

# Monthly Weather Report

## OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

*Summary of observations compiled from returns of official stations and voluntary observers.*

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### March 1970 — Cold and snowy with frequent wintry showers

High pressure was maintained over the Atlantic west of Ireland for much of the month, while troughs of low pressure often moved south-east over or near the British Isles. Winds were frequently north or north-west but became westerly from the 16th to 21st when high pressure was centred near the Azores.

**Weather** — It was generally cold with winds mainly between west and north. Wintry showers of sleet (rain or drizzle and snow) or hail often occurred and snow was much more frequent than usual. There were a number of heavy snowfalls and Kent was particularly badly affected by a blizzard which struck southern districts on the 4th. Power supplies and communications were disrupted over wide areas and in some rural districts power was not restored for several days.

**Wind** — It was generally a windy month but gales were rarely widespread. Local gales were rather more frequent than average in the south but less frequent in the north. Gales were reported on 16 days in England, 14 days in Scotland and 5 days in Wales and Northern Ireland. On the 4th winds reached gale force in parts of the south and a gust of 61 kt was recorded at Aberporth (Cardiganshire). The 16th to 18th was a windy spell nearly everywhere; gusts of 85 kt and 75 kt occurred at Cairngorm (Inverness-shire), height 1090 m, on the 16th and 17th respectively and on the 18th gusts over 50 kt were reported in many parts of Britain with 61 kt being recorded at Hampton (south-west London). Gales were renewed on the 20th in the northern half of the country when a gust of 70 kt occurred at Wick (Caithness).

**Temperature** — In most areas monthly mean temperature was about 2 degC below average but in a few places in north Scotland and eastern England the deficit reached 3 degC.

It was cold for much of the first two weeks when frost, severe at times, occurred almost nightly and daytime temperatures in some areas barely rose above freezing point on several occasions. Cold weather with frost in places returned on the 26th and, in general, persisted for the remainder of the month. Minima recorded included the following on the 5th: -14.4°C at Newport (Shropshire); -12.8°C at Grantown-on-Spey (Moray); -9.4°C at Alwen (Denbighshire). In Northern Ireland, -7.5°C occurred at Knockmany Forest (Co. Tyrone) on the 25th.

Temperatures were sometimes well above average in the third week. Among the maxima recorded during the month were: 16.1°C at Monkswood (Huntingdonshire) on the 20th and at Cambridge Botanic Gardens on the 21st; 15.6°C at Callendar (Perthshire) on the 15th; 14.4°C at Hawarden Bridge (Flintshire) on the 17th; 14.0°C at Larne (Co. Antrim) on the 16th.

**Rainfall** — In most parts of the country rainfall (including melted snow) was above average, and over twice the average occurred in Ross-shire and parts of North Wales. However, less than half the average rainfall was recorded in parts of south-west England and over large areas of Angus, Perthshire and Fife. It was drier still around St. Andrews and both Loch Leven (Fife) and Crieff (Perthshire) had their driest March since 1944.

The snowfall in southern England on the 4th was equivalent to about 25 mm of rain. The heaviest rain during the month occurred in north Scotland on the 16th and 17th; 78 mm of rain fell at Achnashellach (Ross and Cromarty) in the 24 hours ending 0900 GMT on the 17th.

Thunderstorms were reported on 15 days in England and, although they were mostly isolated, they occurred in a number of areas on the 23rd. Elsewhere thunder was heard on 3 days in Scotland, 2 days in Wales and 1 day in Northern Ireland; this is rather below average. Showers during the month were often of small hail but on the 18th hailstones up to 2.5 cm in diameter fell at Prestwood (Buckingham-

shire). On the 23rd lightning strikes damaged property in Silchester (Hampshire).

**Snow** — The number of days on which snow fell in March 1970 was almost three times the average in many central and western areas and was generally more than twice the average elsewhere. During the first fortnight and in the last 5 days, most areas had wintry showers or periods of snow. Late on the 3rd and during the 4th a developing depression moved south-east across the country bringing blizzards to Northern Ireland, Wales and much of England except the south-west.

Drifting occurred in strong winds especially in southern England; roads were blocked and telephone and electric power cables were brought down. In general about 10-15 cm of snow settled at altitudes above 100 m but on high ground in North Wales and the Midlands depths of over 30 cm occurred in places above 300 m. Parts of east and south-east England also had heavy falls with 30 cm reported on Farthing Common, height 180 m, near Lyminge (Kent). Periods of snow affected many areas on the 8th and 9th especially in the south and west and heavy snow showers occurred in the north on the 26th and 27th with severe drifting in north-east Scotland.

**Sunshine** — Monthly sunshine totals were near or somewhat below average in most areas except, notably, in parts of Scotland. Here, apart from the north, amounts were above average and substantially so in a few places in central areas. Around Glasgow over one and a half times the average sunshine occurred and Paisley recorded its highest March total since 1907. The Angus coast was also very favoured where Dundee had its sunniest March since 1933.

**Fog** — Overnight fog, freezing in places, occurred in east and central England from the 8th to 10th, in eastern and northern areas on the 12th and in many parts of England and Wales from the 14th to 16th. On the 20th hill fog was widespread in South Wales and south-west England.

**Miscellaneous Phenomena** — The aurora was seen by observers in Scotland on 11 nights, and in England it was observed from as far south as Exeter on the 8th.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES, March 1970

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE °C					EARTH TEMP. °C		RAIN DAYS	RAIN-FALL	SUN-SHINE
	*Highest Max.	*Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 30 cm.	Mean 122 cm			
	Difference from Average							% of Average		
0 SCOTLAND, N.	12.0	-7.2	-1.7	-2.0	-1.9	-1.5	-0.8	+5	141	101
1 SCOTLAND, E.	12.8	-5.0	-1.2	-1.3	-1.3	-1.1	-0.9	+2	82	119
2 ENGLAND, N.E.	14.4	-12.2	-1.7	-2.3	-2.0	-1.3	-0.5	+6	105	106
3 ENGLAND, E.	16.1	-10.0	-2.7	-2.1	-2.4	-1.5	-0.9	+5	113	85
4 MIDLANDS	14.6	-12.8	-2.6	-1.8	-2.2	-1.3	-0.7	+4	124	105
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	13.9	-8.3	-2.3	-1.8	-2.0	-1.3	-0.6	+5	109	90
6 SCOTLAND, W.	12.8	-8.8	-1.2	-1.8	-1.5	-0.9	-0.9	+1	71	134
7 ENGLAND, N.W. and N.Wales	13.3	-7.1	-2.3	-1.5	-1.9	-1.1	-0.7	+7	120	113
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S.Wales	13.3	-6.1	-2.0	-1.8	-1.9	-1.3	-0.6	+3	83	99
N.IRELAND	12.8	-6.7	-1.6	-1.4	-1.5	-	-	+6	128	107
SCOTLAND	12.8	-8.8	-1.4	-1.7	-1.5	-	-	+3	98	118
ENG. and WALES	16.1	-12.8	-2.3	-1.9	-2.1	-	-	+5	112	100

\*Highest Max. and Lowest Min. of the District Value Stations.