



## Weather Front

March 2019/1919

March 2019.

### Observers Notes.

**Pitsford:** A month of two halves: unsettled initially with outbreaks of rain and strong winds but becoming anticyclonic later with some relatively mild days and good spells of sunshine, but with some chilly nights.

**Mickleover:** The second wettest March since 1999 and the sixth wettest on the station record (1981). There were no air frosts observed during the month and it was only the second time since 1981.

**Eastwood:** Rain, or snow, fell every day for the first seventeen days.

**Coton in the Elms:** While the rainfall total was high, largely due to the wet start to the month, it was very much drier after the middle of the month. The lowest maximum temperature of 8.3 C is the highest on the station record.

**Middleton:** During the first half of the month a total of 137.6 mm of rain was recorded and was the third wettest first half of any month on the station record. Also, all but 0.4 mm of the monthly total fell in the first eighteen days.

**Desford:** A month of two halves with a wet and unsettled start and a fine, warm dry and settled month end; a typical “in like a lion, out like a lamb” kind of March.

**Mountsorrel:** March 2019 was milder, wetter, but also sunnier than normal. The first half was very wet and very windy, with winds exceeding 40 mph on eight days with a maximum gust of 51 mph being reached on three days in the first half of the month. The total rainfall for the month, fell during the first eighteen days. The nineteenth onwards saw a dramatic change to dry, sunny and warm weather with no rain falling.

**Derby:** A wet start to the month. 80 mm of the total fell by the 16<sup>th</sup>, with rain on each day, then dry from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup>. It was also the seventh wettest March on record since 1952. Although, on average, March is a dry month, March 2019 was the fifth consecutive “wet” March. There was 60% snow cover, up-to 1 cm depth, on the 10<sup>th</sup> and was the

“heaviest” snow of the winter/spring so far. Temperatures were above average throughout, to give the sixth mildest March since 1952. There were no air frosts for only the fourth time on record, all of which occurred on, or after, 1992. The extreme Maximum temperature was equal to that of February, while the lowest temperature was the second highest on record for March (behind 8.3 C).

**Saltfleetby:** The very strong South Westerly winds on the 9<sup>th</sup> saw a gust of 52 mph, while on the 13<sup>th</sup> a WSW gust of 72 mph was noted. Generally, the effect of “Storm Gareth” produced strong to near gale force winds up-to the 17<sup>th</sup>, falling to fresh by the afternoon of that day.

**Ely:** The mean minimum temperature (4.4 C) is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest for the month in 48 years of recording. There were only three days with a minimum temperature in single figures and, the lowest maximum (9.5 C) is the highest for the month in 48 years. While the total rainfall is almost equal to the average, it all fell on the first eighteen days.

**Lowdham:** The lowest minimum temperature of 0.5 C, on the 28<sup>th</sup>, is the highest for March since 1992. There was no measurable rainfall from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup>.

## March 1919.

### Observers Notes.

**Derby/Burton on Trent:** A wet month, with all local stations at, or above, 110 mm rainfall, and, at four stations, over 120 mm was noted. This total was only surpassed in March 1947. Temperatures were down to -5 C, or so, on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, while the maximum on the 25<sup>th</sup> was 0 C. Numerous other days had maxima of only 1 or 2 C, while the highest maximum was 12 C on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The overall mean temperature was around 3 or 4 C and was about 1.5 C below the (then) average. There were 18 air frosts and 28 rain days, which was probably a fair amount of snow in this cold month.<sup>i</sup>

**Allans Green, Northumberland:** A cold month, with snow showers and a good deal of east wind. The closing days were dry and with severe frost. Vegetation very backward, and there was practically no growth. I never saw the hill ground so bare.

**Kenninghall, Norfolk:** Generally, an exceptionally cold month, especially during the second half, when frosts at night were frequent. The first half was very wet. Vegetation is very backward.

**Copdock, Suffolk:** An unpleasant month; dull and wet during the first part, and then very cold. The maximum temperature of the month [12 C] was the lowest I have ever recorded in March.

**Weston Turville, Bucks:** A very cold, unseasonable month. Vegetation extremely backward.

**Tenbury, Worcester:** A wet, cold and wintry month. The total rainfall (126 mm) was 65 mm above the normal [207%]. Owing to the unworkable conditions of the soil all spring sowing has been much delayed.

**Llandrindod Wells, Radnor:** With the exception of 1903, it was the wettest March for 36 years.

**Worlingham, Surrey:** Throughout the month snow was more, or less, always on the ground, and on the 30<sup>th</sup> it lay to a depth of six to eight inches. There was a good deal of sunshine during the month, but the snow persisted in spite of it, and in places there were deep drifts.

**Southport, Lancs:** The total rainfall (135 mm) was greater than in any previous March for at least 57 years. The water level maximum was higher even than in January, and unequalled by any month whatever since the great floods of 1882-3.

**Blundellsands, Lancs:** The wettest March recorded here during [the last] 43 Years.

**Dublin, Fitzwilliam Square:** A very cold month of unsettled weather and frequent precipitation, except in the period from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>, which was dry. Snow fell daily after the 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Carrigoran, Co. Clare:** The weather during the month has been very varied, but on the whole of a very wintry character. Rainfall was nearly 25 mm below the normal, but the rain days were one above. During the latter half of the month the days were intensely cold, with snow and sleet, and there was frost at night.

**Hurdlestown, Co. Clare:** The total rainfall (75 mm) was 7 mm above the normal [110%], and the rain days four above. It was a cold, severe month, but generally suitable for farm work.

**MWR Headline:** **Cold and Wet.**

The opening sentence of the Monthly Weather Report<sup>ii</sup> sums up the weather for March 1919, "With the exception of brief warm spells round about the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> the weather of the month was of a dull, cold and wintry character, and was the coldest March experienced in Scotland for at least sixty years, perhaps for a century." The observers' notes appear to re-enforce this statement.

A closer look at the temperatures for the month show that the mean temperature was below the average throughout the country and ranged from [-0.6 C] in the vicinity of the English Channel to [-2.4 C] in eastern Scotland. This was in contrast to March 1918, when mean temperatures ranged from [+0.3 C] around the English Channel to [+1.1 C] in northern Scotland. The editor of the MWR<sup>iii</sup> suggested that, from the Edinburgh records, March 1919 was the coldest in Scotland for about 100 years.

The highest temperature recorded in Scotland was [12 C] at Leith, on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Never, in the previous 60 years, had the temperature failed to reach a higher-level during March. The lowest temperature occurred mainly during the first week, or towards the end of the month. The lowest temperatures in Scotland were at Braemar [-14 C], Balmoral [-8 C] and at Bangour (Linlithgow) [-9 C]. In the south and south west of England, on the 11<sup>th</sup>, at some stations, minimum temperatures did not fall below [10 C], however, nowhere did the mean maximum attain the average for the month, while, at many stations it was considerably below.<sup>iv</sup> At Brocklesby<sup>v</sup>, on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the maximum temperature reached [12.8 C], but only two other days exceeded [10 C], on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. The seventeen days of frost occurred after the 13<sup>th</sup> and [-5.6 C] was noted on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

Precipitation was below average in both northern and eastern Scotland; the former recording 86% of average, and the latter 90%. Elsewhere in the country rainfall was above average, ranging from 104% in Northern Ireland to 202% in the Channel Isles, and 231% in the Midlands<sup>vi</sup>. Rainfall totals exceeding 100 mm were recorded at many stations, especially in the Midlands, North West and South West England. The highest totals were recorded at Rhayader in Radnor (187 mm), Arlington in Devon (173 mm) and Wilton in Wiltshire (159 mm). At Princetown, in Devon, 77 mm was the total for a single day, while at Beddgelert in Caernarvon, 58 mm was noted. The observer at Raunds reported exceptional floods in the valley of the Nene, from Northampton to Peterborough, between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. I have however been told, but unconfirmed, that flooding in the Nene valley was a common occurrence at this time.

The weather during the latter part of the month was dominated by a succession of depressions, which resulted in precipitation being in the form of rain, sleet and snow, while hail was noted at some of the more northern stations. During this period snow was reported in many places on most days.

Finally, an unusual, optical phenomena, The Zodiacal Light, was observed at Oxford on the 1<sup>st</sup>, and at Jersey on the 26<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.

March 1919 appears to have been a very miserable month!

**Central England Data (averaging period 1881-1910):**

Mean Maximum Temperature: 6.6 C, Average: 8.7 C.

Mean Minimum Temperature: 0.6 C, Average: 1.5 C.

Mean Temperature: 3.6 C, Average: 5.1 C.

England and Wales Rainfall: 120.0 mm, Average: 63.8 mm.

Midlands Mean Maximum Temperature: 6.1 C.

Midlands Mean Minimum Temperature: -0.4 C.

Midlands Mean Temperature: 2.9 C.

Midlands Rainfall: 119.8 mm.

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<sup>i</sup> D J Stanier, by email.

<sup>ii</sup> Monthly Weather Report, March 1919, HMSO, 1919, summary page.

<sup>iii</sup> MWR, March 1919, HMSO 1919, summary page.

<sup>iv</sup> MWR, March 1919.

<sup>v</sup> Lincoln Archive Office, YARB 14/2.

<sup>vi</sup> MWR, March 1919.