

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

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Cold and rather dull, with snow at times: dry in north-west.

A complex depression over Ireland and south-west England influenced the weather at the beginning of the month, but this soon moved away south-eastwards. Pressure then rose over Scandinavia, and an anticyclone developed to the north of Britain, maintaining an easterly airflow for several days. The anticyclone moved south to Scotland on the 5th, but retreated westwards during the 7th, allowing fronts and depressions to move south or south-east across the British Isles between the 8th and the 14th. Another anticyclone drifted east across all districts between the 15th and the 17th. Frontal troughs from the west or south-west then crossed all areas and a filling depression moved across the Irish Sea on the 20th and 21st. Pressure rose over the British Isles on the 22nd as an anticyclone developed over France and Germany; this drifted northwards and declined over the next few days. A cold front moved slowly southwards on the 24th and 25th, but then a complex area of low pressure persisted to the south of Britain until the end of the month, with fronts gradually progressing northwards.

Weather

The month was generally cool, particularly during the second week, when snow fell in many areas, and also in the middle of the last week, when there were wintry showers in the north. The weather was mostly changeable and rather dull, although there were some sunny days and it was very dry in the north-west. Easterly winds predominated and fog sometimes persisted along eastern coasts. Hill fog formed extensively at times.

Wind

Winds were fresh or strong on exposed coasts at times throughout the month, occasionally reaching gale force locally. Recorded maximum gusts exceeded 60 kt on the 9th only, when speeds of 71 and 61 kt respectively were attained at the mountain station at Snaefell (Isle of Man) and at Tiree in the Inner Hebrides. Directions were mainly south-east to north-east during the first week, becoming north to north-west between the 9th and the 14th. Speeds were generally light and directions variable from the 15th to the 17th, but winds then blew mainly from points between south-west and south-east until the 23rd. East to north-east winds prevailed from the 24th until the end of the month.

Temperature

Monthly mean temperatures were below average in all areas. Departures from the normal were between -2.0 and -2.5 °C over most of eastern and central England and in parts of Wales and Cornwall, and were mostly between -1.0 and -2.0 °C elsewhere. This was the coldest April over England and Wales, as a whole, since 1922. Temperatures were generally near normal during the early part of the month, but it became cold with night frosts during the second week. It was very cold at times, and minima of around -11 °C were recorded in North Wales on the night of the 10th/11th. Temperatures returned to nearer the normal during the third week, although it was sometimes cool in eastern areas. The nights were mild in most districts between the 20th and 23rd, however, and many places recorded their highest daytime temperatures between the 22nd and the 24th, when maxima reached at least 19 °C in parts of southern England. Colder

weather returned to all areas by the 25th and it remained generally cold until the end of the month.

Rainfall

Rainfall totals were above average in most east coast areas from the Moray Firth to the Wash and in most places south-east of a line from the Wash to Torbay. Totals exceeded 150 per cent of average in parts of eastern Scotland and in east Kent, where twice the normal amount of rain fell in Thanet. Rainfall was below average almost everywhere else, with less than half the usual amount for April falling in the Northern Isles and western Scotland, and also over most of north-west England, the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland. Parts of western Scotland had less than 25 per cent of average, but no long-term records were broken as April 1974 was drier. Many places had rain at the beginning of the month, but it then became mostly dry during the rest of the first week. Outbreaks of rain, wintry showers and thunderstorms which occurred during the second week were followed by a few mainly dry days, but rain reached most areas between the 18th and 21st, the heaviest falls occurring in Wales and south-west England. There was another mainly dry spell from the 22nd to the 24th, but the weather then became unsettled.

Snow

Falls of sleet or snow were confined to two main periods. Wintry showers occurred in northern areas on the 9th and moderate amounts of snow fell in north-eastern Scotland, where considerable drifting was reported. A depth of 17 cm was measured at Braemore in Caithness on the morning of the 10th and snow fell in many parts of the United Kingdom on that day. There were heavy falls of snow in places and Bedford re-

ported an undrifted depth of 20 cm in the evening. Depths of 5 to 15 cm were measured in level snow at a number of places on the morning of the 11th. Wintry showers continued to occur until the 15th and were again reported between the 25th and the 28th. Occurrences were mainly in the north during the latter period, although scattered falls of sleet and snow, which did not lie, were reported as far south as Wiltshire and Berkshire on the 26th.

Sunshine

Except in Shetland and in one or two places on western coasts, sunshine was below average in all districts. Monthly totals were between 75 and 100 per cent of the normal in Orkney, the far north of mainland Scotland, in most western parts of the United Kingdom and along Channel-facing coasts of south-east England. Values were mostly between 50 and 75 per cent of average elsewhere. Edinburgh had its dullest April since 1901, but in spite of the generally dull weather, most areas had some sunny periods during the month.

Fog

Fog occurred most frequently during the first week, from about the 17th to the 24th, and towards the end of the month, but local fog patches occasionally developed at other times. Eastern counties of England and Scotland, and the Midlands, were the most affected areas, and fog formed extensively on coasts and hills at times, persisting in places between the 22nd and the 24th. Six people were killed on the 29th when their private aircraft crashed in fog into a hill near Rochester (Kent).

Miscellaneous Phenomena

Nil

Table 1 District values

District	air temperature °C					mean 30-cm earth temp °C	rain-days	rainfall	sunshine
	Highest Max *	Lowest Min. *	max.	min.	mean				
			difference from average						
0 Scotland N	17.2	-7.2	-1.3	-1.0	-1.1	-0.5	-7	52	85
1 Scotland E	14.6	-7.3	-2.7	-0.6	-1.7	-0.1	-2	107	71
2 England E & NE	14.8	-5.8	-3.1	-1.1	-2.1	-0.5	-2	92	62
3 East Anglia	17.3	-5.1	-3.1	-1.1	-2.2	-1.1	0	113	69
4 Midland Counties	16.5	-5.9	-2.9	-1.3	-2.1	-1.1	+2	86	66
5 England SE & Central S	18.8	-5.3	-2.9	-1.2	-2.0	-1.3	+4	128	72
6 Scotland W	17.0	-7.3	-1.6	-1.1	-1.3	-0.5	-6	39	76
7 England NW & Wales N	17.3	-6.0	-1.9	-1.2	-1.5	-1.0	-2	59	82
8 England SW & Wales S	18.5	-4.7	-2.4	-1.3	-1.9	-1.0	+2	86	83
N Ireland	15.2	-4.5	-1.8	-1.2	-1.5	-0.4	-3	48	78
Scotland	17.2	-7.3	-1.9	-0.9	-1.4	-0.4	-5	66	77
England & Wales	18.8	-6.0	-2.7	-1.2	-2.0	-1.0	+1	94	72

*Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations.