

# MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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## Mild and unsettled, then cold and very dry; ending mild and unsettled once more

On the 1st a depression to the south of Iceland, with a complex low-pressure area over southern Scandinavia, and an anticyclone over the Bay of Biscay produced a strong westerly airstream over the British Isles. During the 2nd a ridge built from the anticyclone to cover all of the British Isles. By the 3rd, northern and western areas came under the influence of another deep depression south of Iceland. The anticyclone meanwhile moved away slowly eastwards while low pressure in the eastern Atlantic pushed into the British Isles. Eastern areas were affected by a ridge of high pressure until the 8th, after which a succession of fronts associated with the complex low-pressure area moved across the United Kingdom. From the 11th Scotland once more came under the influence of a ridge of high pressure which, by the 15th, extended its influence over the whole United Kingdom. High pressure then became the dominant feature over the United Kingdom, and remained so in the south and east, although western and northern areas were affected from time to time by frontal systems associated with Atlantic depressions.

### Weather

This was a month of contrasting weather. In the first week it was very mild with rain or drizzle, the rain sometimes heavy in places. During the second and third weeks it became cold with unsettled wintry weather. The last week was unsettled and rather windy over Scotland but quiet and mild with hazy sunshine by day and fog by night in England and Wales. However, along southern and eastern coasts where the fog persisted it remained rather cold. Thunderstorms occurred at a number of places in western Scotland on the 1st and at Pershore, Hereford and Worcester on the 3rd. Hail was reported on a number of occasions in Scotland, mainly during the second and third weeks.

### Wind

Winds generally were mostly light to moderate but strong or gale force winds blew mainly in western areas during the middle of the month. On the 9th, over much of Great Britain there was considerable drifting of snow in strong easterly winds. A further period of gale force easterlies brought very severe weather to the south-west on the 14th; Gwennap Head recorded a gust of 73 kn with a mean hourly wind of 55 kn and in the early hours of the 15th Camborne recorded a gust of 72 kn with an hourly mean of 38 kn. After that the winds moderated and although it remained rather windy at times over Scotland and Northern Ireland, the rest of the month was quiet with light winds over England and Wales. During the first week wind directions backed from westerly to southerly and then to easterly where they remained until the 17th. For the rest of the month the wind direction was mainly southerly.

### Temperature

Mean temperatures were near normal in Scotland and Northern Ireland, but below normal in England and Wales. The differences from average were greatest in part of central England from the west Midlands to East Anglia where temperatures were 2 °C to 2.5 °C below the February normal.

The first and last weeks of the month were very mild and the middle two weeks very cold. By the 6th the British Isles were between cold air to the north and east and warm air to the south and west. The cold air spread into the Midlands during the 8th/9th. On the 9th St Mary's, Isles of Scilly had an afternoon temperature of 11.8 °C, but on the 10th it only reached 5.9 °C and there was air frost at Jersey. From then until the 15th the Isles of Scilly had the highest recorded temperature each day in Great Britain. At Cwmbargoed, Mid Glamorgan the temperature remained below freezing point for nine days from the 9th.

### Rainfall

Rainfall amounts were below the monthly normal everywhere except for a small area of Hereford and Worcester where there was about 125 per cent of normal. All of England north of a line from Dungeness, Kent to Merseyside, together with North Wales, southern and eastern Scotland, Northern Ireland and much of south-west England had less than half the normal monthly rainfall. An area including much of north Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Humberside, North Yorkshire and Cleveland had less than 10 per cent of normal rainfall, making it an exceptionally dry month in eastern England; in this area three stations had a monthly total of only 1 mm and three others had only 2 mm. In contrast, moderate or heavy falls in parts of the south-west, South Wales and the western Midlands on the 6th to 8th resulted in high rainfall amounts in places, such as the 133 per cent of normal at Pershore, Hereford and Worcester. The highest daily rainfall was recorded at Altnabreac, Highland Region on the 1st, when 85 mm was measured. In Northern Ireland, Bryansford, Co. Down had a fall of 60 mm on the 6th. Most of the heavy falls in excess of 50 mm occurred in the latter part of the month in western Scotland.

### Snow

Snow showers occurred in all areas, mainly during the first half of the month, although snow fell in Scotland until the 20th. Amounts were small, the heaviest accumulation being at Cairngorm

Chairlift on the 1st with an undrifted depth of 20 cm, while several places in Tayside had 10 cm. Snow fell between the 8th and 11th and on the 14th and 18th in northern areas. There was widespread snowfall in the south between the 8th and 10th, but amounts were small except in the Welsh mountains, where 23 cm was reported at Cae Llwyd and at Mold, both in Clwyd.

### Sunshine

It was a generally sunny month with sunshine amounts above the monthly average nearly everywhere in the United Kingdom excepting Orkney, the Isle of Man, parts of Northern Ireland and south-east Scotland, and much of the English south coast from the Isles of Scilly to the Isle of Wight, where sunshine amounts were below normal for February. Totals ranged from about 165 per cent of average in places in the Midlands, North Wales and the Channel Islands to only about 60 per cent of average in the Torbay area of Devon and at Portland Bill, Dorset. The daily maximum for the United Kingdom exceeded 8 hours every day between the 10th and 28th except the 25th. The highest amount of 9.8 hours was reached on the 23rd at Guernsey Airport, Channel Islands and on the 24th at Tenby, Dyfed and Lizard, Cornwall.

### Fog

Fog formed frequently overnight during the first week, mainly in central and south-western areas, on the 14th, when a few dense patches formed around dawn in the south, and as freezing fog on the 16th and 17th and on the 20th and 21st when it persisted through the day. In the last week fog was more widespread and dense at times, especially on the 28th when fatal road crashes occurred as far apart as Shrewsbury, Shropshire and Swanscombe Cutting, Kent. Hill fog was frequent, mainly in the west, but more widespread between the 15th and 19th. Fog was frequent around western coasts during the first few days and in the last week, along the Channel coast from Sussex to Devon.

### Miscellaneous Phenomena

None reported.

Table 1 District values

District	Air temperature °C					Mean 30 cm soil temp°C	Rain- days	Rainfall	Sun- shine
	Highest Max*	Lowest Min*	Max.	Min.	Mean				
			Difference from average					% of average	
0 Scotland N	15.3	-17.7	+0.5	-0.3	+0.1	-0.9	-7	56	120
1 Scotland E	14.0	-15.4	+0.3	-0.2	+0.1	-0.5	-8	29	117
2 England E & NE	12.5	-12.6	-0.7	-1.0	-0.8	-0.6	-9	15	119
3 East Anglia	13.9	-14.5	-1.7	-1.7	-1.7	-0.7	-9	30	126
4 Midland Counties	14.3	-14.5	-1.4	-2.1	-1.7	-0.6	-7	57	130
5 England SE & Central S	14.0	-11.3	-1.4	-1.8	-1.6	-0.9	-7	60	133
6 Scotland W	14.1	-13.8	-0.3	-0.4	-0.3	-0.6	-7	47	111
7 England NW & Wales N	15.6	-11.2	-0.9	-0.7	-1.0	-0.8	-6	38	115
8 England SW & Wales S	15.9	-9.7	-0.5	-0.5	-0.7	-0.7	-7	54	105
N Ireland	12.0	-8.1	-0.4	+0.3	0.0	-0.6	-8	51	101
Scotland	15.3	-17.7	+0.2	-0.3	0.0	-0.7	-7	48	116
England & Wales	15.9	-14.5	-1.1	-1.3	-1.3	-0.7	-7	45	121

\*Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations