

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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February 1970 — *Very sunny but also snowy and wet*

Low pressure affected all districts throughout the month except on the last four days. Depressions were intense at times and although centred mostly to the north of the British Isles they occasionally crossed southern districts. On the 12th the mean-sea-level pressure at Culdrose (Cornwall) fell to 970 mb.

Weather — It was a very sunny month but also rather cold, particularly in the north. The weather was generally changeable with stormy periods. Rain or snow occurred frequently, especially in north Scotland where precipitation of some kind fell on most days. Snowfall was more frequent than normal and caused traffic dislocation and damage in some areas. On the 22nd, after a wet period, rising water-levels in rivers in England and Wales, particularly in the West Country and the Midlands, caused some alarm but fortunately flooding was not widespread.

Wind — It was rather a windy month and, in general, the frequency of gales was above average. The highest frequency was in coastal areas where in places it was twice the average. Gales occurred locally on 19 days in England, 15 days in Scotland, 14 days in Wales and 9 days in Northern Ireland. The windiest period was the 1st to 3rd when many gusts exceeded 60 kt in Scotland, Northern Ireland and northern England and caused damage to electric power cables. Gusts of 70 kt or more occurred and 73 kt was recorded at Great Dun Fell (Westmorland) on the 1st and at Abbotsinch (Renfrewshire) on the 3rd. Gales affected southern England on the 12th when a gust of 68 kt occurred at Scilly. Gusts over 50 kt were reported widely on the 19th/20th and 66 kt was recorded at Bidston (Cheshire) on the 19th.

Temperature — The month was colder than average almost everywhere. Monthly mean temperature was 2-3 degC below average in some northern areas but it was nearer average farther south.

It was cold around the 6th, from the 10th to 17th and again at the end of the month. During the period 10th to 17th frost was widespread nightly; frost was particularly severe in northern districts where it persisted throughout the day in some upland areas. Minimum temperatures recorded during the month included: -17.8°C at Camps Reservoir (Lanarkshire) on the 11th and 12th and also at Achentoul (Sutherland) on the 12th; -11.7°C at Santon Downham (Norfolk) on the 17th; -11.5°C at Loughermore Forest (Co. Londonderry) on the 13th; -10.6°C at Alwen (Denbighshire) on the 15th.

Temperatures rose well above average in most areas on the first few days and again around the 21st, especially in the south. Among maxima during the month were 14.4°C at Bath on the 22nd; 13.3°C at Murlough (Co. Down), 12.8°C at Prestatyn (Flintshire) and 11.7°C at Girvan (Ayrshire) on the 21st.

Rainfall — It was a wet month in Northern Ireland where over twice the average rain fell in parts of the north and west and it was the wettest February at Moneydig (Co. Londonderry) since 1923. Places in north Scotland also had over twice the average rainfall and Strathclyde (Sutherland) recorded its highest February total since records began in 1938. In contrast to these areas, some places in north-east and central southern England had below average rainfall.

Heavy rain and showers fell in northern districts on the 1st and 2nd. Flooding occurred in Northern Ireland and 74 mm of rain were recorded at Kinlochewe (Ross and Cromarty) in the 24 hours ending 0900 GMT on the 3rd. From the 19th to 22nd frequent belts of rain crossed most areas with some heavy falls in western districts. Rivers became very swollen and flooding was reported in places as far apart as Northern Ireland and the south Midlands. 'Daily' falls during this period included nearly 56 mm at Hawkeshead (Westmorland) on the 19th and over 53 mm at Minafon (Merioneth) on the 20th.

Thunder occurred on 10 days in England, 9 days in Scotland, 3 days in Northern Ireland and 2 days in Wales. This is above the average frequency but thunderstorms were mostly isolated. Many of the wintry showers during the month were of small hailstones.

Snow — In general, snow occurred on about twice the average number of days for February. Much of the snow fell in showers which were sometimes frequent and prolonged in Scotland and northern England. There were some heavy falls of snow at times on high ground and accumulations became very deep in parts of the Scottish Highlands above 500 m. On the 6th a fall of 12 cm of snow occurred in less than 4 hours at Derry Lodge, 427 m, in the Cairngorms. General snowfall occurred on the 12th in the southern half of England and Wales; blizzards were reported in many areas and snow blocked roads and brought down electric power lines in South Wales. About 8 cm of level snow settled but 15-20 cm collected above 250 m in South Wales and south-west England with drifts 2 m deep on the moors. Snow spread eastwards across all areas on the 17th and caused the temporary closure of Manchester and Edinburgh airports. Falls amounted to 20 cm on high ground in the north but only 3 cm or so in the south and east.

Sunshine — A preponderance of days with long sunny spells and a marked absence of dull periods led to a very sunny month nearly everywhere. Among the most favoured areas were the Forth/Clyde valley where it was the sunniest February at Springburn Park (Glasgow) and Paisley since records began, in 1881 and 1885 respectively, and at Blackford Hill (Edinburgh) since 1907. Farther south, both Kew Observatory and Oxford (Radcliffe Observatory) had their highest February sunshine total since recording commenced in 1881. Although the excess of sunshine was smaller in some coastal areas than farther inland, most places recorded amounts well above average. Outstanding among these were London Weather Centre and Abbotsinch with 210 and 200 per cent of average respectively.

Fog — Because of the windy character of the month, fog was neither frequent (except on high ground), prolonged nor widespread.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — On the 7th an avalanche occurred in Glen Coe (north Argyll) and one person was killed. The aurora was observed on 7 nights in Scotland.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES, February 1970

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE °C					EARTH TEMP. °C		RAIN DAYS	RAIN-FALL	SUN-SHINE
	*Highest Max.	*Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 30 cm.	Mean 122 cm			
	Difference from Average							% of Average		
0 SCOTLAND, N.	9.4	-9.6	-1.7	-2.7	-2.2	-1.0	0.0	+2	144	128
1 SCOTLAND, E.	9.4	-9.4	-1.4	-1.5	-1.4	-0.9	-0.4	+4	146	136
2 ENGLAND, N.E.	11.1	-7.8	-1.1	-1.2	-1.2	-0.9	+0.2	+4	113	148
3 ENGLAND, E.	12.8	-8.3	-0.7	-0.8	-0.7	-0.5	-0.1	+6	137	154
4 MIDLANDS	11.6	-7.8	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8	-0.5	0.0	+4	125	158
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	12.8	-9.1	-0.1	-0.4	-0.2	-0.2	+0.2	+5	103	153
6 SCOTLAND, W.	10.0	-12.2	-1.1	-2.3	-1.7	-0.9	-0.4	-1	117	169
7 ENGLAND, N.W. and N. Wales	11.2	-7.8	-0.8	-1.0	-0.9	-0.1	0.0	+3	133	151
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S. Wales	12.8	-9.4	-0.2	-0.7	-0.5	+0.1	0.0	+6	144	135
N. IRELAND	11.3	-6.9	-1.4	-1.8	-1.6	-	-	+2	164	135
SCOTLAND	10.0	-12.2	-1.4	-2.2	-1.8	-	-	+2	131	144
ENG. and WALES	12.8	-9.4	-0.6	-0.8	-0.7	-	-	+5	125	150

*Highest Max. and Lowest Min. of the District Value Stations.