

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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MARCH, 1934.—Unsettled with variable rainfall.

The weather of the month was generally unsettled and rather cold, with variable rainfall. Sunshine was below the average locally in England and south Scotland, and well in excess of the average in the northern half of Scotland. For the first seven days depressions moved north-east or east across Iceland and associated secondaries or troughs crossed the British Isles. Weather was unsettled with occasional precipitation, which took the form of hail, sleet, or snow at times, particularly on the 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 7th, while thunder occurred in places on the 5th and 6th. Records of bright sunshine were, however, good at times. Thereafter the centres of depressions were situated further south, and from the 11th until the 21st passed directly over the British Isles, the period from the 14th to the 19th being very unsettled, with gales at times, local thunderstorms and some falls of snow, especially in northern districts. Pressure was unusually low in England on the 14th and 15th. After the 21st the Azores anticyclone spread further north and Atlantic depressions were displaced northward, but the weather of this country was still partially influenced by associated troughs of low pressure. An anticyclone off our south-west coasts gave an exceptionally sunny day on the 27th, and bright but colder weather prevailed on the 28th under the influence of an anticyclone which developed over Scandinavia. Subsequently, cloudier conditions prevailed with pressure still high over Scandinavia, but low to the south-east and south-west of the British Isles. By the 31st, however, the Scandinavian high had again spread a little south-westward and fair weather was re-established.

Pressure and Wind.—As was to be expected in an unsettled month, pressure was everywhere below the normal, the deficiency being greatest as a rule in Wales and parts of Ireland, and varying at 7 h. from 5.3 mb. at Lerwick to 8.3 mb. at St. Ann's Head. Pressure was very low for the season around the 14th and 15th. At Kew Observatory the reading 974.3 mb. at station level at 19 h. 15 on the 14th was the lowest in March since the unusually low pressure recorded on March 8th, 1922. The windiest period occurred on the whole between the 11th and the 17th, but local gales occurred at times in Scotland (mainly in the north) during the first six days and in south-west England on the 19th and 22nd. Among the highest speeds recorded in gusts were 90 m.p.h. at Butt of Lewis on the 6th, 71 m.p.h. at Quilty on the 15th and 70 m.p.h. at Pendennis Castle on the 14th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature for the month was a little below the average, the deficiency varying from 0.1°F. in Scotland, E., to 1.3°F. in England, S.E. A warm spell occurred around the 24th and 25th, when temperature rose to 60°F. or slightly above locally in most districts. The coldest nights were, as a rule, the 1st and 14th, but at some stations the lowest temperature for the month occurred around the 9th, the 22nd, or on one or other of the last few days. Temperature in the screen fell to 10°F. at Braemar and to 13°F. at Balmoral on the 14th and to 12°F. at Rhayader and 13°F. at Balmoral on the 1st. Ground frost occurred frequently; it was recorded on 29 occasions at Coventry, 28 at Belvoir Castle and 27 at Braemar, Lowestoft, Shrewsbury and Rhayader. Among the lowest temperatures on the grass were 5°F. at Braemar and 7°F. at Dalwhinnie and Balmoral on the 14th and 5°F. at Rhayader on the 1st.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 63°F. at Attenborough, Birmingham (Sparkhill), Killerton and Newton Abbot, on the 25th, 12°F. at Rhayader on the 1st; (Scotland) 64°F. at Perth and Kirkcaldy on the 24th, 10°F. at Braemar on the 14th; (Ireland) 61°F. at Newcastle (Wicklow) on the 24th and 25°F. at Markree Castle on the 14th and 29th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the normal for the period 1881-1915 was 108, the values for the constituent countries being, England and Wales 110, Scotland 97 and Ireland 114. Although rainfall exceeded the normal over the country as a whole, less than the average was recorded for the most part in the western half of Scotland, north-west England and north-east Ireland. Totals were also below the normal over a part of the Midlands from Worcester to Cambridge, the eastern part of the Bristol Channel and parts of north-east Scotland. More than 150 per cent. of the normal was recorded roughly in a narrow strip extending from Haddington to the extreme north of Yorkshire and at isolated stations in Kerry and Cork.

The wettest period occurred for the most part from the 11th to the 17th; in Scotland heavy rain fell locally also on the 1st and in southern Ireland on the 9th. Among the heavier falls in 24 hours are included 45 mm. at Ardgour on the 1st and at Gleneagles on the 11th, 40 mm. at Blaenau-hydyfer, Brecon, on the 17th, 39 mm. at Borrowdale on the 16th and 36 mm. at Eggleston (Durham) on the 11th.

Snow occurred frequently, especially in northern districts up to the 22nd. There were some heavy falls of snow in Scotland on the 16th and 17th and snow lay to a depth of 12 inches at Dalwhinnie. At Balmoral snow was lying from the 10th to the 24th. Local thunderstorms occurred on the 5th, 6th, 10th, and at times between the 15th and 18th.

Sunshine.—The most striking feature of the sunshine distribution was the marked excess in parts of northern and eastern Scotland. For example, the excess amounted to as much as 60 hours at Deerness (Orkney) and 49 hours at Banff. In the south and west of Scotland there was a deficiency. In England totals were rather variable but, on the whole, sunshine was most deficient in northern districts, though there was also a deficiency on the south coast from Scilly to Southampton. In Ireland a small excess was recorded in the south, but deviations from the average were rather variable in the north.

Among particularly sunny days may be mentioned the 27th and 28th, when 11 hours or more sunshine were recorded locally.

Fog.—Fog occurred at times mainly from the 1st-3rd, on the 9th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 20th, 22nd to 26th, and on the 28th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on the nights of the 4th-7th, 9th, 14th, 16th, 18th, 22nd, 25th and 29th. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on sixteen occasions and a fireball was observed at Glasgow during a thunderstorm on the 5th. (See "Meteorological Magazine," vol. 69, p. 65.)