

# Monthly Weather Report

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## OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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### February 1957—*Mostly mild and wet in England and Wales, sunny periods generally*

Weather was changeable but mild until the 13th of the month, rather cold with light northerly winds during the following week and mild and unsettled again from 21st to 24th; the remainder of the month was mostly dry and sunny.

Although there were light falls of snow on the 1st in Scotland, weather over most of England and Wales was unusually mild during the first few days of the month with temperatures rising generally above 50°F. during the afternoons and reaching 59°F. locally in southern England. A vigorous depression skirting the west coasts of Ireland and Scotland on 4th and 5th gave widespread rain and southerly gales which carried the mild air to the whole of the British Isles. Rain was heavy and severe gales occurred in Scotland; several stations recorded over 1 in. of rain in 24 hr. and wind exceeded 90 kt. in gusts in the Hebrides. In the upper air, a low at 500 mb. persisted in mid-Atlantic from the 4th to 12th, and the British Isles came within the general south-westerly flow to the east of it; several small-amplitude fast-moving troughs crossed the country in this stream. A narrow warm sector associated with a complex Atlantic depression moved slowly eastwards across the British Isles on the 7th giving widespread and locally heavy rain, particularly in the south and west; more than 1 in. fell at many stations, and several places in southern England and South Wales recorded over 2 in. in 24 hr. There was extensive flooding in the Thames Valley as a similar system brought a renewal of heavy rain to southern England on the 11th. By this time, rainfall at many places had exceeded the February normal. The Atlantic upper air low moved east across the country between the 13th and 16th to become stationary over the North Sea. Surface winds over the British Isles veered to the north on the 14th and snow and sleet showers spread to all districts. The cold weather lasted until the 20th in southern England and to the 23rd in Scotland; keen or hard frost occurred locally at night with screen temperature falling to the lower twenties in many places on the 19th and 20th and to 9°F. and 12°F. at Kincaig and Dalwhinnie respectively on the 22nd. An exceptionally heavy snowstorm on the night of the 18th to 19th gave 12 in. of level snow in Leicestershire and 7 in. in Nottinghamshire. On the 21st, south-westerly winds brought rain and snow to southern England, but it was not until the 23rd that this mild Atlantic air spread to Scotland accompanied by widespread fog which persisted throughout most of the day in many places. By the 25th afternoon temperatures in England and Wales again exceeded 50°F. fairly generally and 58°F. was reached at Swanage, but occasional snow still fell in Shetland. On the 26th pressure over the British Isles rose considerably and depressions in mid-Atlantic became slow-moving. Southerly winds spread to the whole country and, apart from some slight rain in the west, weather was mostly fine and sunny until the end of the month.

**Pressure and Wind.** Pressure was everywhere below the average and was generally lower in the west of the country than in the east; the deficiency ranged from 12.9 mb. at Aldergrove to 9.4 mb. at Croydon. Winds were mainly between south and south-west until the 13th, light and rather variable but mainly from a northerly direction until the 21st, becoming generally south-westerly from the 23rd, and light variable or southerly during the last three days of the month. Gales occurred on 14 days in Scotland, mostly during the first week, and on the 4th, 5th, 7th, 8th and 23rd in England and Wales; they were widespread and severe in places on the 4th and 5th. Gusts of over 70 kt. were reported at Point of Ayre, Moor House and Aldergrove late on the 4th. On the 5th a mean hourly wind

speed of 60 kt. was recorded at Tiree with a gust of 93 kt. and at Benbecula gusts reached 95 kt.

**Temperature.** Mean temperature differed from the 1921–50 average by +1.9°F. in England and Wales, –0.5°F. in Scotland and –0.1°F. in Northern Ireland. Kew reported a night minimum temperature of 52°F. on the morning of the 1st, the highest for the time of year since records began in 1871. In Scotland temperature rose to 55°F. or more at many places during the first week, but during the latter part of the month frost was widespread and severe on several nights; at Glenlivet ground temperature fell to 4°F. on the 16th, 21st, 22nd and 27th.

Extreme temperatures for the month included:—(England and Wales) 59°F. at Wisley on the 1st and at Boxworth on the 3rd, 3°F. at Sutton Bonington on the 20th; (Scotland) 57°F. at Achnashellach on the 8th, 9°F. at Kincaig on the 22nd; (Northern Ireland) 54°F. at Ballykelly on the 4th, 20°F. at Aldergrove on the 19th.

**Precipitation.** The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the 1881–1915 average was 155 over England and Wales, 98 over Scotland and 95 over Northern Ireland. Less than average rainfall occurred over parts of North Wales, Lancashire, Cheshire, the Peak District, most of Scotland north-west of a line Ayr to Aberdeen and the greater part of Northern Ireland. More than 150 per cent. of the average was recorded generally south of a line Cardiff to Grimsby, and twice the average was exceeded over most of Kent and Sussex, around the Wash and in southern Devonshire.

Heavy falls of 2 in. or more in 24 hr. were mainly confined to the 7th. Examples are:

2.40 in. at Dalehead Hall, Cumberland; 2.20 in. at Cardiff Waterworks (Storey Arms Field), Brecknockshire; 2.20 in. at Ashburton, Devonshire.

**Thunder.** Thunder was heard locally in Scotland on the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th and in England and Wales on the 11th–17th, 20th, 23rd and 25th.

**Snow.** Snow was fairly frequent about the third week; it lay to a depth of 4–6 in. on high ground in Scotland from 18th to 23rd, and ground was extensively snow-covered in the Midlands and north-west England from 15th to 24th. On the night of the 18th to 19th snow fell to a depth of 12 in. at Leicester, 7 in. at Sutton Bonington and 6 in. at Sheffield.

**Sunshine.** The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the 1921–50 average was 118 over England and Wales, 125 over Scotland and 148 over Northern Ireland. Sunshine records exceeded the average in nearly all parts of the country; Aldergrove with 95 hr. was sunnier than during any February since their records began in 1927 while Turnberry in Scotland had its sunniest February since 1931.

**Fog.** Early morning fog was reported on 18 occasions in Scotland and nearly every morning somewhere in England and Wales and persisted for most of the day in many places on the 23rd; fog was reported on 15 mornings at Huddersfield.

**Miscellaneous Phenomena.** The aurora was observed in Scotland on 18 nights. A pronounced earth tremor occurred during the afternoon of the 11th; it was felt within 100 miles radius of Loughborough, Nottinghamshire, and some damage to buildings was reported from Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire.