

History of Meteorological Observations in Ireland

Séamus Walsh









200

Annals and Dairies....pre 17th century

Annals – Various reference to Irish Weather and Climate, Earliest mention of Meteorological event in Ireland or Great Britain Irelands Natural History, Boate(1652) Earliest published account of Irish Weather & Climate Earliest Weather Diary by John Kevan, for the Due of Ormond at Kilkenny

M'Sweeny, on the Climate of Ireland.

A good deal of information relating to the weather in Ireland, may be collected from Ware's Annals. The following are extracts :

" A.D. 1171 This winter the English soldiers, by the scarcity of provision, and change of air and diet, contracted several distempers, and many died.

"1172 A very tempestuous winter, the king having stayed three months in Dublin.

"1192 This likewise may seem worth the remembering, that this year there were so great tempests in Desmond, that many houses and churches were beaten down, and much cattle and men destroyed.

"1209 The city of Dublin, by reason of some great mortality, being waste and desolate, the inhabitants of Bristol flocked thither to inhabit.

"1247 The same year, saith Florilegus, there was a marvellous and strange earthquake over England, but saith Feleon, over Ireland, and all the west of the world; and there followed immediately a continual intemperature of the air, with a filthy skurf, the winter stormy, cold, and wet, which continued until the 11th of July, and put the gardeners, fruiterers, and husbandmen, void of all hope, insomuch that they complained *that winter was turned to summer, and summer to winter*, and that they were like to lose all, and be undone.

"1326 The earth received fruitfulness, the air temperature, and the sea calmness.

"1348 This year there was great mortality in all places.

"1361 About Easter, began a great mortality of men, but few women in England and Ireland.

"1370 There was a third pestilence in Ireland.

"1383 The fourth great pestilence was in Ireland.

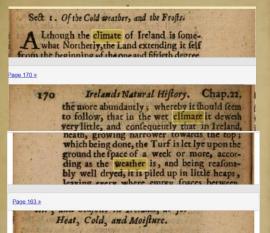
"1486 March, there happened so great a storm of wind and rain, that trees were pulled up by the roots, and many houses, and some churches, were blown down to the ground.

"1489 This summer proving very pestilent and feverish, many people died.

"1491 This year was commonly called by the natives, the dismal year, by reason of the continual fall of rain all the summer and autumn, which caused great scarcity of all sorts of grain throughout Ireland.

"About the latter end of December, after the appearance of a blazing star, which shone for some days, a certain grievous and pestilential sickness, commonly called the English sweat, began first to afflict this nation.

"1492 There was so great a drought this summer, throughout Ireland, that many rivers were almost dried up, the cattle dying every where with thirst; also soon after



Sect 1. Of the Cold weather, and the Frofts.

A Lthough the climate of Ireland is fome-

Page 164 »

in most other Countries ; fo that fome all Winter long hardly come near a freconce in a day ; and that nor only in the ordinary cold weather, but even whilf it is a freezing. Yea many times the cold is fo flack even in the

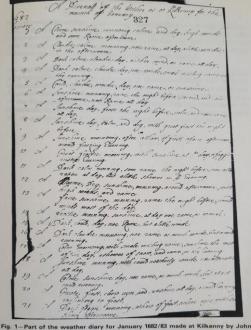
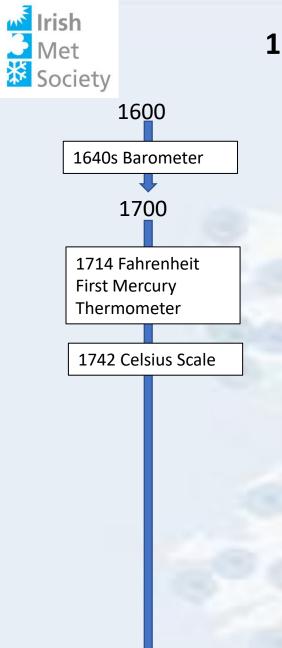
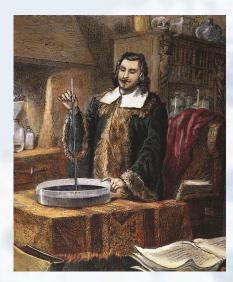
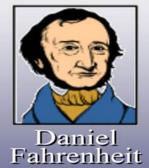


Fig. 1—Part of the weather diary for January 1682/83 made at Kilkenny by John Kevan for the Duke of Ormonde. National Library of Ireland, M3 2428 (Ormonde correspondence Vol. 128), p. 327. Reproduced by kind permission of the National Library.



17th and 18th Century Developments



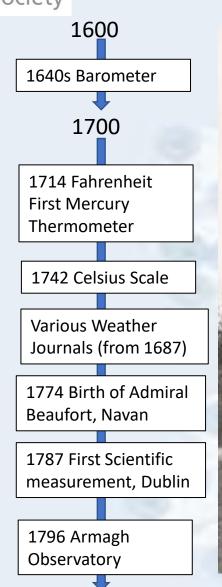




Anders Celsius





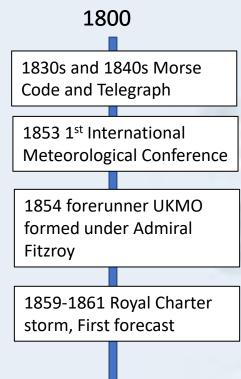


17th and 18th Century Developments





19th Century Developments





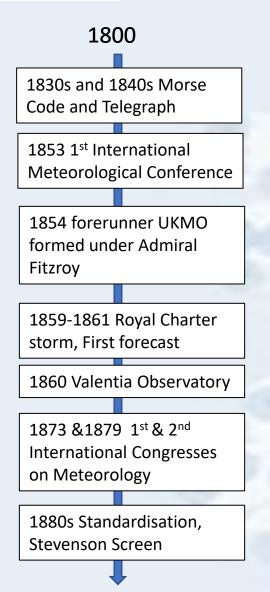
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Berwick	29.69	59	55	WSW	4	4	e	2
Ardrossan	29.73	57	55	w	5	4	c	5-
Portrush	29.72	57	54	SW	2	2	6-	2
Shielda	29.80	59	54	WSW	4	5	0	3
Galway	29.83	65	62	w	5	4	C	4
Scarborough	29.86	59	56	w	3	6	c	2
Liverpool	29.91	61	56	SW	2	8	e	2
Valentia	29.87	62	60	SW	2	5	0	3
Queenstown	29 88	61	59	w	3	5-	e	2
	30.05	61	59	w	5-	2	e	ż
Yarmouth	30.02	62	56	SW	3	2	6	
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EXPLANATION.								
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in shade. M Moistened bulb (for evaporation and dew point). D Direction of wind (true two points left of magnetic).								

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ud (1 to 9). L - Initials : h -bloo sky . c ---



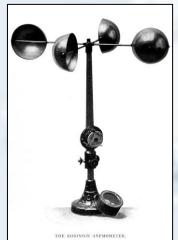
19th Century Developments







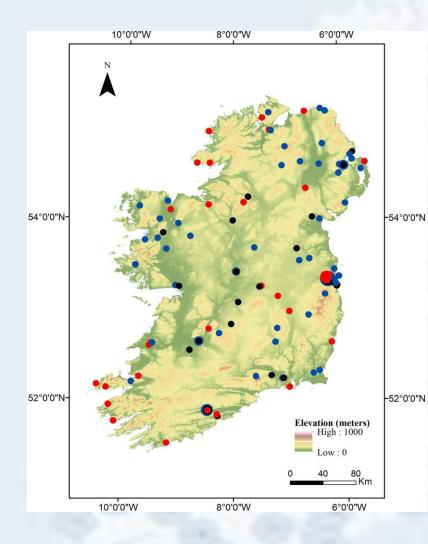






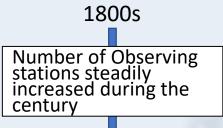






Location of instrumental meteorological records pre-1850 inclusive. Observations include maximum and/or minimum thermometers (red) and thermometer (blue) among other instrumental records and other instrumental data (black). Mateus(2021)





From 1860 to 1900 the number of rainfall stations increased from 13 to almost 200

Botanic Gardens 1800 Markree Castle 1824 Phoenix Park 1829 Birr Castle 1872 Roches Pt 1873 Malin Head 1888

The weather keepers

S ome of Ireland's early weather stations were linked to scientific institutions such as the Ordnance Survey, the Botanic Gardens and the centres for astronomy at Armagh, Birr and Markree. Others were maintained by individuals. The rainfall network, led by G.J. Symons in London, was almost exclusively run by volunteers. It expanded from 13 Irish stations in 1860 to almost 200 by 1900 and included men and women, clergymen, industrialists, academics and others who routinely took rainfall measurements as a leisure pursuit.



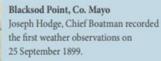
National Botanic Gardens, Co. Dublin Weather records have been taken here since 1800. Image source: National Botanic Gardens Library.

Banbridge, Co. Down J. Smyth, Jun. Esq. voluntarily managed three rainfall stations in the Bann Valley in the 1860s. The linen industry relied heavily on water-powered mills.

Roches Point, Co. Cork W. Kennedy recorded the first weather observation in July 1873, noting 'thick weather'.



Birr Castle, Co. Offaly From 1874 until 1878 observations were taken by the famous astronomer John Louis Emil Dreyer (1852–1926). Image source: Armagh Observatory.

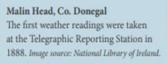


Valentia Observatory, Co. Kerry On 8 October 1860, Ireland's first 'real time' weather observation was transmitted via telegraph from Valentia Island.

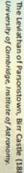




Markree Castle, Co. Sligo From 1874 until 1876 observations were taken by a Danish lady named Anna Doberck. Image source: University of Cambridge, Institute of Astronomy.









'The Female Touch'

Anna Doberck

The observations illustrated here were taken by a woman of Danish origin, named Anna Doberck. Anna's name appears on the Markree records from 1874 to 1876. Her records are distinctive because she draws the prescribed weather symbols in the notes field more frequently than other observers. For example,

▲ for hall . for snow

Why was a lady of Danish origins recording observations in County Sligo in 1876?

Anna Doberck's brother, William, was an acclaimed astronomer and he was in charge of the Markree Observatory from 1874 to 1882. Anna assisted William at the observatory.

It was while the Dobercks were at Markree that our record lowest air temperature was recorded; that is -19.1°C (-2.3°F) on 16th January 1881.

'Typhoon Annie'	

The Hong Kong Connection

In 1882, the Dobercks left Markree for Hong Kong, when William was appointed Director of the new Hong Kong Observatory.

Ten years later, In 1892, Anna was appointed Assistant Meteorologist in the same institution – only after lengthy negotiations with the Colonial Office.

Anna's appointment was noted in the journal *Nature* Vol. 46 (108) 1892, where she was misidentified as Dr. Doberck's daughter.

Anna remained at the Hong Kong Observatory until her retirement in 1915. Part of her role in Hong Kong was to visit ships in port to excerpt weather observations from their navigation log books. Because of the nature of her work, she was nicknamed 'Sampan Annie' or 'Typhoon Annie'.

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Anna Doberck drew prescrib

The lowest air temperature eve recorded in Ireland was -2.3F. 16th January 1881.

CALLS INCOME.

Hong Kong Observatory 1913

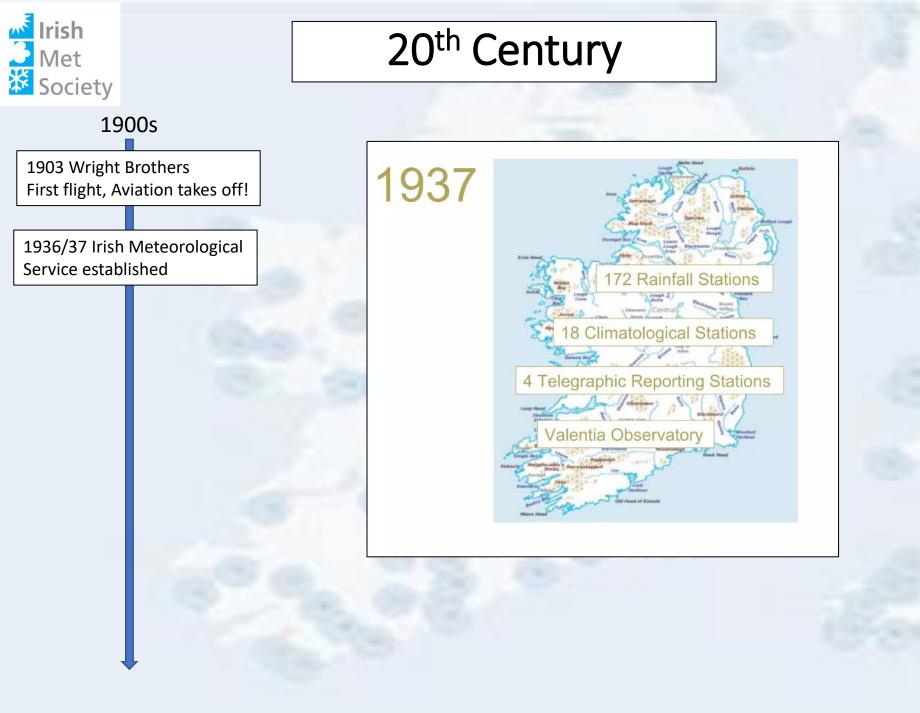
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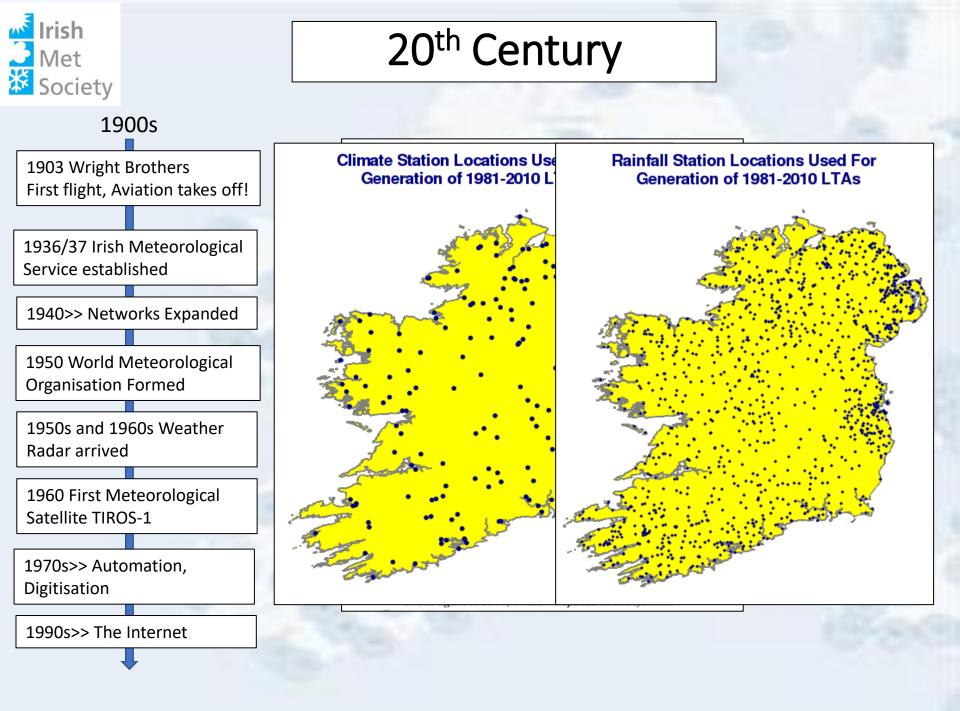
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Meteorological Registers

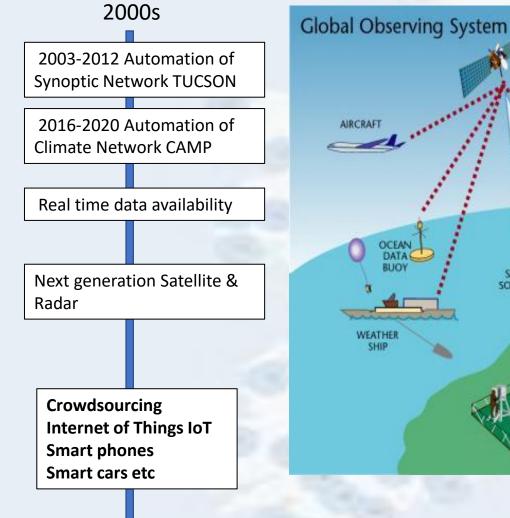
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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26	27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 400					
The columns headed "Extra Observations (if any)" are intended for such records as "Black bulb maximum in Sun," "Minimum on Grass," "Depth of Snow when lying," &c., &c., which are not necessarily taken at all stations.	EXTREMES FOR THE MONTH. Highest corrected reading of Barometer 30 272 on 22 th 9.9 m / y c. 1 The following Symbols are proposed for the indication of Hydrometers and other					
Observers are requested to employ the new symbols given on this form in filling up the "Remarks" column. * M.O.	Highest corrected reading of Baremeter $36.2/2$ on 26^{-2} at $g.29_{2P_1}$ / e^- (The following hypothesis are proposed for the induced at Highmatrix and the baremeter $36.2/2$ on 26^{-2} at $g.29_{2P_1}$ / e^- (The following hypothesis are proposed for the induced at Highmatrix and the baremeter $36.2/2$ on 26^{-2} at $g.29_{2P_1}$ / e^- (The following hypothesis are proposed for the induced at Highmatrix and the baremeter $36.2/2$ on 26^{-2} at $g.20_{2P_1}$ / e^- (The following hypothesis are proposed for the induced form $a^- \oplus$ (Highmatrix and a^-) and a^- (Highmatrix and a^-) and (Highmatrix and a^-) an					
The word "Corrected" in the headings to the columns means "Corrected for Index Error."	Highest temperature in Shade _65.7_on24.4 J Base					
EXTRA REMARKS.	Lowest n n n U Linear Line U					
	Highest ", in Sun /25 3 on 22" / Hall the Reinhow					
The mean temperature was 1.3 degrees below, and the rainfall	Bowest " on Grass 26.2 on 3 Strong wind / Dust Hane ("Höhen-) co					
.015 inches more, than corresponding month last year.	Greatest daily rainfall					
average rainfall for the last ton years 2 obb inohes ; this	Wind— very slight, 2 strong.					
month being the inches below the guerage.	No. of days of No. of Observations of A K Clear Sky. O'east, Galas N NE R 24 S SW W NW Calm Ris further to be reased when the observer is Ris further to be reased at the reased when the observer is					
	2. • Choir-Ginton, Alarda, D. 515, Grott, William Column, and a second state of the se					
	1 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 17, 10, 3, 7, 5, 4, 12. "Election."					
Norm It is requested that this Sheet be returned by the 10th of the month following that to which it refers.	signed Whinkewoodinginest					
	Dig.					

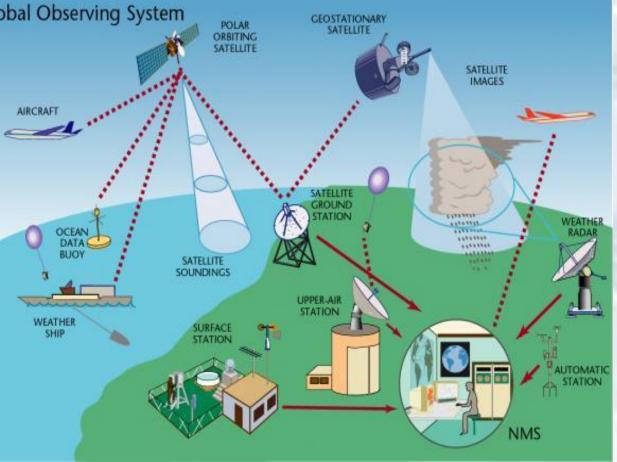






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