

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

VOL. 71 No. 3

PUBLISHED BY HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

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March 1954—Unsettled and changeable; very cold and wintry at first.

Unusually cold wintry conditions during the first few days were followed about the 5th by a milder westerly type. From the 10th to the 12th the winds were mild southerlies; these were replaced by dull cold easterlies from the 13th to the 18th. Afterwards a south-westerly to westerly type predominated.

On the 1st a small depression off our south-west coasts moved east along the English Channel and there was widespread snow in Wales and much of southern England during the day or the following night. On the 1st and 2nd air temperature fell to 15°F. or below at numerous places. Between the 2nd and 3rd a deep depression moved eastward from the Atlantic to near the Scottish border with widespread strong winds or gales and precipitation. Over much of the high ground there was snow also on the 3rd and 4th and in north-east Scotland, the fall was heavy with deep drifts. The 5th was a sunny day generally with north-westerly winds and scattered showers. On the 6th a deep depression south of Iceland moved slowly east to the north of Scotland and later turned north-east. Milder, south-westerly, winds prevailed reaching gale force in places; rain fell generally and was heavy locally on the 6th and the weather was mainly showery, with long bright periods in most places on the 7th. On the 8th and 9th a ridge of high pressure moved north over the country giving long sunny periods in most areas on the 8th and locally in northern districts on the 9th. On the 10th–12th there was a mild southerly type; sunny weather in the south-east on the 10th spread to most districts by the 12th; on the north-east coasts there was, however, a good deal of fog which kept temperature relatively low. With the development of an anticyclone over Scandinavia on the 12th, cold mainly dull easterly winds set in on the 13th and lasted until the 18th; there was little rain during this spell except at times in the south-west; the fall in temperature with the onset of the easterly winds was very marked. On the 19th–20th a depression moved east over our southern districts and on the 22nd–24th a deep depression moved slowly north-east into Ireland and then moved away south-south-east and filled; rain fell fairly generally during this period, particularly on the 19th, 21st and 22nd. During the rest of the month there was a changeable south-west to westerly type of weather; it was mainly sunny on the 26th and 27th but rain fell fairly frequently during the period and was heavy locally at times, for example on the 29th. Thunderstorms occurred rather widely in England and Wales on the 30th and 31st. The last two weeks were mainly mild, but there was occasional ground frost and slight air frost in places.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure was generally well below the average for the period 1921–50, the deviation from the average at 9h. ranging from –6.8 mb. at Lerwick to –9.1 mb. at Holyhead. Winds reached gale force locally at times, mainly on the 2nd–4th, 6th–8th, 15th–16th, 20th–24th, 30th and 31st. Among the highest gusts, in knots, were 58 at Stornoway on the 4th, 57 at Millport and 63 at Bell Rock on the 7th, 59 at Lizard on the 20th and 57 at Scilly on the 22nd.

Temperature.—Mean temperature was below the average for the period 1921–50 by 0.1°F. in England and Wales, 1.0°F. in Scotland and 0.2°F. in Northern Ireland. The first few days were notably cold, particularly the 1st and 2nd when air temperature fell below 10°F. at some places in Great Britain; another cold spell occurred from about the 13th to the 18th. It was warm from the 10th to 12th, particularly in England and Wales on the 11th and in Scotland and

Northern Ireland on the 12th. The drop in day temperature on the 13th was marked, being as much as 19°F. at Cranfield, Bedfordshire. The last two weeks were mainly rather mild with temperature reaching 60°F. at times locally in England and Wales.

Extreme temperatures for the month included:—(England and Wales) 64°F. at Camden Square, London on the 11th and at Aber on the 22nd, 6°F. at Burnley on the 1st; (Scotland) 62°F. at Prestwick Airport on the 12th, 4°F. at Glenlivet on the 2nd; (Northern Ireland) 59°F. at Castle Archdale on the 12th, 21°F. at Garvagh on the 1st.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915 was 117 over England and Wales, 89 over Scotland and 117 over Northern Ireland. In Scotland, it was generally somewhat more than the average in the extreme west and south-west and in a narrow belt extending from the Trossachs to the coasts of Angus and Fife. In England and Wales, it was less than average from the Scottish Border to Derbyshire and locally in mid Wales; it was more than average elsewhere and more than 175 per cent. of average locally in Somerset, Dorset and the Isle of Wight. In Northern Ireland percentages at individual stations ranged from 92 at Ballymena, County Antrim to 147 at Newtownbutler, County Fermanagh.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hours were:—

6th 2.47 in. at Inverailort Castle, Inverness-shire.
 2.40 in. at Cwm Dyli, Snowdon and 2.39 in. at Patterdale Hall, Westmorland.
 29th 2.90 in. at Ardrishaig, Argyll and 2.06 in. at Loch Dhu, Perthshire.

Thunderstorms occurred locally in Scotland on the 4th and 6th, in Northern Ireland on the 7th and more widely in England and Wales on the 30th and 31st.

Snow or sleet fell widely during the first five days, locally on the 13th and 14th and there were scattered wintry showers in the last week. On the 1st snow lay on high ground from the snowfall at the end of February and there were appreciable falls of snow during the first three or four days. Strong winds caused deep drifts on high ground; for example, there were drifts of 5 ft. at Alston and 4½ ft. at Bwlchgwyn on the 2nd and 5ft. at Fairburn and 3 ft. at Ardross, both in Ross and Cromarty, on the 4th.

Sunshine.—The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1921–50 was 87 over England and Wales, 97 over Scotland and 94 over Northern Ireland. There was a considerable excess in the north-west and locally in the west of Scotland and in the neighbourhood of the Moray Firth but it was very deficient elsewhere in east Scotland. In England and Wales the deficiency was general except locally on the west coast of Wales and a number of places in north-west England.

Fog.—Fog, mainly in the morning, occurred at times chiefly on the 1st–4th, 8th–12th and 18th–20th; it was most frequent on high ground and in large towns. It was rather persistent locally on the north-east coasts on the 10th, 11th and 12th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on 19 days. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on 14 days. A rare, very complete halo phenomenon was widely seen on the 2nd. (See Met. Mag. for June 1954.)