

## MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

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

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## MARCH, 1926. FAIR, MILD AND VERY DRY GENERALLY.

**General.**—The principal features of the weather of March was the marked deficiency of rainfall in England and Wales, Ireland and in the southern and eastern districts of Scotland and the continuance of the mild weather of February interrupted only for brief periods, notably during the spell of easterly winds between the 16th and 26th.

During the first fortnight the passage of vigorous secondaries associated with depressions near Iceland frequently caused the winds to strengthen to gale force; on the 3rd and 4th and again on the 9th and 10th, gusts of 70-80 miles per hour occurred in several places. In the rear of a depression which passed across Scandinavia on the 4th there was a marked, though temporary drop in temperature, with snow, hail or sleet showers in many places. Precipitation was heavy locally in the north and west early in the month, among the largest amounts recorded being 90mm. (3.54 in. at Achnashellach (Ross-shire) and 113mm. (4.43 in.) at Snowdon (Carnarvon) on the 7th. On the 14th an anticyclone commenced to move northwards across England, giving fair misty weather with fog locally inland, followed a few days later by easterly winds and a decided drop in temperature. High easterly winds prevailed in the English Channel on the 21st to 23rd, and at times on the east coast also. Snow or sleet fell in many places, including London, though the amounts were generally small. A grass minimum reading of 11°F. occurred at Wisley on the 22nd, and a screen minimum of 23°F. at a few stations on the night of the 24th to 25th. Meanwhile a decrease of pressure was spreading from the southwest and by the 26th a warm, southerly current was affecting the southern counties. Temperature rose above 55°F. again and a shallow depression over the English Channel caused some rain in many places. In the northern districts strong winds on the 29th and 30th reaching gale force locally and accompanied by hail showers in some places were associated with the passage north-eastwards of a depression to the north of the Shetlands. On the 31st a large and deep depression approached from the Atlantic giving cloudy and showery weather in the north-west, though fair weather continued to prevail in the east.

The general character of the month is illustrated by the following remarks taken from observers' notes:—Lerwick, —Wettest March on record, the month's total exceeding that of the wet March of 1914. Southport, —A dry month and mainly warm, yet rather dull, but consisting almost entirely of two widely different portions, viz., a very stormy westerly period up to the 14th and a trying easterly spell from the 16th to the 28th. Leyland (Lancashire), —Driest March since 1910. Copdock, —The past month has proved much the driest March in my records—in fact I only have two months in the whole of my 25 years with a lower rainfall, both of them in 1921, February, 5mm. with 5 rain-days and June, 4mm. with 2 rain-days. Berkhamsted, —The month was rather warm and exceptionally dry. Cheltenham, —The total rainfall for the month is next to the lowest on record for March since 1867. Newport (Isle of Wight), —A very dry and rather windy month. Totland Bay, —Only once, during 39 years, has the total rainfall for March been less, viz., in March 1925. Torquay, —A cloudy month with rainfall below the average; a deficiency of sunshine, but temperatures generally high. Newquay, —Driest March since 1915, but sunshine next to the least on record for March, viz., March, 1902. Highest barometer reading for March since 1904.

**Pressure and Winds.**—The mean pressure was above normal at all stations. The highest recorded pressure was 1042 mb. at Scilly (St. Mary's) on the 11th and the lowest 977 mb. at Lerwick on the 30th. The general trend of the isobars favoured westerly winds but from the 16th to the 26th, easterly winds were prevalent. The first two weeks of the month were of a stormy character, westerly gales occurring widely between the 3rd and 6th and from the 9th to the 11th. Gusts exceeding 80 mi/hr. were recorded at Quilty on the 4th and at Fleetwood on the 10th. A severe line squall in which a maximum wind velocity of 80 mi/hr. was registered in a gust passed over Southport shortly before 4h. on the 4th. A line squall occurred also at Richmond (Kew Observatory) at 15h. 5m. on the 9th.

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**Temperature.**—For the third consecutive month, the mean temperature in all Districts was above normal, the excess ranging from 2.9°F. in England E. (mean temperature 44.0°F.) to 1.3°F. in the Channel Isles (mean temperature 46.6°F.). The month on the whole was not as mild as February, the mean excess for Districts 1-10 being 2.2°F. compared with 4.2°F. in February. Temporary falls in temperature took place generally on the 4th, in Scotland on the 9th and again widely during a spell of easterly winds between the 16th and the 26th. Ground frosts occurred in all Districts particularly during the second and third weeks.

The extreme temperatures for the month were:—(England and Wales) 63°F. at Hull and Worksop on the 8th, 20°F. at Comondale on the 16th; (Scotland) 61°F. at Montrose on the 13th, 18°F. at Wolfelee on the 5th; (Ireland) 62°F. at Killarney on the 14th, 26°F. at Clongowes Wood on the 20th.

**Precipitation.**—Except in the northern and western districts of Scotland, the month was exceptionally dry; in all parts of England and Wales and Ireland and in the eastern and southern districts of Scotland, monthly aggregates were below normal. The deficiency was greatest in the eastern and southern districts of England; at Felixstowe, Shoeburyness and Rothamsted, less than 10 per cent., and Woburn, Grayshott and Ilfracombe less than 13 per cent. of the normal amount of rainfall for March were recorded. At Walton-on-Naze, the month was practically rainless, the total for the month amounting to only 1mm. In many places the month was the driest March on record. Little rain fell in the London area; at Greenwich, Camden Square and at Richmond (Kew Observatory) the month was the driest March on record since 1841, 1858 and 1871 respectively. In the west and north-west of Scotland, however, very heavy rain was recorded during the first eight days of the month, especially on the 7th and 8th. Over considerable areas from Loch Fyne to Loch Carron, the aggregate rainfall of these two days exceeded 75mm. (3 in.) and in the Lochar district, Kinlochquoich had 108mm. (4.26 in.) on the 7th followed by 63mm. (2.49 in.) on the 8th. At Loch More, Achfary, the month's aggregate amounted to 230 per cent. of the normal while at Lerwick the month was the wettest March on record, the total for the month, 155mm. exceeding that of the wet March of 1914, viz., 153mm.

The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the normal, 1881-1915, was 57; the values for the several countries were:—England and Wales 35, Scotland 103, Ireland 55.

Snow, or sleet fell widely on the 4th, between the 20th and the 23rd and in several places on the 9th.

Thunder, accompanied in many places by hail occurred locally, between the 3rd and 6th, on the 9th and during the last few days of the month. The largest number of thunderstorms reported was four at Deerness and Liverpool.

**Sunshine.**—The mean daily duration of sunshine was above the normal in England E. and S.E.; in the remaining Districts it was below normal. The largest mean daily excess was 0.10 hr. in England E. and the largest deficiency 1.18 hr. in Ireland N. There were frequent bright periods and good sunshine records were obtained at several places on various dates. Amongst the largest amounts recorded were 11.4 hrs. at Nairn and 10.9 hrs. at Inverness on the 24th, 10.9 hrs. at Scilly on March 28th, 10.6 hrs. at Ventnor and 10.9 hrs. at Bournemouth on the 30th.

**Fog.**—Little fog was reported during the month; it occurred locally inland between the 14th and 19th and between the 25th and the 29th.

**Miscellaneous Phenomena.**—Solar and lunar halos were observed at several stations on various dates. Aurora was frequently observed in Scotland and at one or more places on as many as 15 nights. A brilliant auroral display on March 9th was witnessed as far south as the Channel Isles; at most places the phenomenon was observed between 19h. 30m. and 20h. 30m. G.M.T. The Zodiacal Light was seen at Oxford on the 9th, 10th, 13th and 15th. A sun pillar was observed at Markree Castle on the 16th. A parhelion was seen at Letterfrack (Co. Galway) on the 30th.