

## MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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## MARCH, 1936.—Mild; with a marked deficiency of sunshine.

The month was distinguished by a marked deficiency of sunshine. Temperature was considerably above the average, while rainfall was deficient over the country generally but an excess occurred in places, particularly in south-west England, the western Midlands and south-east Ireland.

On the 1st of the month a depression over the North Sea with a ridge of high pressure to westward of the British Isles gave cold northerly winds with snow or sleet in many places. From the 2nd to the 6th depressions moved east and south-east from Iceland and wintry precipitation occurred in most districts during this period. Southerly gales blew in Scotland on the 4th, on which day fog was wide-spread in the east, south-east and central districts of England. A depression moved in from the Atlantic on the 7th and 8th, giving rain in most districts and milder conditions. An area of low pressure over the British Isles on the 9th was associated with general rain and, in Scotland, with snow and sleet.

This was succeeded by a ridge of high pressure and weather became dry and in the south very mild, temperature reaching 61°F. at South Farnborough on the 10th. Temperature fell again on the 11th but with anticyclonic conditions prevailing up to the 18th mainly dry weather was experienced, while temperature rose during the latter part of this period. On the 19th a depression off south-west England was spreading north-east and with air of warm southerly origin invading the country, temperatures rose high above the average March level and exceeded 60°F. at many places in the next few days. Pressure remained low off the south-west coasts and a trough of low pressure moved northwards on the 23rd giving general rain and local thunderstorms. Conditions continued unsettled and very mild until the end of the month under the influence of Atlantic depressions. Widespread rain fell on the 26th and 29th and heavy rain occurred in south-west England and south-west Ireland on the night of the 28th.

**Pressure and Wind.**—Mean pressure was substantially below the average in the south-west and somewhat exceeded the average in the north of Scotland, the deviation at 7 h. ranging from -5.9 mb. at the Scilly Isles to +3.9 mb. at Lerwick in the Shetland Islands.

South-easterly or easterly winds were unusually prevalent and gales were, on the whole, infrequent for March. A rather widespread gale was reported in Scotland on the 1st and gales occurred locally on the 2nd, 4th and 5th. They were also reported at isolated stations in the north and west on the 26th and 29th-31st. No exceptional speeds were registered in gusts, among the highest being 68 m.p.h. at Kirkwall and Bell Rock Lighthouse and 65 m.p.h. at Lerwick on the 1st and 63 m.p.h. at St. Mary's, Scilly, on the 2nd.

**Temperature.**—Mean temperature exceeded the average in all districts, the excess varying from 1.4°F. in Ireland S., to 2.6°F. in the Midlands.

The first four days of the month were cold and a second rather cold spell occurred from about the 11th or 12th to the 15th. Some low minima were registered on the 3rd and 4th; for example, 11°F. at Braemar, 12°F. at Logie Coldstone and 13°F. at Balmoral on the 3rd and 18°F. at Rickmansworth and 19°F. at Usk on the 4th. The latter half of the month was very mild, particularly from the 19th to the end, when the country lay, for the most part, in the path of warm air of some southerly or south-westerly origin. Day

temperature reached or exceeded 60°F. at numerous stations on one or other of these days, and touched 65°F. at Fort William and Kelso on the 22nd and in parts of London and at Cranwell on the 21st.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 65°F. at Kensington (London), Camden Square (London) and Cranwell on the 21st, 18°F. at Rickmansworth on the 4th; (Scotland) 65°F. at Fort William and Kelso on the 22nd, 11°F. at Braemar on the 3rd; (Ireland) 62°F. at Newcastle (Wicklow) on the 31st and 25°F. at Markree Castle on the 11th and at Glasnevin (Dublin) on the 3rd.

**Precipitation.**—The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881-1915 was 85, the values for the constituent countries being England and Wales 90, Scotland 71 and Ireland 86.

In Scotland, rainfall was deficient except at a few stations in Angus, Fife, Argyll and locally in the Clyde Valley. The deficiency was greatest in the Central Highlands and the north, where it was more than 50 per cent. in places. In England and Wales, the distribution was very variable; considerably more than the average fell in the western Midlands and south-west England from Scilly Isles to Hampshire and locally in Wales. Elsewhere, apart from a few isolated stations, there was a deficiency which amounted to 70 per cent. or more in parts of Suffolk. At Halstead (Essex) there was an absolute drought from the 10th-24th inclusive. In Ireland, more than the average was registered in the south-east, roughly from Cork to Wicklow and locally in County Down, and less than the average elsewhere.

Snow or sleet occurred locally at times during the first half of the month, chiefly in the first five days. Resulting from the unusual snowfall of the last days of February and the beginning of March snow lay at Bellingham until the 5th, at Peebles, West Linton and Wolfelee until the 8th, at Balmoral until the 11th and at Braemar until the 17th.

Thunderstorms were reported from the Border districts and from Argyll on the 20th, 21st and 22nd and in the Midlands and north-west England on the 23rd.

Among the heavier falls of rain in 24 hours were:—

26th 55 mm. at Fofanny (Co. Down).

28th 47 mm. at Fofanny.

29th 60 mm. at Snowdon and 47 mm. at Borrowdale (Cumberland).

**Sunshine.**—The most striking feature of the weather of the month was the exceptional and general deficiency of sunshine. For districts 1-10, the percentage of the average was only 61 and at many places it was the dullist March on record. For instance, at Southport and Phoenix Park, no previous March has had so little sunshine in records which go back to 1892 and 1881 respectively.

**Fog.**—Local fog occurred at times, particularly from the 3rd-4th, 7th-11th, 16th-20th and 24th-31st. The fog on the 4th was wide-spread in England and thick in many places.

**Miscellaneous Phenomena.**—The aurora was observed in Scotland on the 6th, 10th, 21st, 23rd, 24th, 26th and 27th, the display on the 24th being seen as far south as Edinburgh. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on 13 days.