

Monthly Weather Report

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

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March 1953—Dry; sunny; mainly quiet, with frequent fog night and morning.

The month was notable for exceptionally high mean pressure. Except in the north of Scotland it was quiet, with frequent fog at night and in the morning. Little or no rain fell in most areas until the 26th, but heavy rain occurred in Wales, north-west England and locally in the Midlands on the 28th and 29th.

Anticyclonic conditions prevailed until the 25th with little or no rain. Fog was widespread in England, Wales and Ireland during the first six days, both inland and at some coastal stations, fog or low stratus cloud persisting occasionally all day in some places. This made both sunshine amounts and day temperature very variable. At places with persistent fog very low maxima were registered, for example, 32°F. at Watnall on the 1st, 34°F. at Pershore on the 2nd, 33°F. at Mildenhall on the 3rd, and 34°F. at Aberporth on the 4th. On the 7th drier air arrived behind a cold front moving south over the country and subsequently there was not much persistent fog though it often occurred at night and in the morning. Early morning frost was registered frequently throughout the anticyclonic period, with occasional screen minima of 25°F. or below up to the 16th, even in the south. There were a number of sunny days and maximum temperatures were often above the average in the north. Towards the end of the anticyclonic spell it was notably warm, temperature rising to 70°F. locally in England on the 24th and 25th. By the 25th absolute drought had lasted for 34 days in many areas including London and for longer in some places. It was the longest widespread drought early in the year since 1893. On the 25th the anticyclone retreated southward and became less intense, and on the 26th a cold front moved south-east across the country ending the drought almost everywhere, though locally in north-east England there was still no measurable rain. A changeable westerly type of weather prevailed for the rest of the month. On the 28th a small secondary disturbance moved east across northern England giving heavy rain in Wales and north-west England and on the 29th and 30th another small depression, which formed on an almost stationary front, moved north-east from a position off the south of Ireland and gave more heavy rain in parts of Wales and the Midlands. In most other areas rainfall was not very heavy; at Tynemouth no rain occurred until the 30th and even then it was only 0.02 in.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure was exceptionally high; it was the highest mean pressure for March over the whole country this century and some stations with longer records reported that it was the highest on record for March. The deviation from the average at 9h. for the period 1901–30 ranged from +15.0 mb. at Lerwick to +18.9 mb. at Armagh. Except in the north of Scotland it was a very quiet month; the total run of the wind at Oxford and Kew Observatory was the lowest since 1929 and at Southport it was the lowest on record. Winds from between south and west predominated in northern districts, while those from between north and east were most frequent in the south. Gales occurred locally at times between the 24th and 31st and, also, in the extreme north of Scotland on the 5th and 6th. Among the highest speeds registered in gusts were 60 kt. at Lerwick on the 26th, 66 kt. at Stornaway on the 27th, and 58 kt. at Durham on the 28th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature was above the average in Scotland and north-east England and somewhat below the average

elsewhere (see Table I). Low minimum temperatures were frequently registered up to the 25th and there were very low maxima during the first six days at some places with persistent fog. Notably high day temperatures occurred on the 24th and 25th.

Extreme temperatures for the month included:—(England and Wales) 71°F. at Durham and Houghall on the 24th and at numerous places in England on the 25th, 14°F. at Moor House on the 16th; (Scotland) 69°F. at Dyce on the 25th, 16°F. at Leadhills and Eskdalemuir on the 5th; (Northern Ireland) 66°F. at Armagh on the 23rd, 23°F. at Nutt's Corner on the 6th and Armagh on the 16th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915 was 40 over England and Wales, 38 over Scotland, and 19 over Northern Ireland. In Scotland it was the driest March since 1919 and in Northern Ireland the driest since comparable records have been available, namely 1920, but in England and Wales 1944 was drier. Only in a small area in Montgomeryshire was precipitation somewhat more than average. There was less than 25 per cent of the average over most of Northern Ireland, east and extreme south Scotland, most of England north of a line from the Ribble to the Humber, and at most places south-east of a line from Torquay to Yarmouth. Less than 10 per cent was registered locally on the coast of Angus and in a coastal belt in north-east England from the Scottish border to Whitby, and less than 5 per cent over much of County Durham and at Tynemouth. Except occasionally in the north of Scotland little or no rain fell during the first 25 days but considerable rain fell in some parts during the last week.

Among heavy falls in 24 hours were:—

28th 4.23 in. at Gam and 4.22 in. at Llangurig (both in Montgomeryshire), 3.00 in. at Aberangell (Merionethshire), 2.97 in. at Lake Vyrnwy, 2.45 in. at Hayfield, Kinder Filters (Derbyshire) and 2.25 in. at Darwen.
29th 3.70 in. at Bala (Merionethshire), 3.35 in. at Llydaw Intake, Snowdon, and 2.68 in. at Rhondda Water Works (Glamorganshire).

Sunshine.—The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1921–50 was 117 in England and Wales, 130 in Scotland and 108 in Northern Ireland. The month was unusually sunny over most of Scotland and the north and west of England and Wales, but locally in east and south-east England and the Midlands there was an appreciable deficit. Leuchars, Perth and Nairn had their sunniest March since 1929 and Marchmont the sunniest since 1894. At Cockle Park, near Morpeth, it was the sunniest March since records were first taken in 1909.

Fog.—Fog occurred frequently from the 1st to the 25th; at 9h. it was recorded on 18 days at Pontefract, Chesterfield, Manchester and Nelson, and on 17 days at Wakefield, Leicester and Birmingham. During the first six days it was widespread in England, Wales and Ireland and occasionally persisted all day in places.

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