

Monthly Weather Report

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

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March, 1951 - Unsettled, and rather cold; very wet in England and Wales

The weather was unsettled and rather cold, with frequent showers of sleet and snow. It was unusually wet in England and Wales, but drier than usual over much of central and western Scotland.

During the first four days a belt of high pressure extended across the British Isles. Weak fronts, however, caused slight rain on the 1st and 2nd and, on the 4th, a trough over our north-west coasts was associated with some rain in Scotland and Ireland. Widespread fog occurred on the 1st and 2nd. On the 6th and 7th a depression west of Scotland moved south, while a secondary which developed south-westward of Ireland moved east to the western English Channel and subsequently swung north, then west and finally south-west. Heavy precipitation occurred in the south-west on the 6th and more precipitation was recorded in western districts on the 7th, while thunder was experienced locally in Ireland. By the 9th pressure was high off the south of Greenland; meanwhile a shallow depression over France moved north and another off south-west Norway moved south-south-west and then west-south-west across the north of Scotland. Cold north-easterly winds prevailed on the 9th, becoming rather variable on the 10th; widespread sleet or snow occurred, being heavy in the north of Scotland on the 10th. Thereafter a depression over south-west France moved north-east causing further precipitation. On the 13th and 14th a deep depression off north Portugal moved quickly north-east across England to the North Sea and thence east across Denmark. Temperature rose and rain occurred on the 13th and scattered, rather slight rain on the 14th. In the rear of this depression a ridge of high pressure built up over the British Isles giving a rather warm, sunny day on the 15th. From the 16th to the 18th a depression was situated westward of Ireland, while associated secondary depressions moved north-east across England. Temperature continued fairly high in England, while rain fell in most areas and was rather heavy at times in England and Wales. On the 19th the main depression, now situated over south-west Ireland, moved east-south-east and on the 19th and 20th an anticyclone to the north-west of Scotland moved south-east across the British Isles to the Low Countries; scattered showers, wintry in places, occurred on the 19th and a fair, sunny day (except in the extreme south-west and west) on the 20th.

A return to more unsettled conditions ensued on the 21st, when an Atlantic depression moved quickly north-east to the north of Scotland and an associated trough crossed the British Isles; heavy rain was widespread on the 21st and occurred in the west and north also on the 22nd. Temperature rose and in most places the 22nd was the warmest day of the month. The depression moved away east and by the 23rd was situated over south Sweden and, in its rear, a cold north-westerly air-stream covered the British Isles causing a considerable fall in temperature. From the 24th to the 26th a depression to the south of Iceland moved east-south-east over the British Isles, later turning east across the southern North Sea; rather cold weather prevailed, with wintry showers and long bright periods on the 25th and 27th, but more general rain or snow on the 26th. Again, from the 28th to the 30th, another disturbance moved south-south-east from the south of Iceland; rain and snow occurred and the weather continued cold but with long sunny periods. On the closing day of the month a trough of low pressure associated with a depression west of Scotland moved east across the country causing precipitation, mostly in the form of rain, but sleet or snow in some places and local thunderstorms in England and Wales.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure was below the average, the deviation from the average at 9h. ranging from -1.1 mb. at Lerwick in the Shetlands to -6.9 mb. at the Scilly Isles. The tracks of depressions constantly passed over or near the British Isles, particularly across England and Wales (see chart II). Winds from some

northerly quarter were rather frequent. Gales occurred locally at times, mainly on the 7th–9th, 13th–14th and 20th–24th. Among the highest gusts registered in knots were 70 at Rye, 65 at Manston and 57 at Lympne and Thorney Island on the 13th, 57 at Durham on the 22nd and 62 at Shoeburyness on the 24th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature was below the 1906–35 average by 2.0°F . in England and Wales and Northern Ireland and 2.7°F . in Scotland. The warmest day was generally the 22nd and it was rather mild in England and Wales from the 13th or 14th to the 18th and in Scotland and Northern Ireland from about the 15th to the 17th. In the west and north the opening days of the month were relatively mild but low minimum temperatures were registered in England and Wales, particularly on the 1st, 4th and 5th. The intervening periods were mainly cold, particularly from the 8th to 12th and during the last week. Extreme temperatures for the month included:—(England and Wales) 60°F . at Birtley, County Durham, and Cambridge on the 22nd, 19°F . at Rhayader on the 4th and Bellingham on the 27th; (Scotland) 57°F . at Strathy on the 3rd and Gordon Castle, Dyce and Dunbar on the 22nd, 3°F . at Dalwhinnie on the 11th; (Northern Ireland) 57°F . at Garvagh on the 22nd, 17°F . at Ballykelly on the 12th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915 was 175 over England and Wales, 95 over Scotland and 97 over Northern Ireland. In Scotland, more than the average occurred in eastern coastal districts and at some places on the west coast. More than 150 per cent. was registered in the neighbourhood of Wick, in Caithness and at Banff. Elsewhere less than the average was received, the deficiency being considerable in central districts where a few stations had less than half the average. Over England and Wales as a whole, apart from the exceptionally wet March of 1947, it was the wettest March since 1919. The excess was general except locally in Cumberland. In Northern Ireland less than the average was registered over much of County Antrim and the neighbouring part of Londonderry; percentages of the average at individual stations ranged from 70 at Ballymena to 118 at Armagh.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hours were:—

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| 21st | 2.47 in. at Barnacarry on Loch Fyne (Argyll) and 2.37 in. at Glenbranter. |
| 22nd | 4.25 in. at Loch Sloy Dam (Dumbartonshire), 3.01 in. at Glen Eive (Argyll) and 2.31 in. at Oughtershaw (Yorkshire). |

Thunderstorms occurred locally in Ireland on the 6th–8th and scattered thunderstorms were recorded rather frequently in England, namely on the 11th–13th, 17th, 19th, 23rd, 24th, 26th–29th and 31st.

Snow or sleet showers occurred very frequently; they occurred widely on the 6th–13th, 17th, 19th and 23rd–31st. Around the 10th–12th snow lay to a depth of 6–12 in. at Dalwhinnie and Glenlivet and at 9h. on the 13th level snow lay 7 in. deep at Bwlchgwyn.

Sunshine.—The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the average for 1906–35 was 83 in England and Wales, 82 in Scotland and 87 in Northern Ireland; the deficiency was practically general. Tieve, in the western Isles, was the only station at which the mean daily sunshine exceeded 4 hours.

Fog.—Fog occurred rather frequently, chiefly on the 1st–6th, 10th–13th, 16th–17th, 21st–22nd and 26th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on 12 nights. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on 11 days.