimum temperatures of 25°F. or below, being widely registered in Britain. Among the warmest days were the 13th (in Scotland), 27th, 29th and 30th: maxima of 70°F. or above were widespread in England on the 27th and 30th.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 75°F. at Milford on the 27th, Bramley on the 27th and 30th and Birmingham, Prestwood, Hereford and London (Camden Square and Westminster) on the 30th, 20°F. at Bellingham and Houghall on the 1st; (Scotland) 67°F. at Stonehaven on the 30th, 15°F. at Dalwhinnie and Peebles on the 1st; (Northern Ireland) 70°F. at Lisburn on the 30th, 26°F. at Garvagh on the 1st.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915 was 108 over England and Wales, 104 over Scotland and 96 over Northern Ireland. In Scotland, broadly speaking, less than the average occurred in the north-west, over much of the extreme south and in an area in the north-east covering Banffshire and the neighbouring part of Aberdeenshire. Elsewhere there was an excess: locally around the Firth of Tay the excess amounted to 50 per cent. In England and Wales less than the average was received over most of south-east England, the greater part of Wales and the neighbouring part of the west Midlands, at a number of places in the extreme north and locally in south-west England. More than 150 per cent. of the average occurred in small areas in Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Norfolk and Yorkshire and around Woburn and Tynemouth. In Northern Ireland percentages at individual stations ranged from 79 at Newtownbutler to 106 at Aldergrove.

Widespread heavy rain fell on the 19th. Among the heaviest falls in 24 hours were:—

13th	1.86 in. at Fofanny Reservoir, Mourne Mountains.
15th	2.37 in. at Halifax.
18th	1.85 in. at Arienskill (Lochailort).
19th	3.33 in. at Borrowdale, 2.58 in. at Craigenallie (Galloway), 2.52 in. at Ardgour and 2.18 in. at Hawkshead (Lancs.).

Thunder was reported locally on the 11th, 16th, 19th, 22nd and 27th.

Snow or sleet fell locally in England and in all Scottish districts on the 1st and 2nd, but did not lie to any appreciable depth. Light showers occurred locally in Scotland also on the 3rd, 20th, 23rd, and 24th.

Sunshine.—Sunshine was deficient in Northern Ireland and in Scotland, especially so in west and north Scotland: a slight excess occurred only at three stations in east Scotland. In England and Wales the deviations were rather variable, but on the whole the duration was not very different from the average. The percentages of the average for the districts ranged from 72 in Scotland, W. to 102 in England, S.E. (See Table I.)

Fog.—Fog developed rather frequently, chiefly during the first 23 days and on the 30th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—Aurora was observed locally at northern stations in Scotland on only five nights: this was fewer than in any other April in the last ten years. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on 18 days.