

History of the Society

A Brief History of the Royal Meteorological Society

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The Royal Meteorological Society was founded as the British Meteorological Society on 3 April 1850. It became the Meteorological Society in 1866, when incorporated by Royal Charter, and the Royal Meteorological Society in 1883, when Her Majesty Queen Victoria granted the privilege of adding 'Royal' to the title. Amalgamation with the Scottish Meteorological Society took place in 1921.

James Glaisher (right) was a founder member of the Meteorological Society in 1850. He was also a pioneering balloonist. Between 1862 and 1866 Glaisher made numerous ascents in order to measure the temperature and humidity of the atmosphere at its highest levels. On one ascent in 1862, he broke the world record for altitude, but passed out before a reading could be taken. Estimates suggest that he rose to approximately 7 miles above sea-level.

The Society's archive is currently located in Exeter, in the National Meteorological Archive, with the exception of the most recent Council and committee minutes, i.e. those which date from the 1970s onwards. Stored within the Archive are Council and committee minutes and other Council and committee papers. There are also incoming and copies of outgoing correspondence from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, as well as old meteorological photographs, many showing weather stations in the late nineteenth century. There are personal papers of George James Symons and a number of other meteorologists, along with a multitude of miscellaneous items, including papers concerned with the British Rainfall Organization. Perhaps most importantly, many rare books from the sixteenth century onwards which belong to the Society through the Symons Bequest of 1900 are cared for in the National Meteorological Archive www.metoffice.gov.uk/learning/library/ ^[1] (NMA). The originals of the Beaufort Wind and Weather Scales are in this category, i.e. owned by the Society but cared for by the NMA.

To learn more about the history of the Royal Meteorological Society along with the History of meteorology in general please see our [History Group](#). ^[2]

Below is an image of the original charter

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Resources

Historical Documents

- [The Meteorological Societies of London](#) ^[3] PDF 604.87 KB
 - [The Minutes of the first meeting](#) ^[4] PDF 1.24 MB
 - [Early membership list](#) ^[5] PDF 1.55 MB
 - [RMetS as seen through its membership](#) ^[6] PDF 361.43 KB
 - [The letter granting the Society the right to use the prefix Royal \(1883\)](#) ^[7] PDF 81.12 KB
 - [The letter regarding the Society's first Royal patron \(1904\)](#) ^[8] PDF 65.28 KB
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Links

[1] <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/learning/library/>

[2] <http://test-accsys.rmets.org/about-us/special-interest-groups/history-meteorology-and-physical-oceanography-special-interest>

[3] <http://test-accsys.rmets.org/sites/default/files/metsoclondon.pdf>

[4] <http://test-accsys.rmets.org/sites/default/files/metsocfirstminutes.pdf>

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