

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

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

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MARCH, 1928: Wet, and on the whole, mild with bright periods. Cold spell 8th to 13th.
Unusual frequency of winds with easterly component.

March was on the whole mild, but there was a notable spell of cold weather extending from about the 8th to the 13th, when decidedly low temperatures and snowstorms were experienced in most districts. There was a marked predominance of winds from an easterly point. Wind force was mainly moderate and there were few severe gales. The general precipitation of each of the constituent countries of the British Isles was above the normal, and although bright periods were frequent sunshine aggregates were nearly everywhere below the normal.

Associated with a trough of low pressure extending south-eastwards over the British Isles rain or drizzle occurred in most districts on the 1st, the largest falls occurring in the east of Scotland (23 mm. at Aberdeen on the 1st). A large anticyclone centred over the Baltic area and southwest Russia extended its influence over the British Isles, and in Scotland and Ireland on the 2nd, and more generally on the 3rd, the weather was mainly fair and warm with, however, some local rain or drizzle. The 4th was fine and warm in most parts of England and Ireland and temperature was abnormally high for the time of year, the day temperature exceeding 65° F. at many stations in south-eastern England.

Fine warm weather continued in south-eastern England on the 5th, but the establishment of high pressure over Iceland caused an influx of cold air from North Russia; by the 6th temperature had fallen decidedly even in southeast England, and from the 8th to the 13th a spell of wintry weather with easterly winds, sleet or snow, and severe frost was experienced over the whole country. Bright periods occurred frequently during the spell, notable sunshine records being 10·3 hr. at Tiree on the 9th and at St. Mary's (Scilly Isles) on the 10th.

A change to southerly winds and relatively mild unsettled conditions began in the southwest on the 14th, with strong winds reaching gale force locally. There was much rain in Scotland, Ireland and the west districts of England and Wales from the 16th to the 21st. Apart from a brief interval of fairly generally sunny weather, with local showers, on the 26th, associated with the passage eastwards over the British Isles of a wedge of high pressure, conditions continued unsettled to the end of the month, with frequent rain and strong winds or gales in the south-west of England on the 23rd, and more widely on the 29th. There were, however, many bright periods, notably on the 28th, 30th and 31st.

Pressure and Wind.—Monthly means of pressure were below the normal at all stations except at stations in the north and east of Scotland. The general trend of the isobars over the greater part of the British Isles differed considerably from the normal trend as may be seen from inspection of chart 1. During the greater part of the month winds were from an easterly point and mainly moderate to light. The observer at Southport reports that the aggregate duration of winds with an easterly component exceeded all previous March records since 1880. Westerly winds were infrequent and occurred almost entirely during the last week of the month. Gales occurred in exposed places in the north of Scotland on the 16th and 17th and widely between the 19th and 23rd and on the 29th. Gusts of 60 m.p.h. and over were recorded at exposed places in the extreme south-west of England and in Ireland during the gales on the 19th. During the gales on the 29th, associated with the passage of the depression, track F, gusts of between 50 m.p.h. and 60 m.p.h. were recorded in several exposed places; at Pendennis a gust of 69 m.p.h. was recorded in the afternoon of the 29th.

Temperature.—The mean temperature for March was about normal in Scotland and Ireland and in the north-east of England, and above the normal elsewhere. Day temperature generally exceeded the normal during the first few days of the month and in southern England attained or exceeded 60° F. on the 3rd, 4th and 5th; the 4th was unusually warm in most parts of England and the maximum of 64° F. at Richmond (Kew Observatory) and Ross-on-Wye exceeded all previous records at these stations for the early part of March. The influx of cold air from Russia caused a sharp fall in temperature, which remained at a low level until the 14th. At Richmond (Kew Observatory) a record low maximum for the time of year, 32° F., was recorded on the 11th, just a week after the record high temperature. Screen minima of 20° F. and below were recorded at many places during the cold spell on the 11th, 12th and 13th; at Rhayader a screen minimum of 11° F.

was recorded on the morning of the 13th and a grass minimum temperature of 7° F. on the morning of the 14th. Reports from observers state the occurrence of a screen minimum of 11° F. on the morning of the 13th at E. Anstey (N. Devon) and a screen minimum of 12° F. and a grass minimum of 3° F. at Stogursey (near Bridgwater) where serious damage was done to apricot and peach blossoms. Apart from low temperature about the 21st and a decided drop in temperature in Scotland on the 29th, temperature after the 15th was above the normal.

The extreme temperatures for the month were:—(England and Wales) 67° at Westminster on the 4th, and 11° F. at Rhayader on the 13th. (Scotland) 59° at Ford on the 4th and Gordon Castle on the 17th, and 16° at West Linton on the 13th. (Ireland) 59° at Dublin (Phoenix Park) on the 17th and 14° at Mountmellick on the 13th and 14th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the normal was 127; the values for the constituent countries were:—England and Wales 118, Scotland 125, Ireland 153.

In the south-west of England, the Severn Basin, Southern Wales, North-east England and parts of East Anglia there was a well defined excess of precipitation; in the remaining districts of England and Wales monthly totals were below the normal.

In Scotland precipitation was below the normal in Midlothian, and markedly so in the north-west and north, but elsewhere there was in general a moderate to fairly large excess, and at Balmoral, Blair Atholl and Dundee aggregates were more than twice the normal; at Dundee the month was decidedly the wettest March for at least 60 years. From the 16th to the 21st there were some heavy rains, at first in the west and then more generally. At Arrochar the aggregate for the period, 16th to 20th, was 7½ in. with nearly 2½ in. on the 19th and again on the 20th and in Perthshire, especially on the 19th and 20th, there were some heavy falls (3·40 in. at Glengyle on Loch Katrine and 2·66 in. at Aberfeldy on the 20th). There was heavy flooding of many rivers, notably in Perthshire, about the 21st.

In Ireland precipitation was below the normal in the north-west and north and above the normal in the remaining districts, monthly totals exceeding twice the normal along a coastal strip extending from Donaghadee to Cork.

Snow and sleet fell in many places during the cold period from the 8th to the 13th. Many districts were visited by severe snowstorms from the 10th to the 12th, roads often being blocked with snow drifts. On the evening of the 10th to 11th snow occurred as far south as the Scilly Isles and Roches Point. Glasgow had 6 in. snow on the 11th and Guernsey 1 in. on the 12th. On the 12th the depth of "snow lying" was 8 in. at Margate, 6 in. at Durham and Copdock, 5 in. at Glasgow and 3 in. in many other places. Thunderstorms occurred on one or two days in several districts.

Sunshine.—Monthly aggregates of bright sunshine were below the normal in all districts, representative totals for Districts ranging from 90 per cent. of the normal in Ireland N. and the Channel Isles, to 46 per cent. of the normal in Scotland E. There were, however, frequent bright intervals and on several days good sunshine records were obtained, notably in the south and east of England and in southern Ireland on the 4th (10 hrs. at several stations in southern England), in south-eastern England on the 5th, over a wide area on the 9th, 10th and 18th, in many parts of England on the 26th (10·9 hr. at Ventnor and 10·3 hr. at Cranwell) and in many places on the 28th, 30th and 31st (10·1 hr. at Tiree and 10·0 hr. at Malin Head on the 31st).

Fog.—Much fog was experienced in many parts of the British Isles during the period from the 2nd to the 6th, and again on the 14th and around the 23rd.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—Aurora was observed at Aberdeen on the 11th, at Lerwick on the 12th and at Baltasound on the 13th. The zodiacal light was seen at Deerness on the 9th and 10th and at Oxford on the 10th. Halos of 22°, accompanied in a few cases by parhelia, were observed at some stations during the second half of the month.