

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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MARCH, 1939.—Dull in England and Ireland; spell of cold north-east winds from 25th-29th.

The weather of the month was dull on the whole but an appreciable excess of sunshine was enjoyed in parts of Scotland. Mean temperature slightly exceeded the average, particularly in Scotland. Rainfall was variable; there was a marked deficiency in south-west England and the excess was considerable in parts of Northern Ireland and locally in south Scotland and north-east England.

The opening days of the month were unsettled and mild; from the 1st-5th a large area of low pressure was situated over the Atlantic and secondary disturbances moved north or north-east over the British Isles. Rain fell at times; it was heavy locally in the west and north on the 1st and 2nd and there was general rain in England also on the 4th. By the 6th the lowest pressure lay to the north of the British Isles and by the 7th an anticyclone was established to the south-west of Ireland where it remained almost continuously until the 20th. Meanwhile a series of secondary depressions moved south-east over Scotland and the North Sea; temperature became more variable, and rather cold, north-westerly or northerly winds prevailed at times, particularly in eastern districts. On the 21st and 22nd a deep depression moved eastward across Iceland and an associated trough of low pressure moved over the British Isles. Subsequently this low pressure system remained almost stationary in a belt extending from the south of Iceland to the Mediterranean, the northern portion becoming much less deep. Rainfall was almost general on the 21st, and during the following days there were wintry showers but good sunshine records on the whole. By the 26th an anticyclone had developed off north-west Scotland and thereafter pressure remained high to the north of Scotland for some days; meanwhile pressure was low over the continent and a spell of cold north-easterly winds prevailed until the 28th and, in the north and west, until the 29th. During the last two days a depression remained almost stationary over the Bay of Biscay and winds became easterly to south-easterly over the British Isles.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure exceeded the average generally, the excess being greatest in the south-west and least in the south-east. The deviation from the average at 7h. ranged from +7.3 mb. at Valentia Observatory to +2.7 mb. at Kew Observatory. The chart of mean monthly pressure shows an area of high pressure off south-west Ireland. After the first six days, winds from some northerly point predominated. Local gales occurred on numerous days and gales were rather widespread on the 8th and 20th. Among the highest speeds recorded in gusts were 76 m.p.h. at Edinburgh on the 2nd, 74 m.p.h. at Spurn Head and Larkhill and 73 m.p.h. at Manchester on the 8th and 73 m.p.h. at Stornoway, Renfrew and Point of Ayre on the 20th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature for the month somewhat exceeded the average, particularly in Scotland, the excess for the districts ranging from 0.2°F. in England, E. to 1.6°F. in Scotland, W. The first six days were mild; thereafter temperature was more variable and rather cold northerly winds were experienced at times especially in eastern districts. A cold spell of mainly north-easterly winds prevailed from the 25th to 29th. Low screen minima were registered on the 10th, 11th, 13th, 18th and 24th-26th.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 63°F. at Hunstanton, Attenborough and Barnstaple on the 3rd, 24°F. at Droitwich and South Farnborough on the 24th and at Tunbridge

Wells on the 13th and 24th; (Scotland) 62°F. at Stonehaven on the 13th and 20°F. at Braemar on the 24th; (Ireland) 57°F. at Dublin (Trinity College) and Rathfarnham on the 2nd, at Dublin (Glasnevin) on the 10th and at Blacksod Point on the 12th and 27°F. at Garvagh and Newtownforbes on the 26th and at Birr Castle on the 26th and 27th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881-1915 was 95, the values for the constituent countries being England and Wales 88, Scotland 102 and Ireland 104. In England and Wales, broadly speaking rainfall exceeded the average in the east, north-east and extreme north-west and was below the average for the most part elsewhere; in the south-west there was a marked deficiency, less than half the average being received at numerous stations. In Ireland, less than the average occurred in the west and extreme south and more than the average in the east and north-east; more than 150 per cent was registered locally in the north-east. Rainfall in Scotland was very variable; on the whole it was wet in the south, but there were large areas in the west, east and north with less than the average rainfall. Rainfall occurred frequently in parts of Scotland and north Ireland; measurable rain was recorded on 28 days at Deerness and Marchmont and 27 days at Baltasound, Dalwhinnie and Garvagh.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hours were:—

- 1st 2.38 in. at Watendlath Farm (Cumberland), 1.96 in. at Fofanny Reservoir (County Down), 1.83 in. at Bandon (County Cork), 1.70 in. at Middlefell (Westmorland).
- 2nd 1.98 in. at Kinlochquoich (Inverness-shire) and 1.84 in. at North Ballachulish (Inverness-shire).
- 7th 2.58 in. at Shiel (Kirkcudbright), 1.65 in. at Glenlee and 1.60 in. at Saddell Manse (Kintyre).

Local thunderstorms occurred between the 4th and 8th, 22nd and 24th, and on the 20th. Thunderstorms were reported from all parts of west Scotland on the 7th; at Ullapool the storm was described as of exceptional severity and at Millport (Bute) as the worst experienced for many years.

Snow or sleet occurred fairly frequently mainly from the 6th-8th, 17th-18th and 20th-27th but the falls were nowhere heavy.

Sunshine.—In England, Wales and Ireland there was an appreciable deficiency of bright sunshine although a slight excess was enjoyed at a few stations in north-east England and the northern Midlands. In Scotland, sunshine was more variable, an excess being enjoyed at numerous stations particularly in the west; at Helensburgh and Renfrew 124 per cent of the average was registered. The percentages of the average for the districts ranged from 75 in England, S.W. and the Midland Counties to 107 in Scotland, W.

Fog.—Fog occurred at times, mainly on the 10th, 11th, 13th and 30th. It was widespread and thick locally on the 10th and widespread in England on the 11th and thick locally, chiefly in eastern districts.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed locally in Scotland on 14 nights. At Oxford solar halos were noted on 12 days and a sun pillar was observed on the evening of the 25th.