

Monthly Weather Report

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

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MARCH, 1946.—Dry; cold until the 17th, then becoming very warm.

The month was notable for the variation of temperature; the first seventeen days were cold and the rest of the month was warm, day temperatures being particularly high during the last week.

During the opening days of the month a depression over France moved north-east to Germany, then west-north-west to the southern North Sea and ultimately slowly south-south-west to the eastern English Channel. Meanwhile pressure was also low between Iceland and Norway. Cold, north-easterly winds prevailed over east and south-east England and later spread over most of Great Britain; a gale was reported locally on the east coast on the 2nd and 3rd. Appreciable snow fell in parts of east and south-east England. Snow lay to a depth of 10 in. at Lympne on the 3rd and about 8 in. at Whipsnade on the 4th. On the 4th a shallow trough of low pressure moved eastward over the British Isles and was associated with rather widespread precipitation. Thereafter pressure was high to the north and low to the south of the British Isles and cold easterly to north-easterly winds prevailed, with scattered wintry showers. By the 8th a complex depression was developing over and to the west of Scotland and subsequently pressure was low westward of the British Isles, while a ridge of high pressure extended from Scandinavia south-westward to the English Channel; there was some precipitation in the west and north and slight, scattered wintry showers elsewhere on the 8th and 9th. The 10th was a mainly fair day. From the 12th–14th a deep depression off south-west Ireland moved south-east to the Bay and then east-north-east across France causing fairly heavy rain locally in the south-west on the 12th.

By the 17th pressure was low on the Atlantic and a belt of high pressure extended from south Scandinavia to Madeira, while associated troughs moved north-east along our west and north-west seaboard. Precipitation (snow or sleet turning to rain) was widespread on the 17th and rain occurred at many places in the west and north on the 18th and 19th but falls were only slight in the east and south. Temperature rose considerably. On the 20th a vigorous secondary over Ireland moved rapidly north-east causing heavy local rain in the north-west. On the 21st and 22nd a small depression moved rapidly east-north-east from south-west Ireland to Denmark. Rain fell in most districts and moderate falls were reported locally in England on the 21st.

Subsequently an anticyclone developed over our southern districts and moved east: dry anticyclonic conditions prevailed over most of the country for the remainder of the month. Sunshine was abundant in England and Wales during this spell and temperature was very high generally.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure exceeded the average, the excess being greatest in the north and least in the south. At 9h the deviation from the average ranged from +0.8 mb. at Scilly to +8.1 mb. at Lerwick. In consequence pressure was nearly uniform over much of Great Britain and the month was less windy than the average. Winds from some easterly point were more frequent than usual. Local gales were reported on a few occasions; for example, on the 2nd, 3rd, 10th, 12th, 13th and 19th. Among the highest speeds registered in gusts were 67 m.p.h. at Gorleston and 62 m.p.h. at Spurn on the 2nd.

Temperature.—Broadly speaking mean temperature somewhat exceeded the average in Scotland and Northern Ireland and was slightly below the average in England. The range in temperature was great. Cold conditions prevailed from the 1st–17th thereafter a considerable rise in temperature occurred and the remainder of the month was mainly warm, particularly the last week. Very high maximum temperatures were registered locally on the last five days. Screen minimum temperatures of 20°F. or below were registered from the 1st–4th and 8th–10th.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 73°F. at Milford on the 29th and at Prestatyn on the 30th, 12°F. at Burnley on the 1st and at Santon Downham on the 8th; (Scotland) 71°F. at Kilmarnock on the 28th and Kelso on the 31st, 9°F. at Logie Coldstone on the 2nd; (Northern Ireland) 68°F. at Armagh on the 31st, 16°F. at Garvagh on the 1st.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915 was 58 over England and Wales, 74 over Scotland and 53 over Northern Ireland. More than the average occurred in an area in the neighbourhood of the Solway Firth, locally on the borders of the Firth of Forth and Firth of Tay, at Tiree and Lerwick and in the extreme east of Kent. Less than 30 per cent. of the average was received over a small area in Lancashire.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hours were:—

17th	2.50 in. at Borrowdale and 2.06 in. at Watendlath Farm.
18th	2.31 in. at Ardgour (Argyll).
19th	2.50 in. at Llydaw Intake (Snowdon).
20th	2.20 in. at Borrowdale.

Thunderstorms were reported locally on the 21st, 22nd and 23rd.

Snow or sleet showers occurred frequently during the first seventeen days. Snow lay to a depth of 10 in. at Lympne on the 3rd and about 8 in. at Whipsnade on the 4th. In Scotland, 6½ in. of snow fell at Penicuik and 5 to 6 in. at Braemar on the 4th. At Eskdalemuir the depth of snow was 11 in. on the morning of the 9th. "Snow-lying" was reported at Whipsnade from the 1st–17th inclusive.

Sunshine.—Generally speaking sunshine was below the average, the percentages of the average being 93 in England and Wales, 90 in Scotland and 102 in Northern Ireland. An appreciable excess occurred in north-west England, while the deficiency was greatest in south and east England and east Scotland. (See Table I). The deficiency in south and east England was the more remarkable because of the prolonged sunshine which was enjoyed during the last week.

Fog.—The chief period of fog occurred during the anticyclonic régime from the 25th–31st. The fog cleared at most places during the day, though it was rather persistent locally at times. Poor visibility (sometimes during snow or drizzle) occurred locally outside this period mainly from the 1st–5th, 8th–13th, 22nd and 24th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—Aurora was observed in Scotland on 13 nights and was very active from the 23rd–28th. It was seen as far south as Whipsnade, Bedfordshire, on the night of the 25th–26th and at Crickhowell, Breconshire, on the evening of the 25th. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on seven days.