

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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MARCH, 1943.—Mild; dry and sunny on the whole.

The weather of March was mild generally; it was dry except on high land in the west and north-west of Scotland and sunny in England and Wales.

The month opened with an intense anticyclone centred off our south-west coasts: meanwhile a deep depression west of Iceland moved east-north-east. Slight rain occurred in the west and north and gales at a few exposed stations in Scotland. Pressure rose in the rear of the depression and by the morning of the 3rd the anticyclone was situated over the north of Scotland. Subsequently it moved south-east, while a depression west of Portugal spread north causing some rain locally in the south-west of the British Isles. A new anticyclone off the west of Ireland on the 5th moved slowly eastward giving a spell of fair weather over most of the British Isles. On the 8th a depression south of Iceland moved north-east and an associated trough moved east over the British Isles; there were showers, and strong winds and local gales in the north and west. On the 9th and 10th another deep depression moved east-north-east over Iceland and associated troughs caused rain (heavy locally) in the west and north of the British Isles; gales were reported in Scotland on the 10th. Subsequently a ridge of high pressure was maintained over the southern half of the British Isles while pressure was low in the far north: there was rain in the north but fair weather persisted elsewhere. On the 15th a deep depression south of Iceland moved north-east and an associated trough moved south-east over the United Kingdom. Rain fell over a rather wider area but weather continued dry in the eastern districts of Britain. On the 17th a ridge of high pressure spread north over the British Isles and intensified and thereafter pressure was high north-east of Scotland and low on the Atlantic. A spell of fair weather with mainly easterly winds prevailed over most of Britain but some rain occurred in Ireland on the 21st.

Subsequently a depression near the Azores moving east-north-east caused rain in south Ireland and south and west England on the 23rd, and in most places in England and Ireland on the 24th. During the following days pressure remained high northward of the British Isles, while a depression off Portugal moved east and an associated trough moved north-west over Britain. Rain fell fairly generally in Britain on the 25th and slight rain occurred in the British Isles on the 26th. During the closing days of the month a depression moved east-north-east over Iceland and secondary disturbances crossed the British Isles. There was widespread rain on the 29th and fairly general rain on the 30th and 31st. Widespread gales were reported on the 30th and 31st.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure considerably exceeded the average, the excess at 7h. ranging from 6.9 mb. at Sumburgh and Stornoway to 9.0 mb. at Tynemouth and Spurn Head. The map shows an area of high pressure over England, while the lowest pressure is situated north of Scotland (see chart 1). There was an excess of winds from between west and south in the northern half of the country: in the southern half winds were more variable in direction and in southern England those from between north and east were fairly frequent. A widespread gale was experienced on the 30th-31st. In the north of Scotland gales also occurred frequently in the first half of the month. On the 15th a mean hourly velocity of 51 m.p.h. was recorded at Stornoway, and among the highest speeds registered in gusts at anemometer stations were 76 m.p.h. at Kirkwall on the 10th, 78 m.p.h. at Lerwick on the 11th and 82 m.p.h. at Bell Rock lighthouse and 81 m.p.h. at Bidston Observatory on the 30th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature appreciably exceeded the average, the deviation being + 3.1°F. over Scotland, + 2.9°F. over Northern Ireland and + 2.3°F. over England and Wales. Mean temperature for the three months January to March, 1943, though high, was not so high as in the corresponding three months of 1938, but December 1942 was mild, while December 1937 was rather cold. Among the warmest days of the month, when temperatures of 60°F. or somewhat higher were recorded, were the 1st, 2nd, 6th, 16th-18th, 23rd-27th, 30th and 31st. Severe frost (screen minimum temperature 25°F. or below) was registered on numerous occasions, e.g. on the 8th, 10th, 12th-16th and 21st-23rd.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 63°F. at Peterborough on the 16th, Norwich on the 17th and Manchester (Whitworth Park) on the 23rd, 20°F. at Newport, Shropshire, on the 15th; (Scotland) 63°F. at Perth on the 6th, 18°F. at Eskdalemuir on the 15th; (Northern Ireland) 57°F. at Garvagh on the 17th and 18th, 27°F. at Aldergrove on the 12th and at Garvagh on the 12th and 13th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881-1915 was 37 over England and Wales, 66 over Scotland and 49 over Northern Ireland. An excess was recorded only in parts of Argyll, Inverness-shire and Sutherland. Less than 25 per cent. was received over an area in east Yorkshire, in a coastal strip extending from Cromer to Lowestoft, in a larger area covering much of south-east England and part of the Home Counties, the extreme tip of Cornwall, in the neighbourhood of Monreith (Wigtown) and near Montrose. Except in the west and north most of the rain fell from the 23rd onward. Many places in the eastern half of Britain experienced an absolute drought: Aberdeen recorded no measurable rain from the 1st-24th inclusive and the total rain from February 16th to March 24th was only .06 in.: at Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, an absolute drought of 41 days, February 11th to March 23rd, inclusive, was registered. On the other hand some stations in the west of Scotland reported as many as 20 or 21 rain-days.

Among the heaviest falls in 24 hours were:—

- 9th. 2.96 in. at Kinlochquoich (Inverness).
- 10th. 2.75 in. at Kinlochquoich.
- 29th. 2.03 in. at Borrowdale.
- 31st. 2.19 in. at Blaenau Festiniog (Merioneth).

In Scotland, snow was reported locally on 14 days; it occurred in all parts on the 11th and there were fairly widespread falls also on the 12th and 13th, but it did not lie to any appreciable depth.

Thunderstorms were infrequent generally but were reported locally at times.

Sunshine.—Sunshine appreciably exceeded the average in England and Wales, where the percentage of the average over the country as a whole was 115. In Scotland the mean daily sunshine varied from approximately 2.5 hours in the Great Glen to more than 4 hours along the coast from Nairn to Banff.

Fog.—Fog was infrequent on the whole in Scotland and Northern Ireland but developed on numerous occasions inland in England. Periods of most considerable fog included the 5th-8th, 15th-18th and 21st-23rd.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on 12 nights. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on 10 days.