

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

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

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MARCH 1932.—Dull in Scotland with excess of precipitation in north and east. Mainly fair and cool in the south with deficient rainfall.

The drought which formed so remarkable a feature of the weather of February continued with cool easterly winds and bright periods during the opening days of March. In Scotland the drought was broken on the 4th or 5th by a deep depression which moved in an east-southeasterly direction from Iceland bringing rain and in its rear squally west or north-west winds and local hail, snow and sleet. It was not until the 8th, however, when a secondary disturbance moved rapidly from Northern Ireland and intensified over the southern North Sea that the drought was really broken in the south. On this day some stations registered 10 mm. or more.

Subsequently an anticyclone spread south-east from Iceland bringing a renewal of dry and mainly cool weather which lasted until the 20th. During this period daily records of 10 hours or more sunshine was recorded in places.

Rain in Scotland on the 20th marked a change to unsettled rainy weather which, except for fair to fine weather in England on the 24th and 25th, continued during the remainder of the month. Excellent sunshine records were obtained in the south-east on Good Friday (25th) but on the following day conditions deteriorated, Easter Sunday being wet and Easter Monday showery with, however, sunny periods. On the 31st cold northerly winds spread across the northern and western districts with local snow and hail in the north and thunderstorms in the south.

Pressure and Winds.—Monthly mean pressures were above the normal. Strong winds or gales were reported from western districts about the 6th, 25th and 31st. Otherwise the month was quiet.

Temperature.—It is unusual for temperature in southern England not to attain 60° in March, as was the case this year when the highest temperature recorded was 59° F. In most parts of England and Wales maximum temperatures did not differ by much from the normal except for a short period of cold weather commencing about the 9th and culminating in low temperatures on the 12th when a maximum of 33° F. was recorded at Lympne. The nights were, however, frequently cold and in consequence mean temperatures were below the normal in most districts. In Scotland and most parts of Ireland mean temperatures exceeded the normal. Ground frost occurred on most nights up to the 25th and grass minima below 20° F. were not uncommon; the lowest readings were 4° F. and 3° F. at Dalwhinnie on the 3rd and 12th respectively.

The extreme temperatures for the month were :—(England and Wales) 59° F. at Tavistock on the 16th, Cambridge on the 19th and Greenwich Observatory on the 31st, 12° F. at Rickmansworth

on the 13th, (Scotland) 60° F. at Arbroath on the 13th, 11° F. at Dalwhinnie on the 12th, (Ireland) 59° F. at Kilkenny on the 23rd and 26th, and at Hazelhatch (Co. Dublin) on the 27th, 20° F. at Phoenix Park (Dublin) on the 17th.

Precipitation.—After a temporary break in the drought dry conditions were renewed over the greater part of the country on the 9th and continued until about the 20th when the change to unsettled rainy conditions took place. In most places the rainfall during the last ten days accounted for the greater part of the month's total, the heaviest falls occurring on the 22nd, 27th, 29th and 30th. Rainfall totals in Scotland exceeded the normal in the north and east and locally elsewhere. In England and Wales there were considerable variations but in general there was a deficiency except in the north-east. In most parts of Ireland there was a considerable deficiency. Some rather heavy falls of snow occurred locally in Scotland around the 6th and 7th, 5 inches being reported at Strathpeffer on the 6th and at Pearsie on the 7th.

The general precipitation for the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the normal for the period 1881–1915 was 88 per cent., the values for the constituent countries being, England and Wales 88 per cent., Scotland 101 per cent., Ireland 71 per cent.

Sunshine.—In northern England and Wales and in Scotland the month was on the whole dull, the deficiency being most pronounced in the north and east of Scotland; Lerwick had only 64 per cent. of the normal sunshine for March, Nairn 57 per cent., and Aberdeen 62 per cent. In the south of England and Wales and in Ireland, except in the south-east, aggregates were generally above the normal. Daily records exceeding 10 hours were recorded locally in Scotland on the 8th and 9th, in many parts of England from the 12th to 16th and in the south-east of England on Good Friday the 25th (11·2 hours at Lympne).

Fog.—Fog was widespread on the 3rd and was dense locally in the Clyde area on the 4th. It occurred in the south-east on the 13th to 15th and on the 19th. In the south fog on the 24th was thick locally. Coastal fog occurred on the 21st.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—Aurora was observed in Scotland on the 4th, 7th, 8th, 10th, 11th, 19th, 28th–31st, the displays of 7th, 10th, 28th and 31st being perhaps the most widely observed. On five occasions the aurora was seen as far south as Dumfriesshire.

Halo phenomena were observed over a wide area in the Midlands and Southern England on the 25th.