

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

FEBRUARY 1987

VOLUME 104

NUMBER 2

Generally rather dry, with average sunshine and temperatures

On the 1st a series of fronts associated with low pressure areas in the Atlantic were crossing the British Isles while an anticyclone was over central Europe moving away eastwards. While fronts continued to affect western and northern areas of the United Kingdom until the 6th, southern areas came under the influence of high pressure to the south. When the last front cleared southern areas on the 7th it brought a transient ridge of high pressure to most areas. A shallow depression to the south-west of the British Isles on the 8th moved rapidly north-eastwards and deepened as it crossed northern areas of the United Kingdom and merged, on the 11th, into a complex low-pressure area extending from Scandinavia to Spain. Later on the 12th there was a weak ridge of high pressure affecting parts of the British Isles, but on the 13th a further depression with its associated fronts crossed southern areas of Great Britain and moved away eastwards on the 14th, to be replaced by a ridge of high pressure extending south-eastwards from Greenland. Over the next few days the anticyclone itself moved southwards, becoming established near the British Isles, where it stayed until the 25th, when new low-pressure systems moved across all areas. However, a further ridge of high pressure affected southern and eastern parts of England and Wales on the 28th.

Weather

After a cold start to the month it became cloudy, milder and more unsettled in western areas on the 2nd. The mild weather spread eastwards between the 3rd and 6th with some freezing rain in the north-east at first. It became more settled in the north on the 7th and 8th, but southern England and South Wales remained cloudy, with some rain or drizzle at times. On the 11th most places became cold and dry, apart from some rain in central and south-western England. Some rain and snow fell over eastern England on the 12th. The 13th was dry nearly everywhere apart from South Wales and south-west England where there was a little rain. By the next day the rain was clearing southern parts, and it became very sunny in the south-west. A cold period from the 14th to 20th gave some light dustings of snow here and there with moderate or severe frosts at night. Milder weather began to move southwards between the 18th and 20th preceded by a little sleet or snow. Thunder was reported at Gogerddan, Dyfed on the 6th. Hail was reported on 16 days and was most widespread in western areas on the 10th.

Wind

It was a generally quiet month with gales occurring on only two or three occasions, mainly in western coastal areas. On the 6th there were gusts of 72 kn at Leeds, West Yorkshire and Blyth, Northumberland. On the 9th winds reached gale force in the far south-west of England and Gwennap Head, Cornwall recorded a gust of 63 kn. Wind directions were mainly southerly or westerly apart from a spell of mainly northerly winds between the 14th and 22nd.

Temperature

Mean monthly temperatures were generally about normal over the whole of the United

Kingdom, and ranged from more than 1 °C above normal in northern Scotland to more than 0.5 °C below normal in places in the far west.

February began cold and frosty, with some very low temperatures: Eskdalemuir, Dumfries and Galloway recorded -11 °C on the night of the 1st. However, the early part of the month was generally mild, Torbay, Devon reporting a maximum of 14.5 °C on the 8th. It became colder from about the 14th with frequent widespread frosts. Milder conditions spread to all parts on the 26th. The last two days were mild everywhere and 16 °C was recorded at London Weather Centre on the 28th making it the warmest February day in central London since 1961. The highest temperature of the month was 16.3 °C recorded at Liphook, Hampshire on the 28th and the lowest was -12.7 °C at Santon Downham, Norfolk on the 1st.

Rainfall

In overall terms, rainfall was about average. However, northern and south-western Scotland, Cumbria, Humberside, Dorset and Somerset all had above average rainfall while all other areas had below average rainfall with amounts ranging from 156 per cent at Dalcross, Highland Region and Carlisle, Cumbria to 54 per cent in North Wales, north Norfolk and Shetland.

Some heavy falls of rain occurred in northern areas on the 5th and 6th. Among large falls reported in 24 hours were 47 mm at Kinlochewe, Highland Region on the 5th. Machynlleth, Powys recorded a fall of 43 mm on the 7th. Rain came to all areas on the 9th and among heavy daily falls was one of 41 mm at Nantmor, Gwynedd. The period from the 21st to 24th was dry in most places. Cloud and rain, preceded by snow over higher ground, moved into south-west England on the 25th, moving north-eastwards into Wales on the 26th: 49 mm was recorded at Bronydd Mawr, Powys. Grizedale, Cumbria recorded 65 mm on the 27th and 70 mm on the 28th, 164 mm in all in the last three days, towards a total for the month of 266 mm.

Snow

A belt of rain crossed Scotland on the 10th, turning to sleet or snow on higher ground. Some 'wet' snow fell for a time in the morning in parts of eastern England on the 12th, settling briefly in places. From the 14th to 17th there were frequent, but mostly light, snow showers in eastern and central areas. Most places had only a light dusting of snow during the period, with a few isolated exceptions. Some sleet preceding rain into the south-west of England fell on high ground on the 25th.

Sunshine

Sunshine amounts were generally above normal in eastern and central areas of England and Scotland, and in Shetland, parts of Strathclyde and Northern Ireland, and below normal in northern and south-west Scotland, Cumbria, Wales and south-west England, ranging from over 130 per cent in Shetland and Humberside to less than 70 per cent in north-west Scotland. The highest daily sunshine amounts were recorded in west Cornwall on the 18th and 20th with nearly 10 hours at Penzance and Cudrose. Southern areas were quite sunny on the 21st and 23rd. Brawdy, Dyfed had nearly 10 hours of sunshine on the 21st. Highest monthly sunshine amount was 97 hours at Ventnor Park, Isle of Wight.

Fog

Overnight fog formed frequently between the 3rd and 13th, mainly in southern and central areas. There was a good deal of hill and coastal fog, rather persistent in the west during the first two weeks. On the 3rd and 4th there was some thick fog, slow to clear in places. Thick fog at sea was the cause of three collisions on the 4th, one off Harwich, Essex and the other two in the English Channel off the coasts of Kent and East Sussex. On the 26th it became very misty with hill and coastal fog which persisted for the rest of the month, especially in the west.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

None reported.

Table 1 District values

District	Air temperature °C					Mean 30 cm soil temp °C	Rain-days	Rainfall	Sunshine
	Highest Max*	Lowest Min*	Max.	Min.	Mean				
	Difference from average					% of average			
0 Scotland N	12.4	-11.0	+0.4	-0.2	+0.1	-0.1	0	90	82
1 Scotland E	13.5	-10.8	+0.2	+0.2	+0.2	-0.1	0	86	92
2 England E & NE	14.2	-11.7	+0.5	-0.1	+0.2	-0.3	-1	88	111
3 East Anglia	14.2	-9.0	+0.3	-0.2	+0.1	-0.3	-1	69	97
4 Midland Counties	14.5	-9.1	+0.5	-0.1	+0.2	-0.3	-2	80	97
5 England SE & Central S	14.9	-7.5	+0.1	-0.3	-0.1	-0.5	0	78	102
6 Scotland W	14.5	-12.0	+0.7	-0.6	0.0	-0.5	-1	94	100
7 England NW & Wales N	14.2	-7.4	+0.3	-0.4	-0.2	-0.5	-2	99	97
8 England SW & Wales S	14.2	-7.6	+0.2	-0.1	-0.1	-0.4	-1	102	94
N Ireland	14.4	-8.5	+0.8	-0.8	0.0	-0.1	-2	84	103
Scotland	14.5	-12.0	+0.4	-0.2	+0.1	-0.2	0	91	91
England & Wales	14.9	-11.7	+0.3	-0.2	0.0	-0.4	-1	90	100

* Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations