

Scottish Meteorological Society 1855-1921



On 11 July 1855, five years after the founding of the British Meteorological Society (later the Royal Meteorological Society), Sir John Forbes and David Milne Home convened a meeting in the Edinburgh rooms of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland to discuss the formation of an Association for Promoting the Observation and Classification of Meteorological Phenomena in Scotland". Support for the proposal was sufficiently enthusiastic for a Provisional Council to be formed and by early in 1856 a network of observing stations had been established, whose data were published in the Quarterly Reports of the Registrar-General for Scotland. Dr James Stark, the Superintendent of Statistics in the Department of the Registrar-General became the first Meteorological Secretary. J D Everett and A H Burgess briefly held the position of Secretary in 1859 and 1960, before in December 1960, Alexander Buchan was appointed to the post, which he filled until his death in 1907 at the age of 78.

The Society's primary object was to "investigate the meteorology of Scotland" and for this it was essential to have a network of reliable observing stations, whose returns were received monthly. The voluntary observers were located not only in Scotland, but also in the Faroes, Iceland and the Near East. Among the subordinate objects was "the discovery of the general laws regulations atmospheric changes". Reports and addresses to the Society, along with summary weather data were published quarterly from the inception of the Society, but from 1864 onwards there was published the *Journal of the Scottish Meteorological Society*, which was edited by Alexander Buchan. As well as editing the *Journal* he also wrote many of the papers. He made important contributions to the development of meteorology, including the exposition of the general relationship between the surface pressure field and the winds. Using land observations and ships logs he produced the first surface pressure maps showing the progression of depression across the North Atlantic from America to Europe.. He also produced climatological averages of temperature, pressure and rainfall for the British Isles and the first maps of mean isobars and prevailing winds for the world. As more observations became available, particularly following the "Challenger" Expedition, these maps were refined .

The image shows David Milne-Home, chairman of the Council of the Scottish Meteorological

Society, before becoming the Vice-President from 1884 until his death in 1890

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