

Monthly Weather Report

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

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February, 1949—Sunny; mild; wet in the north-west; dry in England and Wales and east Scotland.

The weather was distinguished by a large excess of sunshine, particularly in England and Wales and east Scotland. It was dry in England and Wales and east Scotland but very wet in west and north-west Scotland and mild generally after the first week.

During the opening days an anticyclone, centred over Scotland on the first, moved south-east to Germany. This system maintained mainly fair, sunny weather, apart from fog until the 6th, when some rain fell in western districts.

A change to unsettled conditions occurred on the 7th, when a trough associated with an Atlantic depression moved across England giving local gales on the west coasts and general rain. On the 8th a depression approached south-west Ireland from a position near the Azores and on the 9th it moved rapidly across England to Denmark. Rain fell generally on the 8th and showers, wintry in places, on the 9th, while widespread gales prevailed in England and Wales on the 9th. On the 11th and 12th shallow troughs of low pressure moving east over the country caused rain in most areas. Meanwhile the Azores anticyclone spread north-east and from the 13th to 17th pressure was high in a belt from westward of Spain to south-east Europe and mild, fair weather prevailed for the most part in England. At the same time pressure was low in the far north and troughs of low pressure moving east caused rain in the north of the country. From the 18th to 21st troughs of low pressure, associated with deep Atlantic depressions moving north-east, moved east over the British Isles and caused rain at times, while gales were registered at a few exposed stations in Scotland and north-west Ireland. On the 22nd a vigorous depression approached north-west Scotland from the Atlantic and moved rapidly away east-north-east; widespread gales occurred in Scotland and north-west Ireland and heavy rain fell locally, particularly in the English Lake district, in Teesdale and the southern Uplands of Scotland.

Subsequently high pressure was re-established from the Azores across France to Austria, while pressure continued low to the north of the British Isles. On the 23rd and 24th a weak trough moving south-east gave local rain. By the 27th pressure was low over Scandinavia and high off our south-west coasts; a cold air-stream in the rear of the Scandinavian depression caused a fall of temperature and local wintry showers over the British Isles, while on the 28th a deepening depression south-west of Iceland moving south-east to Denmark was associated with widespread north-westerly gales, severe in some places, and more sleet or snow locally in the north.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure exceeded the average generally, the excess being greatest in the south; at 9h. the deviation from the average ranged from +3.9 mb. at Lerwick to +14.5 mb. at Portland Bill. Thus the gradient for westerly winds was increased and the predominating winds were from between south and west. Gales occurred frequently at exposed stations in Scotland. Among the highest gusts registered in knots were 70 at Pendennis and 68 at Thorney Island on the 9th and 72 at Durham and 68 at Prestwick on the 28th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature exceeded the average for the period 1906–35 by 2.6°F. in England and Wales, 2.4°F. in Scotland and 2.5°F. in Northern Ireland. The first week was generally rather cold and the remainder of the month was mainly mild. Low minima

were registered during the cold spell, particularly from the 3rd–6th. The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 59°F. at numerous stations on the 14th, 17th, 18th or 20th, 15°F. at Farnham, on 3rd, Goudhurst on the 4th and Bramley on the 5th; (Scotland) 59°F. at Gordon Castle and Lossiemouth on the 15th, 13°F. at West Linton on the 5th; (Northern Ireland) 55°F. at Ballykelly on the 15th, 16th and 20th and at Castlerock on the 13th, 15th and 19th, 24°F. at Lisburn on the 4th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915 was 60 over England and Wales, 112 over Scotland and 102 over Northern Ireland. More than the average occurred in the west and north of Scotland, in the western part of Ulster and in an inland area in north-west England covering part of the Lake district and extending south-west to north of Huddersfield. In small areas in the west of Scotland more than 175 per cent. of the average was received. On the other hand less than 50 per cent. of the average was measured over much of east Britain from Aberdeen to Yarmouth as well as part of the Midlands, the Thames Estuary and at many places on the south and south-west coasts of England.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hours were:—

- 15th 3.30 in. at Gairloch (Inverness-shire), 2.57 in. at Ardgour (Argyllshire) and 2.50 in. at Inversanda House (Argyllshire).
- 22nd 3.20 in. at Borrowdale and 3.15 in. at Watendlath Farm (Cumberland).
- 28th 2.91 in. at Patt, Loch Monar (Ross-shire).

Thunderstorms occurred locally on the 8th, 9th, 12th, 21st–24th, 26th and 27th.

Snow, sleet and hail showers occurred fairly frequently in the northern half of the country after the first week; in Scotland snow lay in places to a depth of several inches on the 9th and again towards the end of the month.

Sunshine.—The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1906–35 was 159 over England and Wales, 119 over Scotland and 129 over Northern Ireland. Less than the average was registered locally in west Scotland but in east Scotland and England and Wales the excess was notable. The mean daily duration in hours ranged from less than 2 hours in part of west Scotland and the English Lake District to 5 hours or slightly more locally on the coast of East Anglia and the south-east coast of England. At widely scattered stations with long records it was the sunniest February on record; for example at Kew Observatory, Oxford, Birmingham and Southport in records back to 1880, 1881, 1887 and 1896 respectively. At Ross-on-Wye, there was no completely sunless day, a record for any winter month.

Fog.—Fog occurred locally at times mainly on the 1st–7th, 10th–11th, 14th–21st and 24th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on seven nights. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on nine days. The zodiacal light was observed at Oxford on the evening of the 27th.