

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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Mostly cool and changeable.

On the 1st a cold front associated with a depression near the Faeroes crossed all areas from the north-west. This depression moved southwards and a complex area of low pressure developed over the British Isles, North Sea and much of north-western Europe, dominating the weather for the first week of the month. On the 7th and 8th a centre of low pressure became established near south-west England, but this was absorbed in a deep depression which moved northwards from Biscay over the next few days, its associated frontal systems crossing the British Isles from the south.

By the 13th pressure began to rise over the United Kingdom and an anticyclone developed over Ireland on the 15th. This persisted for several days, but by the 18th it began to recede towards the south-west as fronts approached north-western districts. A succession of fronts and ridges then crossed the British Isles from the west until the 24th, when a complex area of low pressure developed over the North Sea and moved only slowly eastwards. The anticyclone remained in the area between Ireland and the Azores until the end of the month, but frontal systems associated with depressions moving from Iceland to the Norwegian Sea continued to cross all parts of Britain from the north-west.

Weather

The month started with a rather cold and unsettled spell of weather. Rain or showers affected all areas at times and snow or sleet showers were reported in many districts during the first week. There was a change towards the end of the second week when it became drier and warmer generally. From the 16th until the end of the month the unsettled weather returned with further rain or showers at times in all districts. There were thunderstorms in places, especially in parts of southern England between the 23rd and 25th, and on the 29th and 30th hail and sleet showers were reported in many northern districts.

Wind

During most of the first week winds were light and rather variable in direction over all parts of the United Kingdom. On the 7th fresh or strong winds from between north-east and south-east became established over all areas and persisted until the 10th when speeds dropped again. Directions then became mainly between south-east and south-west and winds freshened on the 12th, when gales were reported in exposed western areas. From the 13th to 18th directions were again rather variable and except in some exposed coastal areas speeds generally were only light or moderate; sea breezes were reported on one or two days. From the 19th until the end of the month winds blew mainly from between south-west and north-west and were fresh or strong at times. Gales occurred in northern coastal areas on the 29th and 30th.

Temperature

Monthly mean temperatures were below average in all areas. Values were mostly between 0 and 1 °C below normal over England and much of Scotland, but were between 1 and 1.5 °C below average in Northern Ireland, parts of central and northern Scotland, Wales and a few coastal areas in north-eastern and southern England.

The first week was rather cold in all parts of the United Kingdom, but temperatures rose towards the end of the second week and it became warm in many areas with maxima of 23.5 °C being recorded at Hoddesdon (Hertfordshire) and Ulcombe (Kent) on the 15th. The London Weather Centre had its warmest Easter (13th to 16th inclusive) since 1949. From the 16th until the end of the month, however, temperatures returned to near or below normal over most areas, although southern and eastern Scotland had a warm day on the 28th.

Rainfall

Rainfall totals were above average in Northern Ireland, in eastern Scotland, in a large area of central England extending from the Scottish border to the south coast, and also in most of East Anglia, south-west England and parts of west Wales. Values exceeded 150 per cent of the normal in north-east Scotland and in a belt extending southwards from West Yorkshire to the Sussex coast. In the latter area a few places recorded more than twice their normal amount for the month. Most remaining areas of the United Kingdom had less than average rainfall with values generally between 70 and 100 per cent of normal.

The month was generally unsettled with showers or longer periods of rain affecting all areas at times. Considerable flooding was reported on the 7th and 8th following heavy rain in places, particularly in parts of Leicestershire, Surrey and Sussex. Thunderstorms, sometimes accompanied by hail, occurred on several days; on the 8th eleven players taking part in a soccer match at Caerleon (Gwent) were taken to hospital after being struck by lightning.

Snow

During the first ten days snow and sleet showers occurred in many areas but, apart from a report of

sleet in Shetland on the 15th, there was then a period until the last week of the month without further snow. During the last week, and especially on the 29th and 30th, showers of sleet and snow were again reported in many parts of the United Kingdom. Snow did not lie for long on low ground at any time during the month, and over high ground in Scotland and the northern Pennines the snow cover receded rapidly after about the 10th.

Sunshine

Sunshine totals were below average in all parts of the United Kingdom, except for small areas in south Devon, along the coast of North Wales, in the Isle of Man and around the Solway Firth. In these latter areas values were between 100 and 105 per cent of normal. Most other districts recorded between 60 and 100 per cent of their normal sunshine for the month, parts of north-east Scotland and Orkney being particularly dull. In the Grampian Region, Kinloss with 97.0 hours and Dyce with 109.5 hours had the lowest April sunshine totals since their records began in 1952 and 1946 respectively. In spite of the generally dull weather, however most places had a few sunny days during the month.

Fog

Patches of overnight fog formed in some inland areas during the first week and became dense in places in England, but mostly cleared soon after sunrise. During the remainder of the month fog continued to be reported from time to time, but occurred mainly along coasts and over hills and was often associated with precipitation.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

A small whirlwind was reported at Earlswood Lake, near Reigate (Surrey), during the afternoon of the 18th.

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				
0 Scotland N	16.5	-3.5	-1.1	-0.4	-0.7	-0.7	+4	117	74
1 Scotland E	16.4	-6.2	-1.6	0.0	-0.8	-0.7	+6	129	78
2 England E & NE	20.9	-3.0	-1.4	-0.3	-0.8	-0.6	+5	104	79
3 East Anglia	22.8	-2.0	-1.1	-0.1	-0.6	-0.8	+4	138	77
4 Midland Counties	22.2	-4.4	-1.3	-0.1	-0.7	-1.0	+4	134	75
5 England SE & Central S	22.9	-4.2	-0.9	-0.1	-0.5	-0.8	+5	144	76
6 Scotland W	17.0	-6.2	-1.3	-0.6	-0.9	-0.9	+3	94	85
7 England NW & Wales N	20.9	-3.9	-1.5	-0.2	-0.8	-1.1	+4	99	86
8 England SW & Wales S	22.0	-2.7	-1.2	-0.6	-0.9	-0.6	+4	103	92
N Ireland	16.9	-4.6	-1.9	-0.8	-1.3	-1.1	+6	128	84
Scotland	17.0	-6.2	-1.3	-0.3	-0.8	-0.8	+4	113	79
England & Wales	22.9	-4.4	-1.2	-0.2	-0.7	-0.8	+4	120	81

* Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations