

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

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

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MARCH, 1925: MAINLY VERY DRY, WITH NORTHERLY WINDS.

General.—In the rear of a depression associated with local thunderstorms in south-east England on the 1st, an anticyclone moved southwards over the Atlantic from Iceland, causing generally fair weather in the west. The eastern Districts, however, came under the influence of a depression centred over the south of France, and cloudy weather occurred with high north-easterly winds and gales in the English Channel on the 3rd and 4th. During the next few days the winds backed towards the west and the weather became temporarily milder; 56°F. was reached at Kilkenny on the 6th. A rapid rise of pressure near Iceland on the 7th resulted in a renewal of northerly winds, which attained gale force in some places on the 8th. Snow fell in the north of Scotland on the 7th and spread over the greater part of Scotland on the 8th and 9th. Showers of snow, sleet and hail were also of general occurrence, and maximum temperature readings of below 35°F. occurred on one or two days; at Inverness on the 8th the temperature did not rise above 32°F., and at Andover a grass minimum reading of 9°F. was recorded on the night of the 12th-13th. Between the 13th and 19th the air over the British Isles was mainly drawn from a westerly source; the weather was fair and temperature rose above 55°F. on several occasions, reaching 60°F. at Kilkenny, Killarney and Cork on the 15th. Mist or fog developed locally in the early morning of most of these days. On the 19th there was a return of the northerly winds and cold and generally cloudy weather prevailed from then until the 30th. Showers of snow, hail and rain occurred generally and "snow lying" was again recorded in several places, notably on the 22nd, when the depth reported from Balmoral and also at Skegness and at Folkestone was between 2 and 3 inches. The readings of thermometers exposed over the snow were below 20°F. in some places, the reading at Balmoral on the night of the 22nd-23rd being as low as 6°F. By the 30th, the centre of the high pressure area had moved far enough south to give a warm south-westerly current from the Azores to Scandinavia. Heavy rain or snow fell in many parts of Scotland and north Ireland on the 31st, and in Forfarshire, Fifeshire and the Lothians more than half the month's total was accounted for on that day; 37mm. fell at Dunfanaghy (Donegal) and 34mm. at Renfrew. At Bangour (Linlithgow) snow lay on this day to a depth of 1ft. and at Glasgow traffic was disorganised.

The general character of the month is illustrated by the following remarks taken from observers' notes:—Berwick-on-Tweed, —A fairly average March, rather wet, mild and free from gales. Cheltenham, —A dry, cold month. The second driest March recorded. Copdock (Suffolk), —The month was deficient in rain and sun; with northerly winds. The lowest maximum temperature for this month (53°F.) in 24 years' observations; in 1919 the same temperature was recorded. Giggleswick (Yorks.), —An exceptionally bright and clear month. Newport (I. of W.), —A welcome change to dry conditions after an exceptionally wet winter. Newquay, —Rather sunny and dry but temperatures rather low. Relative humidity lowest for March for 32 years, and pressure the highest for the month in 21 years. Remarkable excess of northerly winds. Sidmouth, —Cold drying winds and long bright intervals. Skegness, —An average March with a high air pressure. Southport, —The most northerly March since that of 1900; more than twice the normal number of hours of N.W. and N. winds and a substantial excess of N.E. winds. Not a single hour of S.E. wind. Rainfall less than half the normal. Daily range of temperature very small. Teignmouth, —Dry and cold. The second driest March recorded at this station. Sunshine slightly above and temperature slightly below the average. Torquay, —An exceptionally dry month with a good sunshine record, normal temperature and absence of strong winds. Totland Bay (I. of W.), —The driest March for 38 years with total rainfall of 6.6mm. Bransholme (Roxburghshire), —A good open month with some fine days. Ullaport (Ross-shire), —A cold, miserable, sunless month with strong winds. Cork, —The driest March in the past 42 years. Dublin, —A cold but dry month closely resembling March, 1924. The outstanding feature was the remarkably high mean pressure.

Pressure and Winds.—The mean pressure was everywhere greatly in excess of normal. The deviation of monthly means of pressure at fixed hours varied from 14.6mb. at Cahireiveen to 8.1mb. at Dungeness. The prevailing winds of the month were from the quadrant west to north, the isobars of mean pressure trending from N.W. to S.E. At Edinburgh the mean pressure was the highest for March since 1875.

Only three tracks of depressions crossed the British Isles during the month and of these two (Tracks T and V) passed from north to south over central and eastern England. The majority of the tracks lay well to the north and east of our Islands. The highest recorded pressure was 1040mb. at Blacksod Point on the 4th and the lowest 988mb. at Lerwick on the 7th.

The month was not a windy one. At a few anemometer stations the mean speed of the wind exceeded 38 m.p.h. for not less than an hour on one day and Fleetwood had four such days. The highest recorded gust was 70 m.p.h. at Lerwick on the 8th.

Temperature.—The mean temperature of Districts 1-10 was 41°F. and was practically normal. There were four Districts with temperature slightly in excess of normal, the remainder being slightly below normal. The largest excess was 0.7°F. in Ireland N. (mean temperature 43°F.) and the largest deficiency 1.1°F. in the Channel Isles and Scilly (mean temperature 44°F.). During the 1st and 3rd weeks the temperature of every District was above normal and during the 2nd and 4th weeks, the temperature of every District was below normal.

The extreme temperatures for the month were:—(England and Wales) 60°F. at Fowey and Newton Abbott on the 15th and at Scilly on the 18th, 18°F. at Porton on the 13th; (Scotland) 60°F. at Inverness on the 5th, 8°F. at West Linton on the 21st; (Ireland) 60°F. at Cork on the 15th, Killarney on the 27th and at Kilkenny on the 28th, 24°F. at Birr Castle on the 12th and 27th and at Markree on the 27th.

Ground frosts were of general occurrence and at Balmoral on the 22nd a reading of 6°F. was obtained. At a number of stations as many as 20 or more days of ground frost were recorded.

Precipitation.—Precipitation was below normal in all Districts. The only regions with precipitation normal or above were a fairly large area of northern Scotland, two small areas of the eastern English and Scottish coasts and a small part of extreme northern Ireland. A large part of southern and western England and Wales, a small region of south-western Scotland and the bulk of Ireland had precipitation less than half the normal. In a considerable extent of south-western England and the south of Ireland less than 25 per cent. of the normal was recorded. The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the normal was 54; the values for the several countries were:—England and Wales 47, Scotland 81, Ireland 41.

The first week of the month was the driest generally but with few exceptions the precipitation for each week was below normal in all Districts.

Snow fell in all Districts, but mainly in the north; at Deerness 22 days of snow were recorded. At Braemar snow lying was noted on 12 days. Hail also occurred very generally and at Baltasound as many as 12 days were experienced. Thunder occurred sporadically over the British Isles.

Sunshine.—Sunshine was in excess in Scotland E. and W., Ireland S. and the Channel Isles and Scilly, but deficient in the remaining Districts. The largest mean daily excess, 0.44 hr., was experienced in Scotland N. and the largest deficiency, 0.88 hr., in England E. The Channel Isles and Scilly had 42 per cent. of the possible duration and Scotland N. and the Midland Counties only 22 per cent. The second and fourth weeks were the brightest, and in the latter week a number of daily records exceeding 10 hrs. were obtained.

Fog.—The number of days of fog reported varied considerably. Kensington had 12 days and Greenwich 11 days but many stations were free from fog.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—Halos of 22° were of frequent occurrence. On the 13th at Oxford a solar halo was seen with contact arc, parhelia and the 46° halo; a parhelion was also seen on the 22nd. A sun pillar was observed at Felixstowe on the 13th. Aurora was recorded at Deerness on the 12th, Gordon Castle on the 13th, Lerwick on the 19th and Baltasound on the 20th. The Zodiacal Light was observed at Oxford on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th, at Ross-on-Wye on the 24th and at Wadhurst (Sussex) on the 11th, 12th, 15th and 18th. The Counter-glow was seen at Wadhurst on the 15th.