

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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February 1953—Mainly dry; cold at first, becoming very mild after the 17th.

The month was dry in most areas. It was cold generally during the first fortnight and in England it remained cold until the 17th. Considerable snowfall occurred from the 8th to the 14th with deep drifts, particularly on high land. From the 18th onward it was very mild for the time of year.

During the opening days a depression over north-west Germany moved away south-east and became less deep; meanwhile an anticyclone off our western seaboard moved in over the country. Northerly gales occurred locally at first but these died down as the depression moved away. The weather was cold, with some wintry showers. On the 3rd and 4th a depression east of Jan Mayen moved south to Denmark and the anticyclone receded westward; some slight precipitation occurred in the British Isles. Thereafter cold northerly winds prevailed for a time with wintry showers. Records of bright sunshine were good on the whole during the first week. On the 8th and 9th a trough of low pressure associated with a depression near Iceland moved over the British Isles giving widespread snow and, on the 10th, a deep depression moved east-south-east over our southern districts giving further appreciable precipitation, particularly in England and Wales. Behind this disturbance a cold north-easterly air-stream prevailed, with more snow in many districts on the 11th and 12th. On high ground in northern England and Wales snow lay to a considerable depth, with deep drifts, blocking many roads. On the 13th a small disturbance moved south-east from Iceland to the Shetlands and on the 14th turned south-south-west across northern and western England; more snow fell over much of England but conditions became milder in Scotland, Ireland and the extreme west of England and Wales. A ridge of high pressure moved south-east over the British Isles on the 15th and 16th giving early morning frost, hard locally, in England and Wales, but milder weather persisted in the north and west. Subsequently pressure was high to the south and low to the north of the British Isles and a very mild west to south-west type of weather was established; considerable rainfall occurred at times at some places in the north-west, particularly on the 22nd and 24th, but measurements were small in the south. Gales were registered at times in the extreme north-west and north. On the 26th the ridge of high pressure over France spread north and by the 27th anticyclonic conditions prevailed over the whole country; sunshine records were good at many places during this period but they were variable, partly due to the incidence of fog.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure exceeded the average, the excess being greatest in the west; at 9h. the deviation from the average ranged from +2.9 mb. at Gorleston to 9.2 mb. at Tiree. Winds from some northerly point were frequent during the first half of the month, while westerly to south-westerly winds prevailed from the 17th onward. The total run of the wind was somewhat below the average. Gales occurred locally at times, mainly on the 1st, 4th, 8th–12th and 20th–26th; they were most frequent in the north of Scotland. Among the highest gusts registered, in knots, were 75 at Bell Rock on the 1st, 66 at Lerwick on the 4th, 69 at Scilly and the Lizard on the 9th, 80 at the Lizard and 66 at Kete on the 10th and 69 at Stornoway on the 22nd.

Temperature.—Mean temperature exceeded the average for the period 1921–50 except in the south of England and Wales, the deviation from the average for the districts ranging from +2.6°F. in east Scotland to –0.9°F. in south-east England (see Table I). The first half of the month was cold with hard frost locally at times. Temperature rose in the north and west on the 14th, but over most of England it remained cold until the 17th. The remainder of the month

was very mild, temperature rising to 60°F. or somewhat above locally on some days. The minimum temperature, 50°F., at Dyce on the night of the 25th to 26th was very high for the time of year in that locality.

Extreme temperatures for the month included:—(England and Wales) 62°F. at Usk and Frampton Cotterell on the 27th, 13°F. at Rhayader and Moor House, Dufton on the 8th; (Scotland) 61°F. at Forres on the 26th and at Gordon Castle and Dyce on the 28th, 14°F. at Eskdalemuir on the 8th and at Dalwhinnie and Glenmore Lodge on the 10th; (Northern Ireland) 59°F. at Holywood on the 25th, 20°F. at Garvagh on the 3rd.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915 was 81 over England and Wales, 70 over Scotland and 47 over Northern Ireland. More than the average rainfall occurred in the Shetland Islands, inland in north-west Scotland, a coastal belt from Tynemouth to Yarmouth, locally in east England, east Kent and north Wales and at one or two places elsewhere. Less than half the average was registered over much of east, central and south Scotland, the Lake District on the Lancashire coast and over much of Northern Ireland.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hours were:—

22nd 1.91 in. at Clunes, Loch Lochy.

24th 2.15 in. at Kinlochquoich (Inverness-shire).

During the seven days 19th–25th, 8.34 in. were measured at Kinlochquoich.

Snow or sleet occurred frequently during the first fourteen days. Between the 8th and the 10th the falls were substantial, particularly on high land in the north of England, Wales and the Midlands. Further falls occurred on the 11th–14th and these extended to the south-east. Level snow was 1 ft. or more deep at some high level stations, with heavy drifts blocking many roads. At Bwlchgwyn, Denbighshire, level snow was 17 in. deep from the 11th to the 13th with drifts up to 12 ft. not far away; at Lake Vyrnwy level snow was 12½ in. deep on the 12th with drifts 5–6 ft.; at Buxton snow was 14 in. deep on the 12th, with deep drifts. Even as far south as Whipsnade, on the Chilterns snow was 6 in. deep on the 14th and 15th with drifts up to 6 ft. Snow lay on the ground over quite a large area until the 16th and at some places until the 17th. In Scotland, between the 9th and 13th snow was occasionally 6–9 in. deep on Deeside and at Dalwhinnie, Lauder, Moffat and Glenmore Lodge.

Thunderstorms. Thunder was heard at Southport on the 4th and thunderstorms occurred locally in the south of England on the 9th, 10th and 11th. No reports of thunder were received from Scottish stations.

Sunshine.—The duration of bright sunshine expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1921–50 was 97 over England and Wales, 109 over Scotland and 96 over Northern Ireland. In Scotland, less than the average was registered in the extreme south-east and around the Moray Firth; in other areas most places had more than the average amount. In England and Wales, most places had less than the average but in Cornwall and Devonshire there was a considerable excess. In Northern Ireland percentages of the average ranged from 81 at Armagh to 108 at Aldergrove.

Fog.—There was a good deal of fog, mainly on the 8th, 14th–22nd and 25th–28th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on two nights. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on ten days.

NOTE: Correction to January, 1953. In paragraphs **Temperature** and **Sunshine** the averages used were for period 1921–50, not 1906–35 as stated.