

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed February 19, 1934

AN UNUSUAL AURORA

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Authority on Meteorology.

Newspaper reports last autumn told of a remarkable luminous arch observed spanning the sky on the evening of September 13 by an English astronomer, John Evershed, who at the time of the observation was at Arisaig, on the west coast of Scotland. The arch passed through the zenith, where it was about 15 degrees broad, and remained stationary during the 15 or 20 minutes that it remained visible before being hidden by clouds.

Many subsequent observations of the phenomenon have since been reported, and there is now no doubt that it was a display of aurora borealis. A comparison of these observations, made in Scotland, England and Norway, have enabled Mr. Evershed to determine its actual position in space. He finds that it was about 112 miles above the earth in Scotland and that in longitude 5 1/2 West it was vertically above the 57th parallel of latitude. From Morar, on the west coast of Scotland it crossed Scotland in a direction about 13 degrees north of east, passing over the North Sea from Buchan Ness to Christiansand at ^{the} southern end of Norway, thence across southern Sweden and over the Baltic Sea.

Its apparent width varied according to the angle from which it was seen in such a way as to indicate that it was a thin ribbon about 30 miles wide but not more than 2 miles thick. Such a band, viewed from very distant points, would appear as a line of light like Saturn's rings seen edgewise.

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