

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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March, 1952 - Mainly mild until 25th, then cold and wintry. Rather dull.

The month was very mild until the 25th, apart from a temporary cold spell from the 13th to the 15th. The last week was cold particularly from the 27th onwards. An unusually severe snowstorm occurred in south-east and east England and the Midlands on the 29th.

During the opening days a depression westward of the British Isles moved north-east and caused rain in the west and north. On the 2nd another depression developed on the Atlantic and moved to a position north-westward of Ireland, where it remained for several days, becoming less deep. Meanwhile troughs of low pressure moved north-east or north over the British Isles giving rain at times. On the 6th another depression moved from the south-west to the west of Ireland and associated troughs of low pressure moved north over the country; rain fell generally on the 6th and 7th and was heavy locally on the 6th. In the early hours of the 9th a small secondary depression moved north-east along the English Channel giving considerable rainfall in southern England. More settled sunny weather, apart from local fog, set in on the 10th when a ridge of high pressure crossed the British Isles. Between the 12th and 15th an anticyclone moved from a position north-east of Iceland to central Europe and maintained fair weather over most of the British Isles, with variable amounts of sunshine but long bright periods in many places. On the 15th and 16th a depression off the south of Ireland moved north-east and filled; scattered rain occurred in England and southern Ireland. Except in south-west England and west Ireland good records of bright sunshine were obtained in most areas on the 15th and in the Hebrides on the 16th. The period 13th-15th was rather cold but temperature rose considerably on the 16th. A very mild unsettled spell ensued, with relatively high pressure over Scandinavia and troughs of low pressure crossing the British Isles. Scattered rain or showers occurred on the 17th and 18th with local thunderstorms in the south-east. On the 19th and 21st rain fell generally, and was heavy locally on the 21st, but on the 20th and 22nd rain was mainly very slight and scattered. On the 17th-19th there was much morning fog, which persisted locally on the coasts. A depression approached south-west Ireland on the 23rd and a trough crossed southern England causing rain generally in England and Wales. On the 24th the depression moved a little eastward and a trough lay over southern England and was associated with more rain. Thereafter a ridge of high pressure extending southwards from an anticyclone centred east of Iceland lay over the British Isles and cold north-easterly winds prevailed. The anticyclone subsequently moved slowly south-westward, while pressure became very low west of Portugal and later also over the Bay of Biscay. In consequence the north-easterly winds strengthened and very cold air spread from Russia to the British Isles giving an exceptionally cold spell for late March. On the 29th a depression moved north-eastward across northern France and subsequently into western Germany. Snow fell widely from the 27th onwards, the fall being substantial with severe drifting in southern and Midland districts of England on the 29th.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure was below the average except in the west of Scotland, where the average was slightly exceeded. The deviation at 9h. ranged from -5.2 mb. at Scilly to +0.8 mb. at Tiree. Winds from some southerly point predominated while the total run of the wind was below the average in most parts. Gales were rather widespread in England and Wales, particularly in the south, on 28th-29th. They also occurred locally in exposed places in Scotland on 2nd, 3rd, 5th-9th, 19th-22nd and 29th, and in England and Wales on 2nd, 14th-15th, 22nd and 30th. Among the highest

gusts recorded in knots were 60 at Lerwick on the 7th and 61 at Felixstowe, 60 at Kete, Pembrokeshire, and 59 at Shoeburyness on the 29th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature exceeded the average for the period 1906-35 by 1.9°F. in England and Wales, 1.5°F. in Scotland and 2.2°F. in Northern Ireland. It was generally very mild from the 2nd to the 12th and from the 16th to the 22nd. The period 13th-15th was rather cold (maximum temperature 39°F. at Elmdon on the 13th and minimum 20°F. at Eskdalemuir on the 15th). It was exceptionally cold from the 27th onwards. In parts of south-east England the 29th was one of the coldest days on record for late March.

Extreme temperatures for the month included:—(England and Wales) 63°F. at Boxworth on the 3rd, 16°F. at Kielder Castle on the 15th; (Scotland) 60°F. at Kelso on the 18th, 15°F. at Dalwhinnie on the 30th; (Northern Ireland) 59°F. at Holywood on the 8th, 27°F. at Aldergrove on the 26th and at Garvagh on the 27th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881-1915 was 115 over England and Wales, 94 over Scotland, and 61 over Northern Ireland. Less than 75 per cent. of the average occurred over much of Ross and Cromarty, Inverness-shire, Nairnshire and south-west Aberdeenshire, and also over most of eastern Scotland south of the Firth of Forth and in the extreme south-west. On the other hand about 150 per cent. of the average was received over a coastal strip from northern Angus to Kinnaird's Head. Parts of north and central Wales and much of northern England received less than 75 per cent. of the average but elsewhere there was a considerable excess, more than 150 per cent. of the average falling over a large area of the east Midlands and eastern England. In Northern Ireland there was a general deficit and less than half the average occurred in County Down.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hours were:—

- 1st 2.00 in. at Loch Harport (Skye).
- 2nd 3.90 in. at Cwm Dyli, Snowdon.
- 6th 3.11 in. at Blaenau Festiniog (Merioneth), 2.61 in. at Maesteg Park (Glamorgan) and 2.09 in. at Princetown (Devon).
- 21st 2.60 in. at Blaenau Festiniog (Merioneth) and 2.07 in. at Kinlochhourn (Inverness-shire).

Thunderstorms occurred locally in England on 4th, 17th-18th and 24th.

Snow fell widely from the 27th onwards, notably in southern and Midland districts of England on 29th when there was severe drifting. Snow was reported several inches deep in places in Scotland while, over a large area of southern England, depths of from 3 to 8 inches, with drifts in places of up to 6 ft., were reported on the morning of the 30th.

Sunshine.—The duration of the bright sunshine expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1906-35 was 78 in England and Wales, 97 in Scotland and 101 in Northern Ireland. The deficiency was almost general and was substantial over most eastern and southern districts of England and in South Wales: only in western Scotland and Northern Ireland was there a slight excess.

Fog.—Fog occurred at times, mainly on the 1st, 8th-12th, 17th-19th and, chiefly in south-western coastal districts, from 20th to 24th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—More aurorae were observed in Scotland than in any March since 1941 (17 nights).