

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

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Wet & mild in the south, wet & cold in the north with some snow later

The month began with a deep depression near Iceland and active fronts moving rapidly eastwards across the British Isles. On the 3rd a vigorous depression moved north-eastwards across northern Scotland, and its associated cold front cleared all parts by late on the 4th. The next cold front crossed Scotland, Northern Ireland and into Wales and northern England on the 6th, and cleared south-east England early on the 7th. On the 8th a very deep and intense depression moved quickly across Scotland and into the North Sea, whilst its highly active fronts swept over all parts. Following a weak ridge on the 9th, a less active low and frontal system crossed the country on the 10th. The next depression, slower but still very active, crossed Northern Ireland on the 12th and Wales, England and the North Sea on the 13th. During the 14th and 15th another very deep low developed near Iceland and transferred to the North Sea whilst its occluding frontal system swept south-eastwards. This low moved to Scandinavia on the 16th and 17th, allowing a warm front to move north-east across all parts. The cold front followed on the 19th, and a small low moved across Wales and England on the 20th as its parent low became slow-moving off the coast of Norway. A secondary depression moved across Scotland and northern England on the 22nd, followed by another on the 23rd. A shallow low moved across Ireland and south-west England overnight on the 24th/25th as the main depression transferred to Germany. A weak ridge, over Britain on the 26th, slowly gave way to Atlantic fronts on the 27th and 28th. On the 29th an occluding frontal system swept eastwards over the British Isles, followed across southern England on the 30th by a frontal wave. The month ended as it had begun with low pressure near Iceland.

Weather

Outbreaks of light rain or drizzle moved eastwards across the British Isles on the 1st, and this drizzly weather continued on the 2nd, though Scotland was more showery at first. Persistent, locally heavy rain spread across Scotland on the 3rd, followed on the 4th by showers while the rain or drizzle over England and Wales cleared away. The 5th saw scattered showers in the west, but later on the 6th moderate or heavy rain spread into Northern Ireland and southern Scotland and then on across England and Wales, clearing the south-east early next morning. Further rain spread across all parts on the 8th, followed by showers though these became confined to the west and north on the 9th. Rain spread across all parts from the west on the 10th with showers in the west later, but by evening on the 11th almost everywhere was dry. Further moderate or heavy rain, preceded by snow in northern England and southern Scotland, spread rapidly northwards on the 12th. On the 13th this rain retreated south-eastwards and gradually became showery. On the 14th rain, sleet and snow spread

south-eastwards followed by showers. The next two days were showery, with isolated thunder in the Midlands and the north-west, and with snow over higher hills. On the 17th light rain and drizzle spread across all parts, followed by moderate or heavy rain later on the 18th except in north-east England and eastern Scotland. Showers, wintry over hills, gradually extended southwards on the 19th, though southern England became dry, but on the 20th it was Northern Ireland, Scotland and northern England which stayed dry while rain, turning to sleet and snow as it moved north-east, spread across southern England. From the 21st to the 26th showery weather predominated, with the showers being largely of snow over Scotland and northern England. Rain, locally heavy, crossed southern England and Wales on the 22nd. Overnight on the 24th/25th rain, sleet and snow moved south-eastwards across Northern Ireland, Wales and south-west England. On the 27th rain spread into south-west England, moving north-eastwards the next day and turning to snow for a time over the Midlands and East Anglia, northern England and Wales and over southern Scotland. On the 29th this rain died out, to be replaced by showers over western Britain and over Northern Ireland, with isolated thunderstorms near the Anglo-Scottish border. On the 30th these showers continued over Scotland and Northern Ireland, whilst moderate or heavy rain spread eastwards across south Wales and southern England. Whilst the 31st was a dry day in much of eastern England and Scotland, showers persisted in the west and these were heavy with hail and thunder in places.

Wind

It was a fairly windy month, though not unusually so for December, with gales reported from some part of the United Kingdom on over half the days of the month. In much of England and Wales and Northern Ireland the windiest days were the 8th and 9th, but in Scotland the 19th was generally the windiest. The highest gust reported during the month was 87 knots at Cairngorm, Grampian, and the highest gust at a low-level site was 84 knots at Camborne, Cornwall on the 8th.

Temperature

It was a mild month in England and Wales, but a cold one in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Monthly mean temperatures ranged from 1.8 °C above normal at Goudhurst, Kent to 2.2 °C below normal at Inverness, Highland. The highest temperature reported during the month was 15.5 °C at Colwyn Bay, Clwyd on the 18th, and also at Hemsby and Norwich Weather Centre, Norfolk, on the 19th. The lowest temperature reported was -15.7 °C at Grantown-on-Spey on the 26th.

Rainfall

It was a wet month everywhere except in parts of northern and eastern Scotland, with monthly

totals ranging from 89% of average at Whitehilllocks, Tayside to 241% of normal at Rustington, Sussex. The highest reported daily rainfall was 79 mm at Holme Moss, West Yorkshire on the 8th.

Snow

The first significant snowfall of the month occurred over parts of northern England, north Wales and southern Scotland during the 12th, with accumulations up to 7 cm in parts of the Pennines by the morning of the 13th, though it soon turned to rain. Similarly, there were transitory falls of sleet or snow ahead of a belt of rain over the Midlands, East Anglia, northern England and eastern Scotland on the 14th. Accumulations of a few centimetres from snow showers in the Highlands of Scotland were reported on the 16th, but on the 20th snow over north Wales, the north Midlands, the Peak District and parts of Lancashire and Cheshire led to accumulations of up to 5 cm in places by the following morning, marking the beginning of a wintry period lasting almost to the end of the month. On several days snow showers were particularly heavy in northern and eastern Scotland, resulting in depths of 14 cm near Wick, Highland on the 23rd and at Dyce, Grampian on the 25th. By this date accumulations up to 10 cm were widespread over the Scottish Highlands and parts of the Southern Uplands. On the morning of the 25th a small area of snow moved southwards across western parts of England and Wales, giving the first White Christmas in these areas for a number of years with accumulations of up to 6 cm in central Wales and 1 cm over higher parts of Devon, Dorset and Somerset. Further heavy snow fell for a time on the 28th over northern England, north Wales and the Midlands, with up to 9 cm in the Pennines, but by the end of the month practically all of this snow cover had vanished.

Sunshine

It was a dull month in the west and north of Britain, but a little sunnier than average in east and north-east England; elsewhere sunshine was close to normal. Monthly totals ranged from 38% of average at Malham Tarn, North Yorkshire to 157% of average at Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear. The highest daily total of the month was 7.2 hours at Manston, Kent on the 5th and at Littlehampton, West Sussex on the 11th; the highest monthly total was 70.7 hours at Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear.

Fog

There was fog in many parts of England and Wales on the morning of the 1st, but this proved to be the only widespread occurrence of fog in December 1993.

Miscellaneous phenomena

None were reported.