

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

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

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January, 1926. Wet; mild except for about a week of cold weather commencing on the 13th. An unusual prevalence of southerly to south-easterly winds.

General.—January was mild except for a short spell of cold weather which commenced on the 13th and lasted generally for about a week. There was an unusual prevalence of southerly and south-easterly winds.

During the first eleven days of January, the weather was mainly influenced by the passage of depressions and their associated secondaries between Ireland and the western coasts of the British Isles. Mild, unsettled conditions prevailed generally in western and southern districts and in the north of Scotland; rain and high winds occurred almost daily, the heaviest rain being reported on the 1st, when 85mm. (3.33 in.) occurred at Tynywaun (Glamorgan) and on the 8th when 61mm. (2.40 in.) occurred at Achnashellach. The floods which were so widespread over the country at the beginning of the month began to subside gradually about the 8th. In the eastern districts of England and Scotland, sunnier and less wet weather prevailed during this period.

As the large anti-cyclone centred over northern Russia extended westwards cold south-easterly winds set in over the British Isles on the 12th and a fall in temperature took place in eastern districts spreading later to western districts; at Richmond (Surrey) the day maximum on the 12th, viz. 42°F., was 9°F. lower than the day maximum on the previous day, while at Cahirciveen (Kerry) the day maximum on the 13th, viz. 42°F., was 16°F. lower than on the previous day. During the next few days, low day maxima and night minima accompanied by severe frosts were prevalent. Snow fell widely, and owing to the persistence of the frosty weather lay on the ground for many days in places; on the 16th snow was about a foot deep at South Farnborough. At Hampstead frost was continuous from the 13th to the 16th while the grass minimum of 6°F. recorded there on the 16th was the lowest since March, 1909. Other low temperatures recorded are included in the section dealing with temperature.

On the 17th, depressions approaching from the Atlantic brought milder weather to the western districts, although in the eastern districts cold weather persisted with snow and fog at times. By the 23rd, however, strong warm south-west winds had extended to the North Sea and mild unsettled weather predominated during the last week with further high winds and heavy rain at times, but with many bright intervals.

The general character of the month is illustrated by the following remarks taken from observers' notes:—Lerwick (Shetlands).—A very sunless month with a prevalence of south to south-easterly winds. Huddersfield (Yorkshire).—Dull and rather wet; mild except for cold spell from the 13th to the 22nd. Meltham (Yorkshire).—Southerly winds were more prevalent than in any month for the past 45 years, except in March 1903. Southport (Lancashire).—Except for a severe week or so around the centre of the month, January was very mild, quiet and mainly dull, south-easterly winds being abnormally prevalent. Copdock (Suffolk).—A wet and dull month, rainfall being largely in excess of the normal and sunshine considerably below it. The outstanding feature of the weather of the month was the short spell of sharp frost in the middle of the month. The screen minimum temperature on the 16th, viz. 12°F., being only equalled on two previous occasions in 25 years, February, 1902, and December, 1906. Berkhamsted (Hertfordshire).—The month was wet and rather mild except for the cold spell from about the 14th to the 18th; the number of days of ground frost and "snow lying" exceeded the normal. The night of the 15th–17th was the coldest in any January since 1887. Dublin. —Very unsettled, mild and open weather prevailed up to the 12th, followed by a cold spell which lasted until about the 21st. The remainder of the month was mild and unsettled with high winds and rain on almost every day.

Pressure and Winds.—The mean pressure was markedly below normal at all stations. The deviations of monthly means of pressure at fixed hours varied from 10.2 mb. at Cahirciveen to 3.2 mb. at Yarmouth. The highest recorded pressure was 1034 mb. at Aberdeen, Tynemouth and Eskdalemuir on the 13th and the lowest 974 mb. at Cahirciveen on the 31st. High winds occurred on several days during the first and last weeks of the month but except at coastal stations gales were rare; the highest mean hourly velocity was 49 mi/hr. at Scilly on the 17th and the highest wind speed in a gust 76 mi/hr. at the same station on the 3rd.

Temperature.—The mean temperature of Districts 1–10 was 41.0°F. The mean temperature was above normal in all Districts, the largest excess, 2.4°F., occurring in Scotland N. and England N.W. (Mean temperatures 40.8°F. and 41.8°F. respectively) and the smallest excess, 1.0°F., in England N.E. (Mean temperature 39.2°F.). Mild conditions were experienced generally up to the 12th and again from about the 18th onwards in western districts and later in eastern districts. The mean temperatures for the first and last weeks of the month were well above normal in all Districts of the British Isles. During the intervening

period occurred the cold spell which which was the most noteworthy feature of the weather of the month. Low temperatures in the screen and severe ground frosts were recorded at several stations in England; amongst the lowest screen minima recorded were 5°F. at Rugby on the 16th, 2°F. at Luton, 3°F. at Raunds and Roade, 4°F. at Rothamsted, 5°F. at St. Albans and 6°F. at Oundle, Chelmsford, South Farnborough and Marlborough on the 17th. A screen minimum of 6°F. and a grass minimum of 0°F. at Oxford on the 17th were the lowest temperatures recorded there since 1878 and 1917 respectively. Grass minimum temperatures of -4°F. at St. Albans and -2°F. at Cranwell and Berkhamsted were recorded on the 17th; other low grass minima were -1°F. at Luton on the 17th, 1°F. at Cranwell on the 16th and 5°F. at Worksop, Oundle, Copdock and Porton on the 16th. At Ross-on-Wye the grass minimum temperature on the 16th was the lowest recorded there since February, 1917. The cold spell was less severe and less prolonged in Scotland and Ireland, where the mean temperature for the week ending January 16th was above normal while in England the mean temperature was 3°F. below normal.

The extreme screen temperatures for the month were:—(England and Wales) 60°F. at Aber (Bangor) on the 10th and at Usk on the 26th and 27th, 2°F. at Luton on the 17th, (Scotland) 58°F. at Onich on the 11th, 16°F. at Braemar on the 1st, (Ireland) 58°F. at Dublin (Phoenix Park) on the 10th, 18°F. at Markree Castle on the 16th.

Precipitation.—With the exception of areas in the extreme north of Scotland precipitation was everywhere above normal. In some districts the excess was considerable. Thus Dumfries and Perth had about twice and Dundee nearly two and a half times the normal; at Dundee it was the wettest January since 1867 and at Colmonell in south Ayrshire the wettest January since 1894. In parts of Oxfordshire and Berkshire more than twice the normal amount of rain fell, while in the neighbourhood of Ovington (Hampshire) the total for the month, viz. 182mm. (7.18 in.), amounted to more than two and a half times the normal. In Ireland the wettest areas, where more than twice the normal rainfall was recorded, were the south-eastern counties and a small area in Co. Down. In Ireland the month was the wettest January since 1877. Amongst the largest daily measurements of precipitation were 73mm. (2.89 in.) at Kinlochquoich on the 8th, 81mm. (3.18 in.) at Achdaliu (near Fort William) and 57mm. (2.23 in.) at Arrochar on the 10th. Floods occurred widely during the first week of the month. The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the normal, 1881–1915, was 156; the values for the counties were:—England and Wales 152, Scotland 141, Ireland 184.

Snow fell generally between the 14th, and 18th and owing to the persistence of frosty weather lay on the ground for several days. Thus at Braemar there were 12 days of snow but 21 days of "snow lying," at Balmoral, 6 days of snow and 15 days of "snow lying."

Thunderstorms occurred sporadically on the 6th, 25th, 26th and 29th, but at no station did the number of days of thunderstorm exceed one. Hail occurred at some stations, the largest number of days of hail reported being seven at Falmouth and Redruth (Cornwall).

Sunshine.—The mean daily duration of sunshine was about normal in most districts but was appreciably below normal in the Midland Counties and in England E. The deviations from normal varied from -0.35 hrs. in the Midland Counties (Mean daily duration 1.07 hrs.) to 0.08 hrs. in England S.E. (Mean daily duration 1.76 hrs.) In England and Ireland the week ending on the 16th was the sunniest generally and in Scotland the weeks ending on the 9th and 30th. The largest amounts of sunshine in England were recorded at stations on the south coast, in Scotland around the upper Moray Firth and in Ireland in the southern districts.

Fog.—Fog occurred at several stations on the 6th and 7th and between the 12th and 21st. There were few stations which were entirely free from fog. Amongst the largest numbers of days of fog were 19 at London (Kensington), 15 at Sprowston, and 12 at Hull.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—Solar halos were observed at several stations on various dates. The Zodiacal Light was seen at Wadhurst on the 2nd and at Oxford on the 2nd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 11th and 12th. Aurora was observed at Gordon Castle on the 7th, at Lerwick, Gordon Castle, Aberdeen, Crieff, West Linton and Armagh on the 13th, at Lerwick on the 14th and at Gordon Castle and Lerwick on the 22nd. Very fine colour effects accompanied the aurora at Lerwick on the 14th and 22nd, red predominating in the aurora of the 22nd. Auroral glows were observed at Lerwick on the 7th and 15th. A sun pillar was seen at Norwich on the 24th. Line squalls were observed at 15h. 30m. at Hodsock Priory (Worksop) and at 17h. 10m. at Richmond on the 6th and at 9h. 25m. at Raunds on the 7th.