

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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FEBRUARY, 1936.—Cold; Wet in England, east Scotland and the extreme south of Ireland.

A shallow depression centred off north-west Ireland on the 1st, moved away eastward and, in its rear, cold northerly winds prevailed over the United Kingdom, with rather widespread showers of snow and sleet. Between the 4th and 6th a belt of high pressure moved eastward across the British Isles and later increased in intensity over southern Scandinavia and Denmark. Subsequently this system moved away southward but the country then came under the influence of an extension of an anticyclone over Greenland and cold, mainly dry conditions persisted for the most part until the 13th except in the west, where the weather was affected by depressions off our west and south-west coasts. A very deep depression off our south-west coasts caused widespread gales on the 10th and heavy rain in south-west England and south Ireland.

On the 15th and 16th, shallow depressions moved north-east or north across the British Isles and on the 17th a deep depression situated north of the Azores, moved rapidly north-east to the south of Ireland. This system ultimately moved northward and remained almost stationary off north-west Scotland. Meanwhile, secondary depressions moved north-east from the Bay of Biscay. This unsettled type, with precipitation at times, persisted until the 25th when a wedge of high pressure passed southward over the country.

From the 26th-28th a deep depression moved southward from Iceland to north France and, on the 29th, a disturbance over Amsterdam moved slowly westward. Snow or sleet was rather widespread on the 28th and 29th; the falls were fairly heavy in north-east England and the south-eastern uplands of Scotland and in the latter area the accompanying strong north-easterly winds caused deep drifts in places.

Pressure and Wind.—For the sixth month in succession, mean pressure was below the average generally. The deficiency was greatest in the south and least in the north and varied at 7h. from 11.4 mb. at the Scilly Isles to 0.8 mb. at Lerwick.

Winds from some easterly point were more frequent than usual. Gales were fairly frequent on the west and south-west coasts and in the extreme north and were reported on 9 days at Valentia Observatory, Baltasound and Lerwick and on 8 days at St. Ann's Head. The most widespread and severe gale in England and Ireland was the one around the 10th-11th; mean hourly speeds of 67 m.p.h., 64 m.p.h. and 60 m.p.h., were recorded at Pendennis Castle, the Lizard and St. Mary's, Scilly, respectively on the 10th. No very unusual velocities were recorded in Scotland, the highest mean hourly speed being 47 m.p.h. at Lerwick in the north-easterly gale on the 25th. Among the highest speeds recorded in gusts were 92 m.p.h. at Valentia, 90 m.p.h. at Pendennis and 88 m.p.h. at St. Mary's, Scilly, all on the 10th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature was below the average in all districts, the deficiency being greatest in England, N.E. (3.3°F.) and the Midlands (3.1°F.). At a few individual stations the deficiency exceeded 4°F. The coldest spells were, as a rule, from the 3rd-5th and the 8th-14th, though the 8th and 9th were fairly mild in parts of Scotland. Some low screen minima were registered during these periods; for example, 5°F. at Braemar and 6°F. at Balmoral on the 5th, 7°F. at Rickmansworth on the 12th and 5°F. at Braemar, 6°F. at Balmoral, 7°F. at Dalwhinnie and 9°F. at Peebles on the 13th. At Shoeburyness on the 11th, a thin layer of ice formed on the sea and extended 20 ft. out, while 2 to 3 ft. of flaked ice was heaped up by the incoming mid-day tide.

On the whole, the mildest spell occurred from the 17th-21st and was occasioned by a belt of equatorial air in front of a deep depression moving north-east and then north from the Azores; 56°F. was touched at Oundle and 55°F. at a few other stations in England on the 18th. Other mild days were the 1st, the 6th in parts of Ireland, the 8th and 9th in north and west Scotland, and the 26th.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 56°F. at Oundle on the 18th, 7°F. at Rickmansworth on the 12th; (Scotland) 51°F. at Auchincruive on the 18th and at Forres on the 19th, 5°F. at Braemar on the 5th and 13th; (Ireland) 55°F. at Blacksod Point on the 6th, 21°F. at Aldergrove and Phoenix Park, Dublin, on the 4th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881-1915 was 112, the values for the constituent countries being England and Wales 127, Scotland 87 and Ireland 93.

The distribution was variable; in Scotland, less than the average fell in western, northern and central districts and more than the average in eastern districts. The deficiency amounted to as much as 65 per cent. at Fort Augustus and 59 per cent. at Fort William, while twice the average fell locally in the south-east. Although the rainfall of England and Wales as a whole was decidedly above average, a marked deficiency occurred at many places in north-west England and in Wales. More than twice the average fell, however, in many parts of north-east England and locally in Suffolk and Cornwall, while three times the average fell at the Scilly Isles. In Ireland, an excess occurred in the extreme south and south-east and at one or two places elsewhere; otherwise, there was a deficiency.

Among heavy falls in 24 hours were:—

6th 60 mm. at North Ballachulish (Inverness-shire).

10th 79 mm. at Dunmanway (Co. Cork), 63 mm. at Cork and 61 mm. at Scilly.

17th 51 mm. at Holne (Devon).

Sleet or snow occurred fairly frequently, particularly from the 2nd-5th, 10th-11th, 13th-14th, 21st-23rd, 25th and 27th-29th. At Balmoral and Braemar, snow lay every day throughout the month; on the 5th, the depth at Balmoral was 5½ inches and at some places in north-west England, it was 3 inches. The fall was fairly heavy on the last two days on high ground in north-east England and in the south-eastern uplands of Scotland; it was accompanied by drifts in some places.

Sunshine.—Broadly speaking, sunshine exceeded the average in England (except the south-west and the Channel Islands), in western Scotland and northern Ireland. The excess was greatest in the Midlands (128 per cent. of the average). See Table I. On the whole, the first half of the month was the sunnier; the 20th was, however, the sunniest day of the month at many stations.

Fog.—Local fog occurred at times, particularly from the 4th-6th, 8th, 12th-13th, 15th-18th, 22nd-26th and 28th-29th. The most notable fog was that of the 15th-16th, when it was both widespread and thick in many places.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on the 10th, 12th, 15th, 16th, 19th, 20th, 26th and 29th. Solar haloes were noted at Oxford on 9 days. Interesting examples of glazed frost occurred at Fareham and at Niton, Isle of Wight, on the 11th.