

Monthly Weather Report

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FEBRUARY, 1946.—Mild until the 20th, then cold. Very unsettled periods.

The weather of the month was mild on the whole, with a cold spell from about the 21st onwards. Heavy rainfall on the 7th and 8th following a long wet spell caused serious flooding locally in Wales, north-west England, and the Midlands.

Very unsettled weather prevailed until the 11th. On the 1st and 2nd a deep depression south of Iceland moved first east and then east-north-east and filled. On the 3rd another deep depression approached south-west Iceland, where it remained almost stationary and gradually filled: a secondary depression moved rapidly across the British Isles on the 3rd and another moved along the English Channel on the 4th. During this opening period of the month gales were reported in the west, particularly the south-west and fairly general rain occurred, with local thunderstorms. On the 5th a wedge of high pressure crossed the British Isles and was followed by a trough of low pressure. Long sunny periods were recorded at numerous places on the 5th but further rain occurred in many places during the night of the 5th-6th and on the 6th. On the 7th secondaries to a depression in the far north moved, one over north Scotland and another over south Scotland, and on the 8th a secondary depression off West Ireland moved quickly east over the British Isles. Heavy rain occurred, particularly in Wales, north-west England and locally in the Midlands and Norfolk and there were widespread gales. Serious flooding occurred in the districts with heavy rain. On the 10th a deep depression was centred near Jan Mayn and associated troughs of low pressure moved south-east across the British Isles; gales were recorded in the north of Scotland.

Subsequently an anticyclone centred over the Bay of Biscay spread slowly north and dominated conditions over the British Isles. By the 15th it was centred over the Irish Sea and thereafter receded south-westward to a position off south-west Ireland. This period was comparatively quiet and dry, although rain occurred locally in north and west Scotland on the 15th and slight, local rain was reported on other days.

A period of unsettled weather ensued but with long sunny periods. On the 19th and 20th a depression near Iceland moved east-south-east and a cold front moved slowly south-east across the British Isles. There were widespread north-westerly gales and showery weather, wintry in the north. By the 21st a stream of arctic air flowed over the British Isles with local sleet, snow and hail showers. On the 22nd and 23rd a depression south of Iceland moved south-east across the north of Scotland and was associated with heavy rain on the 22nd and widespread gales, wintry showers and long bright periods on the 23rd. On the 24th a small depression developed west of Ireland and from the 25th-27th a depression moved from the south of Ireland along the English Channel to northern Poland, causing appreciable snow in the south of England. Meanwhile on the 27th and 28th a shallow depression moved south down the North Sea and was associated with snow in Scotland. The period 24th-28th was cold.

Pressure and Wind.—Broadly speaking pressure was above the average in the west and south and below the average in the east. The deviation at 9h. ranged from -2.9 mb. at Lerwick to +5.7 mb. at Scilly. Winds from between south-west and north-west predominated. Gales occurred from the 1st-5th, 7th-11th, 15th-16th and 19th-24th. Among the most widespread gales were those of the 20th and 23rd. Among the highest speeds registered in gusts were 87 m.p.h. at Lizard on the 4th and at Lerwick on the 10th, 90 m.p.h. at Tiree on the 20th and 85 m.p.h. at Bidston and 82 m.p.h. at St. Ann's Head on the 23rd.

Temperature.—Mean temperature exceeded the average by 3.3°F in England and Wales, 1.0°F in Scotland and 2.1°F in Northern Ireland. The first nineteen or twenty days were mild and the remainder of the month generally cold, particularly from the 24th-28th. Screen minimum readings of 20°F or below were

registered at many stations in Great Britain on the 26th, 27th and 28th.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 59°F at Yeovilton, Sidmouth, Teignmouth, Torquay and Fowey on the 7th, 11°F at Marlborough on the 28th; (Scotland) 57°F at Kirkcaldy on the 15th and at Stonehaven on the 17th, 6°F at Dalwhinnie on the 26th; (Northern Ireland) 57°F at Castlerock on the 6th, 23°F at Aldergrove on the 27th and at Garvagh on the 26th and 27th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881-1915 was 138 over England and Wales, 96 over Scotland and 106 over Northern Ireland. Generally speaking in Scotland less than the average occurred in the east and south and more than the average in the north and on the western seaboard. More than 150 per cent. was received over Sutherland and less than 50 over part of the border counties. In England and Wales less than the average occurred on the south Wales coast and in an area extending north-east to Ragley, south Warwickshire and also in the extreme north, especially the north-east. In a small area extending from Durham to Cockle Park (Northumberland) less than 25 per cent. of the average was received. On the other hand more than twice the average was registered over much of north Wales, south Lancashire and the neighbouring part of the Midlands. More than twice the average occurred also over part of Norfolk. In Northern Ireland percentages of the average ranged from 80 at Seaford, County Down to 138 at Londonderry. A wet period occurred during the first ten days, particularly from the 6th-8th. The heavy rain caused serious flooding in parts of England and Wales, notably in Wales, the western Midlands and the Trent Valley.

Among the heaviest falls in 24 hours were:—

7th, 4.02 in. at Blaenau Festiniog, 4.03 in. at Lake Vyrnwy
3.10 in. at Tynant (Radnor).
3.94 in. at Cwm Dyli (Carnarvonshire) and 2.55 in. at Buxton.
8th, 2.60 in. at Cwm Dyli.
24th, 2.44 in. at Blaenau Festiniog.

Thunderstorms occurred rather frequently for the time of year; for example on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 19th and 23rd. They were rather widespread on the 1st and 4th.

Snow or sleet showers occurred frequently in Scotland from the 19th-28th and at times in England and Wales. A considerable fall occurred in the northern half of Scotland on the 20th, when snow lay to a depth of 12 to 18 inches at Braemar and drifts from three to five feet deep blocked main roads in the north-east of Scotland. A fall varying from five to eight inches was experienced in central Scotland on the 27th. Snow occurred in East Anglia from 20th-22nd; about 6 inches were reported to have fallen at Norwich. Appreciable snow occurred in southern England, particularly in the south-east, on the 26th. At Bramley, Hants., four to five inches of snow fell on that day and at Tunbridge Wells snow lay to a depth of 8 inches on the morning of the 27th.

Sunshine.—Broadly speaking considerably exceeded the average, the percentages of the average being 114 for England and Wales, 135 for Scotland and 111 for Northern Ireland. In the south of England, however, and in the Great Glen in Scotland there was a deficiency. The excess was marked locally; at Leuchars and Renfrew it was the sunniest February since records were started in 1922 and 1921 respectively.

Fog.—Fog was rather infrequent for the season. It occurred at the morning observation hour, however, on 11 days at Princetown (1359 ft.), 10 days at Manchester and 9 days at Pontefract and Nelson. The chief period of fog was from the 13th-15th.

Miscellaneous Phenomenon.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on 18 nights, the highest frequency in any month since September 1943. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on 10 days.