

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

Summary of observations compiled from returns of official stations and voluntary observers

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February 1968 — *Cold with severe night frosts*

Weather was mainly cyclonic in character until the 14th and then anticyclonic until the 19th, after which weather again became cyclonic in the south but remained generally anticyclonic in the north.

The 1st was generally sunny with scattered showers, but during the evening winds veered from west to northwest behind a trough which brought heavy thundery rain and local thunderstorms to many districts. These north-westerly winds brought snow showers, previously confined to Scotland, to all parts of the United Kingdom on the 2nd and 3rd. A rapidly deepening depression moved quickly south-south-east from Iceland on the 4th, and later that day many roads in Scotland and northern England were blocked with snow drifting in gale force winds, as associated fronts moved over the country. Snow lay 6 inches deep over much of Scotland, and 2-4 inches deep in parts of northern England. Frost was widespread on the morning of the 4th, and temperatures as low as -8°C were recorded at places as far apart as Eskdalemuir and Bournemouth.

During the next three or four days the British Isles was covered by a complex area of low pressure, and weather continued rather cold with snow at times; a fall of 12-18 inches in parts of the Midlands on the 6th, caused considerable disruption of traffic. The rather persistent cloud-cover broke on the evening of the 7th and that night fog and frost became widespread. Freezing fog persisted in parts of central and north-west England throughout the 8th; at Manchester Airport, after a night of severe frost, afternoon temperatures failed to rise above -2°C .

The low pressure area over the country drifted away south-eastwards on the 9th, and weather became less cold with rain at times in the south and east during the next two days, but it was mainly dry with good sunny periods in Scotland and northern England. On the 12th a frontal trough, associated with a complex depression near the Azores, moved north-eastwards over the British Isles bringing rain to southern districts and sleet or snow to the Midlands and the North. The 13th was dull, wet and somewhat milder as a depression moved towards south-west England and winds backed towards the south-east. By the 14th a trough, associated with this depression, lay quasi-stationary along the English Channel while a ridge of high pressure covered northern England and Scotland. Winds were generally easterly, and weather was dull and wet in the south, though sunny in the north.

Easterly winds gave place to light but predominantly northerly winds on the 15th and weather became generally sunny and dry as a ridge of high pressure spread southwards from Iceland to cover the British Isles. An anticyclone covered the country from the 16th to 18th and weather continued fine, but on the 19th the anticyclone declined, and weather became dull over much of England with rain in the extreme south-west associated with a disturbance over northern France. Overnight fog persisted in many Midland areas throughout both the 19th and 20th, and slow-moving fronts over northern France and near the south coast of England on the 21st and 22nd, brought rain and snow to much of southern England. In Scotland, the 18th to 22nd was generally cold with sunny periods and snow showers, but longer periods of snow on the 19th, associated with a weak front over northern Scotland, spread to southern Scotland on the 20th.

On the 23rd an anticyclone developed over the British Isles. Generally dry, cold weather with long sunny periods, continued in most districts until nearly the end of the month, but on the 28th the anticyclone moved eastwards to the North Sea, and weather became milder with increasing southerly winds, and by the 29th rain from the Atlantic spread into western Scotland.

Pressure and Wind — Mean pressure was mainly above average in Scotland and in parts of north-east England, but was below average elsewhere in the United Kingdom, the deviation at 0900 GMT ranging from +3.4 mb at Lerwick to -5.7 at Scilly. Surface winds, westerly at first, freshened from south on the 4th. From then until the 19th winds were mainly light and variable, except for a spell of south-easterlies from the 9th to 13th, and winds were also mainly east or south-east from the 20th until the end of the month. Winds reached gale force

locally on 9 days in Scotland, and on 14 days in England and Wales. Gales were widespread over the whole of the United Kingdom on the 4th when a gust of 88 kt was recorded at Stornoway.

Temperature — Mean monthly temperatures were well below the 1931-60 average in all areas. The warmest days were on the 1st, around mid-month and during the last few days of the month. Frost was widespread during the third week.

Extremes included: (England and Wales) 12.8°C at Boxworth on the 14th and at Penzance on the 12th, -11.7°C at Moor House on the 16th and 25th; (Scotland) 12.2°C at Poolewe on the 28th, -18.3°C at Braemar on the 21st; (Northern Ireland) 9.4°C at Derrynoyd Forest on the 1st and at Ballylumpford on the 17th and 18th, -11.1°C at Loughermore Forest on the 6th.

Rainfall — Rainfall was below the 1916-50 average over most of the United Kingdom except for a few areas bordering the coast. It exceeded 150 per cent of the average east of an approximate line from Gorleston to Worthing, and also at a few places in south-east Scotland, but was less than 50 per cent of the average over a large part of Lincolnshire and Wales, and less than 35 per cent in western Tyrone (Northern Ireland).

Thunder was reported locally from one place or another on 9 days, mostly during the first two weeks of the month.

Snow and sleet (rain or drizzle with snow) were widespread in Scotland during the earlier part of the month, and ground was snow-covered throughout the month in some northern and upland areas. In England and Wales snow fell widely on the 1st-7th, 12th, 15th-17th and 20th-22nd. By the end of the first week snow lay 4-6 inches deep over much of the Midlands, and 9-12 inches deep in parts of Staffordshire and Derbyshire. At both Onecote and Buxton level snow was reported to be 15 inches deep on the 7th, and the ground snow-covered from the 3rd until the end of the month.

Sunshine — Monthly sunshine totals were very varied but were generally greater in the western part of the country than in eastern, central or northern districts. They exceeded the average over the whole of Scotland except in the Central Lowlands. Percentages in Scotland ranged from 86 at Perth to 161 at Duntulum, and in England and Wales from 38 at Raunds to 141 at Ringway.

Fog — In Scotland morning fog occurred on 16 days but was widespread only on the 19th. In England and Wales fog at 0900 GMT was reported from one place or another on 20 days and was widespread on the 7th, 8th, 19th, 20th and 29th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — The aurora was seen in Scotland on 14 nights.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES, FEBRUARY, 1968

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE °C					EARTH TEMP. °C		RAIN DAYS	RAIN- FALL	SUN- SHINE
	*Highest Max.	*Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 30 cm.	Mean 122cm.			
Difference from Average								% of Average		
0 SCOTLAND, N.	9.3	-6.5	-1.7	-1.9	-1.8	-0.7	+0.4	-1	95	139
1 SCOTLAND, E.	8.9	-6.7	-2.0	-1.8	-1.9	-0.7	-0.2	0	95	112
2 ENGLAND, N.E.	9.5	-6.1	-1.9	-1.7	-1.8	-1.0	0.0	-1	82	84
3 ENGLAND, E.	8.1	-6.1	-2.0	-0.8	-1.4	0.0	+0.2	-2	82	66
4 MIDLANDS	8.3	-6.1	-2.4	-1.1	-1.7	-0.4	+0.1	-3	67	79
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	10.0	-6.7	-1.5	-1.1	-1.3	-0.4	-0.1	-1	94	102
6 SCOTLAND, W.	9.1	-10.2	-2.1	-2.5	-2.3	-0.5	0.0	-4	66	108
7 ENGLAND, N.W. and N. Wales	10.8	-6.7	-1.6	-2.0	-1.9	-0.3	+0.2	-6	66	135
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S. Wales	11.7	-6.7	-2.2	-2.0	-2.0	-0.6	0.0	-4	65	93
N. IRELAND	9.3	-8.4	-1.7	-3.3	-2.5	-	-	-3	54	137
SCOTLAND	9.3	-10.2	-1.9	-2.1	-2.0	-	-	-2	77	120
ENG. and WALES	11.7	-6.7	-1.9	-1.5	-1.7	-	-	-3	72	93

*Highest Max. and Lowest Min. of the District Value Stations.