

Monthly Weather Report

MO 754

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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March 1964 — Cold; dull and wet except in north-west Scotland.

The first ten days and last week of the month were mainly anticyclonic in character with pressure high over Scandinavia or to the north of the British Isles, but from the 11th to the 24th troughs of low pressure from the Atlantic gave unsettled weather.

The month began dull and cold with east to south-east winds covering much of England and Wales associated with an anticyclone over Scandinavia which later developed westwards. The 1st and 2nd were mainly dry although there were a few scattered sleet showers in the east, but on the 3rd a shallow depression moving southwards over the North Sea brought a period of more continuous rain which was followed on the 4th by snow and sleet showers in many parts of the country. During the remainder of the first week high pressure extended from the southern Baltic to western Scotland, and cold easterly winds brought wintry showers of increasing frequency to most districts, but there were long sunny periods in the west; by the 7th the higher ground in Kent and Surrey was snow-covered to a depth of 3 inches in places.

During the next three days the anticyclone to the west of Scotland declined and moved slowly northwards. Many parts of the country had almost unbroken sunshine on the 8th but on the 9th and 10th an almost stationary trough of low pressure gave periods of rain in northern and central England while further south there were scattered snow showers with long sunny periods.

On the 11th the main centre of high pressure moved east to Scandinavia and winds in south-west England and Wales increased to gale force as a deepening depression from the Atlantic reached the South-West Approaches. The next day fronts associated with this depression brought widespread rain to western and southern districts which spread to the remainder of the country during the night and the next morning. Temperature rose rapidly, it reached 15°C at a number of places in the south-east on the 13th, about seven degrees higher than the previous day. The fronts over the country became slow-moving on the 14th and rain was heavy and prolonged in many districts.

A wintry spell began on the 15th as a depression formed over northern France and winds over southern England backed towards the east. The rain turned to snow in parts of the south during the night, and snow fell over most of the country except the extreme west and north throughout the 15th. Snow-drifts 6 ft. deep blocked main roads in Scotland while level snow lay 6-12 inches deep in parts of Yorkshire and 3-6 inches deep in the Home Counties. There were long sunny periods in eastern England on the 16th as the snow moved westwards temporarily, but the troughs spread back that night bringing a renewal of heavy rain and snow. Wintry precipitation continued in most western and southern districts on the 17th and 18th as a deep depression approached Ireland from the Atlantic, and on the 19th milder air brought periods of heavy rain to southern England while a belt of moderate to heavy snow moved north-east from the Midlands to southern Scotland.

The next four days were mild, dull and wet with shallow disturbances over the country, and rain was heavy in southern and central England on the 24th, and in eastern Scotland on the 25th, as a vigorous depression moved east across northern England; 2.13 inches fell at Dyce in about 32 hours.

After a sunny day on the 26th easterly winds set in again on Good Friday (27th) as an anticyclone became established over Scandinavia,

and weather during the remainder of the month was generally dull and became progressively colder with rain at times and some snow in eastern coastal districts.

Pressure and Wind — Mean pressure was above the 1921-60 average in the north and below in the south, the deviation at 9h ranging from +9.2 mb at Lerwick to -4.0 mb at Scilly. Surface winds were easterly at first becoming mainly south-easterly (but occasionally south-westerly in the south-west) from the 10th to the 21st after which wind was rather variable until the 27th and mainly easterly during the last four days of the month. Gales were widespread in Scotland on the 14th with wind reaching 60 kt in gusts at a number of places.

Temperature — With winds predominantly between east and south-east, the month was particularly cold in eastern England although there were milder periods around the 13th and 20th. The coldest nights were generally around the 10th in England and Wales and around the 6th in Scotland.

Extremes included: (England and Wales) 15.6°C at Sellafield on the 20th, -8.9°C at Clawton on the 9th; (Scotland) 13.3°C at Kinlochewe on the 1st and at Benmore Forestry School on the 9th, -8.3°C at Dundee on the 7th and at Coire Cas Scieling and at Cairngorm on the 18th and 19th; (Northern Ireland) 13.0°C at Carrigans on the 24th, -6.1°C at Loughermore Forest and Baronscourt Forest on the 8th.

Rainfall — Large areas of eastern Scotland had more than twice their average amount of rain while places in Skye, west Inverness-shire and west Argyllshire recorded less than 25 per cent of the average. At Stornoway it was the driest March since 1876. Rainfall was also below the average in Cumberland, parts of Westmorland and over most of Wales, but was more than twice the average over much of the north and east Midlands, Lincolnshire, the Thames Valley, Surrey, Hampshire and also in some coastal regions of Norfolk, Essex and the English Channel.

Thunder was heard on the 14th and 19th in Scotland and on the 13th, 21st, 22nd and 24th in England and Wales.

Snow or sleet fell in Scotland at one place or another on the 4th-7th, 9th, 11th-20th, 23rd-25th and 29th-31st (21 days) and ground was snow-covered on the 7th and 14th-21st (12 days). In England and Wales the corresponding figures were the 3rd-8th, 13th-21st, 24th and 28th-31st (20 days) and the 5th-8th, 15th-21st and 24th (13 days). Snow lay 6-12 inches deep in parts of the Midlands and 3-6 inches deep in south-east England on the 16th.

Sunshine — It was a very dull month, especially in eastern districts. Only in the extreme north-west was sunshine above the average, in many eastern coastal districts it was little more than 30 per cent of the average. At Worthing it was the dullest March since 1900 and at Ross-on-Wye the dullest since sunshine records began in 1914.

Fog — Fog was observed at 9h at one place or another in Scotland on 26 days and in England and Wales every day except the 7th, 8th and 26th. It was widespread on the 21st and 22nd and was reported at Ushaw College on 19 mornings.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — The aurora was visible in Scotland on 19 nights.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES— March

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE					EARTH TEMP.		RAIN DAYS	RAIN-FALL	SUNSHINE
	Highest Max.	Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 1 ft.	Mean 4 ft.			
	Difference from Average					% of Average				
0 SCOTLAND, N.	13.3	-8.3	+0.2	+0.4	0.0	-	-	-10	48	86
1 SCOTLAND, E.	12.8	-7.2	-2.1	-0.2	-1.2	-	-	+1	145	51
2 ENGLAND, N.E.	14.4	-5.1	-3.5	-0.5	-2.0	-0.7	-0.3	+4	210	39
3 ENGLAND, E.	14.4	-6.1	-3.5	-0.6	-2.1	-0.8	-0.6	+2	217	46
4 MIDLANDS	14.6	-7.6	-3.1	-0.7	-1.9	-0.5	-0.3	+2	192	54
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	15.0	-6.1	-2.7	-0.2	-1.5	-0.7	-0.3	+2	212	56
6 SCOTLAND, W.	13.3	-8.3	-1.6	-0.3	-0.9	-0.1	0.0	-4	78	62

1964 (1908, revised 1928, 1941, 1956 and 1964)

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	Highest Max.	Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 1 ft.	Mean 4 ft.			
	Difference from Average					% of Average				
7 ENGLAND, N.W. and N. Wales	15.6	-8.0	-2.3	-0.6	-1.4	-0.5	0.0	-1	135	57
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S. Wales	15.1	-8.9	-2.2	-0.6	-1.4	-0.1	-0.2	-2	149	65
N. IRELAND	13.0	-6.1	-1.3	-0.9	-1.1	-	-	-1	131	62
SCOTLAND	13.3	-8.3	-1.3	0.0	-0.7	-	-	-4	83	66
ENG. and WALES	15.6	-8.9	-2.9	-0.5	-1.7	-	-	+1	170	53