

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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Generally mild and wet; last week very windy

A series of frontal systems associated with areas of low pressure in the Atlantic crossed all parts of the British Isles until the 17th, when high pressure over the near Continent, which had never been far away, extended a ridge of high pressure northwards to affect most southern areas of the United Kingdom during the next day or two. A warm front moved erratically north-eastwards across the United Kingdom on the 20th, followed between midday on the 21st and midday on the 22nd by a more active cold front, associated with a deep low pressure centre near Iceland. During the 24th/25th a very deep and intense depression tracked north-eastwards close to north-west Scotland, while the persistent belt of high pressure just to the south of the United Kingdom was pushed further south than of late. The depression deepened further as it tracked eastwards across southern Scotland and northern England, falling to near 950 mb before moving away over the North Sea by the 26th. On the 27th a small but very active depression moved north-eastwards across England while during the 28th a transient weak ridge of high pressure crossed from the west. However, by the 29th a complex area of low pressure was centred near the north-west of the British Isles and during the next few days a series of troughs moved north-eastwards crossing all parts of the United Kingdom.

Weather

The month was generally unsettled with periods of rain, heavy at times, or showers, occasionally wintry in northern areas. Much of England and Wales and north-west Scotland was dry on the 3rd and 4th, although there was heavy rain in the Glasgow area on the 3rd. Rain and strong winds affected all areas from time to time from the 9th. Thunder occurred in northern areas, mainly over Scotland and Northern Ireland on the 17th, 19th, 22nd and 23rd. There were thunderstorms over both Scotland and southern England and Wales on the 26th, over north-west England and Wales on the 30th and over parts of the south on the 31st. Thunderstorms were frequently accompanied by hail.

Wind

The month was generally very windy, mainly moderate or fresh after the 9th, but strong or gale force at times. The night of the 16th/17th was very windy in northern areas, with gusts of 76 kn and 79 kn at Stornoway and Benbecula, Western Isles late on the 16th and a record January gust of 109 kn with a mean speed of 72 kn at Fair Isle, Shetland early on the 17th. The 25th was an extremely windy day with severe gales over England and Wales with gusts to 93 kn at Aberporth, Dyfed and Gwennap Head, Cornwall. Gusts to more than 80 kn were widely reported on other exposed southern and western coasts and to more than 70 kn in many central and southern parts of England and Wales. A great deal of structural damage was done and a large number of trees brought down; the area affected being much more widespread than that during the storm of 16 October 1987. Wind directions were predominantly south-westerly.

Temperature

Mean monthly temperatures were above normal everywhere ranging from 1.1 °C above normal at Cape Wrath, Highland Region to 3.8 °C above normal at Lyneham, Wiltshire. The highest temperature of the month was 16 °C at Colwyn Bay, Clwyd on the 15th and the lowest was -8.1 °C at Kinbrace, Highland Region on the 27th.

Rainfall

Monthly rainfall amounts were above normal everywhere except eastern coastal areas of England where they were slightly below normal. The east coast of Scotland was very dry with Wick, Highland Region having less than half the normal rainfall compared with over twice the normal over a large area of the western Highlands.

On the 27th, precipitation totals well exceeded 20 mm widely in a broad belt from Yorkshire and Lancashire, across the western Midlands and the whole of Wales to Devon and Cornwall; the 27th was the wettest 09-09 day in Wales since 17 October 1987, when the rainfall was, as in this case, preceded two days earlier by exceptional winds in southern parts of Great Britain. During the 29th and the next two days much of the United Kingdom had showers and longer spells of rain. Rainfall was heavy and thundery in the south and west, with extensive flooding in several areas, notably around the River Severn, its waters already swollen from the deluge on the 27th. Heavy daily falls included 67 mm at Moel Cynnedd, Powys on the 10th and 69 mm at Milford Haven, Dyfed on the 27th.

Snow

Locally heavy and wintry showers came to Scotland on the 17th and the morning of the 18th. Blustery, thundery showers on the 23rd were of snow on higher ground and Aviemore, Highland Region had 5 cm of snow lying by the evening. On the 24th there were snow showers over Scotland and snow was persistent for a time over northern England and the north Midlands giving about 5 cm of lying snow in places. Much of Scotland reported

snow lying on the 24th, with low-lying areas recording 1 cm of lying snow, while places above 150 m had more than 20 cm. During the 24th and 25th further widespread snow showers, with heavy falls of snow in the Highlands and strong winds, gave blizzard conditions at places in southern Scotland. Early on the 26th, 30 cm of level undrifting snow lay at Cairngorm Chairlift, Highland Region and 29 cm at Leadhills, Border Region. On the 27th and early on the 28th heavy snow over northern England and North Wales gave level snow depths of 23 cm at Wilsden, West Yorkshire and 20 cm at Moel-y-Crio, Clwyd.

Sunshine

Monthly sunshine amounts were below average in southern coastal counties and in Shetland and western Scotland, and above average elsewhere, reaching 156% in North Wales, but as little as 42% in southern Scotland.

Highest daily sunshine total was 8.1 hours at East Hoathley, East Sussex on the 28th and the highest monthly total was 86.7 hours at Craibstone, near Aberdeen, Grampian Region.

Fog

There was patchy fog overnight on the 1st, especially over southern England, and on the 2nd in parts of central and south-east Scotland and many parts of England and Wales, clearing from many places by morning. A few patches formed over the south-eastern half of England late on the 4th and over Northern Ireland, Scotland and parts of eastern England early on the 5th. Overnight on the 7th, 8th and 9th patchy fog formed over parts of England and Wales, with a few patches on the 13th confined to central southern and south-east England. Coastal fog formed off north-east England and eastern Scotland on the 3rd and South Wales on the 11th. Hill fog occurred mainly in central areas on the 6th and in south-west England on the 20th.

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			
0 Scotland N	13.6	−5.8	+1.9	+1.7	+1.8	+0.5	+5	176	88
1 Scotland E	14.4	−3.5	+2.4	+2.3	+2.3	+1.2	+4	155	128
2 England E & NE	14.5	−2.1	+3.2	+3.0	+3.1	+2.1	+3	134	115
3 East Anglia	13.4	−1.8	+3.4	+2.9	+3.1	+2.6	+1	106	127
4 Midland Counties	13.9	−5.3	+3.5	+3.0	+3.2	+2.3	+4	148	126
5 England SE & Central S	13.2	−2.3	+3.3	+3.4	+3.3	+2.7	+4	160	96
6 Scotland W	12.9	−2.5	+2.3	+2.6	+2.4	+1.4	+9	190	71
7 England NW & Wales N	15.0	−1.7	+2.8	+3.2	+2.8	+2.3	+7	186	110
8 England SW & Wales S	13.6	−1.7	+2.9	+3.2	+2.9	+2.3	+8	161	86
N Ireland	15.0	−2.6	+2.0	+1.9	+2.0	+1.4	+6	132	115
Scotland	14.4	−5.8	+2.2	+2.2	+2.2	+1.0	+6	176	96
England & Wales	15.0	−5.3	+3.2	+3.1	+3.1	+2.4	+5	156	110

* Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations