

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

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

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FEBRUARY, 1932.—Exceptionally dry. Mild in Scotland but cold in the south.

The outstanding feature of the weather of the month was the remarkable deficiency of rainfall in all districts associated with abnormally high pressure and persistent winds from a northerly or easterly point.

The anticyclonic conditions which had set in over the country on January 20th persisted throughout the month. There were fluctuations in both the position and the intensity of the dominant area of high pressure but the anticyclone was never entirely to the south of the British Isles, and consequently there was a very unusual dearth of winds from between south and west. During the first few days of the month the anticyclone was situated over or to the west of Ireland, winds being westerly to north-westerly over most of the country. On the 3rd the temperature rose to 58° F. at Crieff and Perth, the highest recorded in the British Isles during the month. Slight rain or drizzle with much mist or fog occurred locally during this period. By the 9th the high pressure area lay to the north and during the next few days cold north-easterly to easterly winds prevailed generally. Snow was widely reported from the 10th to 12th but the amounts were small. In spite of sunny intervals temperature was very low in the south, remaining below the freezing point on the 10th in the east and south-east of England and in the Midlands. From the 14th to the 24th the centre of high pressure lay to the west or over the country and there were frequent sunny periods. The days became less cold, the temperature approaching or exceeding 50° F. in the north and west on several days during this period and also in the south about the 22nd. Low minima, however, were recorded at night whilst in the Midlands the 19th was also a very cold day. By the 28th easterly winds had again become established over southern districts and were accompanied by a considerable drop in temperature; at Boscombe Down the maximum on the 29th was 33° F.

Pressure and Winds.—As in January, February was characterised by unusually high pressure monthly means being from 15 to 25 millibars above the normal. At Southport the monthly mean pressure was the highest recorded in any month for at least 60 years, and at Glasgow for at least 65 years. Although below the high level attained in the north of England on January 26th, pressure again reached an unusually high level on February 20th, mean sea level values exceeding 1047 mb. being reported from places in Scotland. No centre of low pressure crossed the country during the month, and pressure fell as low as 1014 mb. only for a few hours and in a very limited area of eastern England. Northerly to easterly winds were unusually persistent, conspicuously so in the south of England, where locally there was a complete absence of southerly winds. Gales occurred in the English Channel and in exposed places on the west coast of England and Wales on the 10th–11th and 28th–29th, but with these exceptions there was a notable absence of strong winds. At Southport the month was the calmest February in over 60 years' records.

Temperature.—In Scotland temperature, as in January, was high for the season, maximum temperatures seldom falling below 40° F. In the south of England and Ireland the month was cold, the temperature remaining below 50° F. throughout the month in parts of the south-east, including London; at Greenwich the highest temperature recorded, viz., 49° F. was 8° F. below the normal absolute extreme for February. The warmest days occurred around about the 3rd and the 22nd. Night minima were low on the mornings of the 7th, 10th to 13th and 19th, but not remarkably so, whilst ground frost occurred frequently.

The extreme temperatures for the month were (England and Wales) 54° F. at Harrogate on the 3rd, 15° F. at Rickmansworth on the 7th and 19th, (Scotland) 58° F. at Crieff and Perth on the 3rd, 15° F. at Dalwhinnie on the 11th, (Ireland) 52° F. at Armagh and Roches Point on the 3rd and at Mallarany on the 20th, 18° F. at Markree Castle on the 19th.

Precipitation.—The outstanding feature of the weather of February was the general and pronounced deficiency of precipitation as the following figures, which express the general precipitation as a percentage of the normal for the period 1881–1915, indicate:—England and Wales 18, Scotland 12, Ireland 7, British Isles 14. The figures for Scotland and Ireland are the lowest recorded for over half-a-century.

Although over England and Wales as a whole the general precipitation slightly exceeded that of February, 1921, and was little different from that of February, 1895, in many places February, 1932, was the driest experienced since the great drought of February, 1891, when the general precipitation was only 5 per cent. of the normal value. In some places in the west and north, even the abnormal dryness of February, 1891, was eclipsed, the month being the driest experienced at Stornoway, Liverpool, Holyhead, Falmouth and Cahirciveen (Kerry) for more than 60 years. Locally in the south-west of England and over considerable areas in the west of Scotland no measurable precipitation was recorded during the month. At the end of the month the drought still continued, many places having experienced no appreciable rain since the middle of January.

Sunshine.—Sunshine totals were generally below the normal except in parts of Scotland, Wales and the west of Ireland. Representative totals for districts, expressed as a percentage of the normal for the period 1881–1915, ranged from 80 per cent. in the Midlands to 168 per cent. in Scotland W. Notable daily records were 9·1 hrs. at Hastings and 9·0 hrs. at Brighton on the 18th.

Fog.—Fog occurred rather frequently, except in the south-west, during the first three weeks. The fog was thick locally on the 4th, 8th and between the 15th and 18th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—Aurora was observed locally in Scotland on the nights of the 3rd, 4th, 8th, 11th and 12th.