

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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JANUARY, 1937:—Unsettled and wet with frequent gales.

The month was unsettled with frequent gales in the west and north. Rainfall markedly exceeded the average and sunshine was deficient on the whole, notably in south-west England.

On the 1st a trough of low pressure crossed England giving heavy rain in the south. Between the 2nd and 6th depressions passing on an easterly track northwards of the British Isles caused unsettled weather with winds from some westerly point. Thereafter a wedge of high pressure crossed the British Isles and high pressure became established over Germany, while deep depressions were situated on the Atlantic. Little rainfall was experienced over most of England between the 7th and 11th, and records of bright sunshine were mainly good in east and south-east England from the 7th–10th.

Subsequently the Atlantic depressions extended their influence eastward and dominated conditions over the whole country. From the 12th–25th weather was mild and unsettled with mainly southerly winds, frequent rain and local gales.

On the 26th a secondary depression off south-west Ireland moved south-east and from the 27th–29th a depression off Portugal moved north-east and then east over France. Rather cold easterly winds were established over the British Isles and widespread sleet and snow occurred between the 28th and 30th. Milder conditions were renewed in the south on the 30th and spread northwards on the 31st.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure was substantially below the average particularly in the western half of the country, the deficiency at 7 h. varying from 14.3 mb. at Valentia Observatory to 3.6 mb. at Lerwick.

Gales occurred very frequently at exposed stations in the west and north; they were reported on 20 days at St. Ann's Head, 18 days at Lerwick, 17 days at Kirkwall, 16 days at Baltasound, Stornoway and Wick and 14 days at Tiree and Point of Ayre. The Orkneys and Shetlands experienced one of the stormiest months on record; at Lerwick gales occurred on each of the days from the 15th to 26th inclusive. Among the highest speeds recorded in gusts were 83 m.p.h. at Holyhead on the 17th, at the Lizard on the 20th and Lerwick on the 25th and 77 m.p.h. at Pendennis Castle on the 20th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature exceeded the average generally, the deviation for districts 1–10 being +1.3°F. The excess was greatest (2.5°F.) in England, S.E. The only district with a mean temperature slightly below the average was Ireland, N. (See Table I).

The coldest period occurred on the whole from the 26th–30th and was accompanied by winds from some easterly point. The lowest minimum temperature was recorded, however, earlier in the month at the majority of places; for example, on the 8th, 14th–16th or 19th–20th. Fog was associated with low day temperatures at certain stations on the 14th and 15th; at Manchester on the 14th and at Mildenhall and Catterick on the 15th, temperature failed to rise above the freezing-point. The highest day temperatures occurred on the whole on the 3rd, 6th, 11th, 12th or on one of the days from the 21st–25th.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 58°F. at Aber and Llandudno on the 21st, at Rhyl on the 22nd and at Wisley on the 24th, 18°F. at Castleton on the 15th and at Rickmansworth on the 20th; (Scotland) 59°F. at Glenbranter on the 22nd, 19°F. at Dalwhinnie on the 19th; (Ireland) 58°F. at Cork on the 3rd and 23°F. at Markree Castle on the 20th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation of the British Isles, expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915, was 176, the values for the constituent countries being England and Wales 185, Scotland 162 and Ireland 178. The excessive rainfall was almost general; less than the average occurred, however, in an area covering parts of Lancashire and Westmorland. More than twice the average was recorded in most of east and south-east England, parts of south-west England, in fairly large areas in southern Ireland, locally in southern Scotland and in an area of eastern Scotland covering Aberdeenshire and parts of Angus and north Perthshire. At Braemar and Balmoral more than four times the average was received. At Valentia, Aberdeen and Crawley (Sussex) it was the wettest January since records began in 1866, 1871 and 1883 respectively, and at Braemar it was the wettest month of any name since records were first taken in 1866. Widespread floods were reported from the Midlands and eastern and southern counties from the 24th onwards.

Among the heaviest falls in 24 hours were:—

- 3rd. 3.30 in. at Kinlochquoich and 2.70 in. at Glenquoich, (Inverness-shire).
- 4th. 2.15 in. at Glenbranter (Argyllshire).
- 5th. 2.90 in. at Blaenau Festiniog (Merioneth).
- 9th. 2.04 in. at Borrowdale (Cumberland).
- 12th. 2.73 in. at Princetown, 2.50 in. at Holne (S. Devon) and 2.08 in. at Brechfa (Carmarthen).
- 14th. 2.58 in. at Borrowdale (Cumberland).
- 24th. 3.28 in. at Braemar and 2.65 in. at Balmoral.

Snow or sleet fell in Scotland on 23 days; it was widespread in Scotland from the 26th–31st and was widely reported in England from the 28th–30th and in Ireland on the 29th and 30th. The snowstorms of the 29th–31st were severe in some parts; undrifted snow was 15 inches deep in Aberdeenshire, 10 inches deep in Fife and 4 to 6 inches deep locally in north England.

Thunderstorms were recorded locally at times, chiefly in the west and north-west on the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 12th, 22nd–26th and 30th.

Sunshine.—Sunshine was below the average generally, the district percentages varying from 56 in England, S.W. to 99 in England, S.E. At some individual stations in Scotland, the Midlands and eastern and south-eastern England more than the average was registered. The period 7th–10th was mainly sunny in east and south-east England.

Fog.—Fog occurred locally at times, chiefly on the 8th and between the 11th and 15th; it occurred also at a few places between the 17th and 20th, 25th and 27th and 30th and 31st. It was thick at times and persistent locally in southern Scotland and north-west England on the 14th and locally in east and north-east England on the 15th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on 4 days. The display on the evening of the 7th was of unusual brilliance and was observed at least as far south as Scarborough. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on 14 days.