

Monthly Weather Report

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February 1960—*Wet but sunny with some extremes of temperature*

Depressions moved north-eastwards to the north-west of the British Isles until the 4th with winds over the country predominantly south-westerly. Winds fell light on the 5th and the next day an anticyclone from Europe developed over the British Isles, subsequently moving out on to the Atlantic on the 9th. Cold winds, mainly from between north-east and north-west, covered the British Isles from 10th to 16th, but pressure became low over the country from 17th to 23rd with variable winds. During the last week of the month southerly winds brought unusually mild weather to most districts.

The first few days were mild, wet and stormy. On the 2nd widespread rain was associated with an intensifying depression off the coast of Ireland. Many places in north-west England and west Scotland recorded more than 1 in. of rain in 24 hr. while in Westmorland there was a fall exceeding 5 in. Wind reached gale force at times, especially in the west and north (on the 3rd gusts of 62 and 64 kt. were recorded at Holyhead and Lizard respectively) and weather was generally cloudy or dull until the 4th with afternoon temperatures in many places reaching about 50°F.

A large anticyclone over Russia spread westward over the British Isles on the 5th and 6th and weather became generally quiet and fine for the next three or four days, many districts having as much as 8 hr. sunshine by day although fog developed widely at night.

By the 10th the anticyclone had moved further westward becoming centred near Greenland, and the blocking situation, previously over Europe, became established over the eastern Atlantic, dominating the weather until about the 20th. Cold northerly winds on the eastern flank of the anticyclone brought air of Arctic origin to all parts of the British Isles. Snow fell in many northern districts and by the evening of the 10th it lay up to 10 in. deep on some of the higher ground in Scotland. Weather became brighter in the north as winds veered to north-east, but periods of snow and sleet continued to occur in most central and southern districts of the British Isles associated with a depression which moved from Spain towards north-west France. This depression moved slowly eastward along the English Channel on the 13th.

Another depression moving southwards across the Norwegian Sea brought further heavy falls of snow to Scotland on the 15th and gales to the Scottish coasts. The depression turned east on reaching the central part of the North Sea and was followed by another depression moving southwards on a rather similar track on the 26th. From 17th to 20th a complex area of low pressure was situated over the British Isles. Snow and sleet showers continued in the north but there was occasional rain in the south as temperatures gradually rose.

After the 20th westerlies extended into western Europe as the high pressure system in the central Atlantic slowly declined. On the night of the 21st/22nd continuous rain spread along the south coast, but otherwise it was dry with frost and fog patches at night.

Southerly gales, associated with a complex low pressure area in the eastern Atlantic, brought a general rise in temperature on the 24th. Rain was widespread and persistent for about three days, many places in the west having more than 1 in. of rain in 24 hr. on the 24th, 25th and 26th. The 27th was mild and sunny, and the month ended with two unusually mild days, afternoon temperatures exceeding 60°F. over much of the country and reaching 64°F. at a number of places in the Midlands and south-east England.

Pressure and Wind. Pressure was considerably below average everywhere, the deficit at 9 h. ranging from 5.8 mb. at Wick to 8.6 mb. at

Scilly. Winds were mainly south-westerly until the 4th becoming generally light and variable from 5th to 9th, although easterly winds predominated in southern England during the latter part of this period. From 10th to 16th winds were from a northerly direction but thereafter were variable until the 23rd, between south and south-east from 24th to 26th and mainly south-westerly during the last three days of the month.

Temperature. Mean temperature was 0.3°F. below the 1921–50 average in England and Wales, 2.1°F. below in Scotland and 2.9°F. below in Northern Ireland; it was, however, slightly above the average in east and south-east England. Day temperatures were generally above average on the 1st–4th, 28th and 29th, the last two days of the month being exceptionally mild for the time of year. On the 29th temperature was higher at Stonyhurst than in any previous February since records began in 1848. The coldest night was that of the 17th/18th when screen temperature fell below 20°F. at a number of places in England and Wales and below 0°F. at a few places in Scotland.

Extremes included: (England and Wales) 65°F. at Maldon, Bryn Adda and Llety-evan-hen on the 28th, 8°F. at Kielder Castle on the 24th; (Scotland) 61°F. at Elgin and Dunbar on the 29th, –8°F. at Grantown-on-Spey on the 18th; (Northern Ireland) 57°F. at several places on the 28th, 9°F. at Ballykelly on the 19th.

Precipitation. The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the 1916–50 average was 118 in England and Wales, 123 in Scotland and 129 in Northern Ireland. Less than average rainfall occurred in small areas from Snowdonia to Scarborough, from the Peak district to Wiltshire and on the East Anglian coast. Twice the average was recorded locally in the extreme north-east of Scotland. Over England and Wales it was the wettest winter (December to February) since 1915–16. Over Scotland it was the wettest February since 1950.

Among the falls exceeding 3 in. in 24 hr. were:

2nd 5.03 in. at Great Langdale, Westmorland, 3.63 in. at Cwm Dyli, Caernarvonshire and 3.02 in. at Thirlmere, Cumberland.

19th 3.58 in. at Llyn Stwlan, Merioneth.

Thunder was heard on the 3rd, 4th, 6th, 10th, 15th, 16th, 18th, 19th and 20th in England and Wales and on the 3rd, 12th, 14th–16th and 21st in Scotland.

Snow fell widely on the 10th–20th, ground being covered in many areas on 11th–24th. Drifting blocked many roads in the north on 14th–18th when level snow lay 1–2 feet deep in parts of Scotland, Northern Ireland and northern England and 4–8 in. deep in parts of Wales and central England.

Sunshine. The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the 1921–50 average was 118 in England and Wales, 149 in Scotland and 155 in Northern Ireland. At a few places along the east coast sunshine was around or a little below average, but mostly it was considerably above average especially in the west; at Rothesay twice the average was received. The sunniest week was from 15th to 21st when many places along the south coast had more than 50 hours of sunshine.

Fog. Fog occurred at many places in south and west Scotland on the 6th and 26th; it was dense around Glasgow on the 6th. In England and Wales fog occurred at one place or another on all but one or two mornings during the month; it was most prevalent on the 5th, 6th, 11th and 24th–26th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena. The aurora was visible in Scotland on 16 nights and was seen as far south as Ballykelly on the night of the 19th/20th.