

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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FEBRUARY, 1944.—Dry; heavy snowstorm 26th—27th.

Over a large part of the country the month was distinguished by a deficiency of rainfall. The opening days were very mild and the latter half of the month was cold, particularly the last week.

During the opening days of the month pressure was high south-west and south of the British Isles, while Atlantic depressions moved east-north-east along our north-western and northern sea-boards. Mild, unsettled weather prevailed with rain at times, and widespread gales on the 3rd. In the rear of a depression which moved from near Thorshavn to Norway on the 3rd, cold, north-westerly gales, accompanied by wintry showers in the north and east, were experienced on the 4th. On the 5th and 6th a wedge of high pressure moved south-east over the British Isles; on the 5th there were scattered showers and bright periods and on the 6th, a rise of temperature and rain in the north and west were associated with a trough of low pressure moving east over the country. On the 7th a deep depression north of Thorshavn moved east and associated troughs moved south-east over the British Isles. Showers or slight rain occurred in many places and there were gales in the northern half of the country. In the rear of this disturbance an anticyclone centred south-west of the British Isles spread north-east. There were showers in the north and west, but long bright periods in most parts on the 8th; on the 9th, however, a depression near the Shetlands and a small depression west of Scotland moving south-east were associated with a mainly dull day, with rain and a few local gales. Bright, cold weather, with northerly winds and scattered wintry showers prevailed on the 10th in the rear of these disturbances, and a mainly fair day occurred on the 11th.

Thereafter a ridge of high pressure extended across England from the Azores anticyclone: meanwhile on the 13th and 14th a trough of low pressure moving east caused general rain in the north and west on the 13th and some scattered rainfall in England on the 14th. On the 15th and 16th another trough of low pressure moved eastward from a position off our western seaboard and was associated with moderate rainfall.

Subsequently from the 18th–24th mainly anticyclonic conditions prevailed, although weak troughs moved eastward over the country on the 19th and 20th. By the 21st an intense anticyclone was centred between Iceland and Scotland. Throughout this period rather cold weather prevailed with some scattered precipitation. By the 25th the anticyclone had moved to the south-west of Iceland and from the 25th–27th troughs of low pressure moved slowly south over the British Isles. Cold winds prevailed and considerable snowfall occurred on the 26th–27th. Subsequently a depression north-east of Iceland moved slowly south-east and associated troughs moved south over these Islands. Weather continued cold and there was some further precipitation but sunshine records were good on the whole.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure exceeded the average, the excess being greatest in the south-west: at 7h. the deviation ranged from +12.4 mb. at Tiree to +4.4 mb. at Lympne. Pressure was highest off south-west Ireland and decreased northward and eastward; northerly winds were therefore more prevalent than usual. Gales were reported locally on fairly numerous occasions, the most widespread being on the 3rd–4th and 7th. Among the highest speeds recorded in gusts were 75 m.p.h. at Durham on the 3rd and at Sealand on the 4th and 72 m.p.h. at Stornoway on the 7th.

Temperature.—On the whole mean temperature was below the average in England and slightly below the average in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The deviation from the average for the districts ranged from -0.2°F. in Scotland, W. to -1.8°F. in England S.E.

The first three days were unusually mild and the latter half mainly cold, particularly the last week. Low minimum temperatures were registered on the 6th and during the last week: they were notably low on the 28th and 29th.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 61°F. at Rhyl on the 2nd, 9°F. at Mayfield, Walsall, Belper and Newport (Salop) on the 29th; (Scotland) 57°F. at Kirkcaldy and Boghall on the 1st and at Arbroath, Errol, Longforgan, Perth, Leuchars, St. Andrews and St. Abb's Head on the 2nd, 5°F. at Braemar on the 28th; (Northern Ireland) 57°F. at Ballyhalbert on the 2nd, 22°F. at Garvagh on the 29th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915 was 67 over England and Wales, 64 over Scotland and 50 over Northern Ireland. More than the average occurred in Sutherland and over a coastal area from Nairn to Banff and in the eastern districts of England from north of Tynemouth to Leicester and in a coastal strip from the Wash to the Thames Estuary. Less than 50 per cent. of the average occurred in the Western Isles of Scotland, in an area stretching from Dumbarton to Angus and Edinburgh and in the neighbourhood of the Solway Firth, over south-west England and south Wales and eastward to west Sussex, Surrey and the south London area. Less than 50 per cent. was received also over Northern Ireland except in the north-west of the Province. Less than 25 per cent. was registered in the neighbourhood of Kettins, County Angus and over much of Somerset and Dorset and parts of Devon and Monmouthshire.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hours were:—

- 1st 2.23 in. near Blaenau Festiniog (Merioneth), 1.86 in. at Machynlleth (Montgomery) and 1.74 in. at Glenquoich.
- 6th 2.00 in. at Kinlochquoich (Inverness-shire).
- 27th 1.00 in. or more at numerous stations in the Midlands and Lincolnshire.

Local thunderstorms were reported at times, for example, on the 2nd, 4th, 6th–8th, 10th, 18th and 27th.

Snow or sleet fell frequently: the snowstorm of the 26th–27th was unusually heavy in some areas. At a number of places in the Midlands and north-east England there was a fall from 6 to 12 inches. For example, $11\frac{1}{2}$ in. at Mansfield on the 27th and 8 in. at Cranwell, 9 in. at Bellingham, 11 in. at Rotherham, Belper and Sutton Bonnington and 12 in. at Nottingham on the 28th. In Scotland, at Derry Lodge (Braemar) undrifted snow was 15 in. deep on the 28th. There was heavy drifting in Skye and north Argyll and drifts of from 6 to 12 ft. were reported from Caithness. Roads in Glencoe and Glenorchy were blocked and in north-east Scotland roads were blocked and bus services suspended.

Sunshine.—Broadly speaking, sunshine was below the average over most of England, the deficiency being greatest in the east and north-east. Over much of Scotland, particularly the west, sunshine substantially exceeded the average: at Renfrew, it was the sunniest February since records were first taken in 1921: in the north-east and north (except the Shetlands) and in the Lothians and Berwickshire there was a deficiency. In Northern Ireland there was a considerable excess.

Fog.—Fog developed at times, chiefly on the 1st–2nd, 6th, 12th–16th, 23rd and, mainly with snow, on the 26th and 27th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed locally in Scotland on 10 nights. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on three days.