

# MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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## A cold, dry month with localized heavy falls of snow at mid month

The month started with a depression and its associated fronts crossing the British Isles. A further deep depression moving from near Greenland across the north of Scotland affected western and northern areas on the 3rd and all areas on the 4th while, on the 3rd, southern and eastern areas of England and Wales were temporarily influenced by high pressure which moved away southwards on the 4th. A new Atlantic anticyclone dominated over the 6th, 7th and 8th. Further fronts reached western areas of Great Britain on the 8th, but moved westwards again as the Scandinavian anticyclone extended a ridge of high pressure south-westwards over the United Kingdom. The anticyclone persisted until the last day of the month when a new series of Atlantic fronts reached south-western areas of the British Isles.

### Weather

After a mild, wet and unsettled start to the month, the weather became cold and snowy for a while with strong easterly winds causing drifting, especially in eastern areas. However, it became less cold around the 20th, remaining dull and misty for the rest of the month, with overnight fog patches and drizzle at times. Thunder was reported at Tregastick, Cornwall and St Helier, Jersey on the 2nd, at a number of places in Northern Ireland and western Scotland on the 5th and at Newcastle, Tyne and Wear on the 13th. Hail was reported in places, mostly early in the month, together with other wintry precipitation.

### Wind

It was a generally quiet month, but with two particularly windy periods, one during the first week and the other around mid month. Winds reached gale force on the 2nd mainly in the south-west, with 59 kn recorded at Gwennap Head, Cornwall and 49 kn at Milford Haven, Dyfed. On the 5th gales were severe at times on exposed coasts and hills, especially in western areas, with gusts of over 60 kn recorded in the Western Isles. From the 13th freshening winds over eastern areas caused much drifting of lying snow. Winds remained strong on the 14th and 15th causing further drifting, before moderating on the 16th. Gusts during this period included three of 53 kn at Shoreham-on-Sea, East Sussex. Wind directions were mainly westerly at first, then easterly until the 21st, becoming variable until the 29th when they became south-easterly for the remainder of the month.

### Temperature

January was a cold month over the United Kingdom as a whole, with mean monthly temperatures ranging from about 0.5 °C below normal in the north of Scotland to about 3.5 °C below normal in southern England.

It was cold from the 9th to the 19th, and very cold from the 11th to the 14th with temperatures in most places below freezing throughout. On the 12th the highest temperature in the United Kingdom was +0.1 °C at Butt of Lewis, Western Isles. On the 12th Hampstead, Greater London reported its coldest day since records began in 1909, and the 13th was the second coldest January day since 1947. The lowest maximum in the United Kingdom on the

13th was -8.5 °C at Okehampton, Devon. The low temperatures on the 12th at Caldecott, Northamptonshire (-23.3 °C) and Warsop, Nottinghamshire (-19.1 °C) are markedly lower than would be expected and no explanation has yet been found. Otherwise the lowest monthly temperature was -17.6 °C, recorded at Fyvie Castle, Grampian on the 12th, and the highest was 14.5 °C at Oldpark Filters, Belfast on the 17th.

### Rainfall

Mean monthly rainfall amounts were below normal everywhere except Edinburgh, Lothian Region and ranged from as little as 10 per cent in places in southern England to 101 per cent in the Edinburgh area.

Torrential rain brought flooding to parts of mid Wales on the 4th. The River Dyfi burst its banks and cut roads between Machynlleth, Powys and Aberystwyth, Dyfed. A heavy fall of 52 mm in 24 hours was measured at Sumburgh, Shetland on the 9th. Other heavy falls measured were 50 mm at Trinity States Farm, Jersey, on the 13th and Isle of Rhum, Highland Region on the 19th. Much of Wales and the western half of England had a dry end to the month with little or no precipitation during the last 10 days. This was the driest January at Hampstead, Greater London since 1914.

### Snow

On the 9th and 10th there were frequent sleet and snow showers brought inland off the North Sea and snow fell each day between the 11th and 14th. On the 12th there were frequent heavy snow showers along the east coast and in Cornwall. Level snow cover of 39 cm was reported at Penzance and 30 cm at Falmouth, and conditions were made worse by drifting in the strong easterly winds. Heavy snow fell in the area of Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey, Kent on the 12th combining with strong winds to give drifts of over 6 m. Among depths of level snow measured were 38 cm at Shoeburyness, Essex and 37 cm at Ulcombe, Kent. Further heavy snow on the 13th brought the worst conditions for over twenty years to Kent. The greatest depth of level snow in the south-east was

52 cm at East Malling, Kent, probably the greatest depth of level snow in the area for at least 40 years. On the 14th snow fell almost everywhere, with heavy falls spreading to Wales and the Midlands. Strong winds caused drifting, and transport was brought almost to a standstill, with some areas cut off altogether. There were further snow showers during the next few days, but on the 18th and 19th mild weather and rain brought a thaw of lying snow to all areas.

### Sunshine

Monthly sunshine totals were generally above normal in the United Kingdom except in eastern coastal districts and ranged from about 65 per cent of normal on the coast of East Anglia to more than 150 per cent in the Manchester area.

A spell of dull weather between the 13th and 28th broke records in many places for the greatest number of consecutive days without sunshine in January; among those with 15 sunless days were Elmdon, West Midlands, Arborfield, Berkshire and Faversham, Kent. The sunniest day of the month was the 6th, when southern and central areas and much of north-west England had between 5 hours and 7 hours of sunshine. The highest monthly sunshine amount was 73 hours at Southsea, Hampshire and the highest daily total was 10.5 hours at Bastreel, Cornwall on the 26th.

### Fog

Overnight freezing fog formed on the 8th in parts of south-east England, persisting all day in places, causing disruption to road traffic and interrupting flying at Gatwick and Heathrow Airports. On the 9th freezing fog patches were slow to clear from some eastern areas. Fog formation became more frequent from the 20th and by the 22nd affected most of England and Wales; in parts of Kent it persisted all day, and it was slow to clear in the north-west. Fog became more patchy during the rest of the month, affecting mainly exposed hills and coasts.

### 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	10.2	−15.6	−1.2	−0.9	−1.0	−0.9	−6	51	78
1 Scotland E	10.6	−16.0	−1.8	−1.4	−1.6	−0.6	−5	60	89
2 England E & NE	11.3	−14.1	−2.3	−1.8	−2.1	−0.5	−5	59	99
3 East Anglia	10.0	−14.9	−3.1	−2.3	−2.8	−0.6	−4	43	86
4 Midland Counties	11.5	−13.9	−2.9	−2.5	−2.7	−0.7	−8	33	113
5 England SE & Central S	11.2	−14.0	−3.4	−2.7	−3.0	−1.0	−9	28	109
6 Scotland W	11.6	−13.1	−1.8	−1.9	−1.9	−0.9	−8	49	110
7 England NW & Wales N	13.3	−10.2	−2.3	−2.0	−2.4	−0.7	−9	40	121
8 England SW & Wales S	11.5	−11.9	−2.7	−2.2	−2.7	−1.0	−9	22	105
N Ireland	11.8	−8.5	−1.0	−0.7	−0.8	0.0	−6	47	100
Scotland	11.6	−16.0	−1.6	−1.4	−1.5	−0.8	−6	51	92
England & Wales	13.3	−14.9	−2.8	−2.3	−2.6	−0.7	−7	35	105

\* Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations