

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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Mild, windy and generally very wet

At the start of the month a complex low-pressure system extended from south of Iceland to Scandinavia with the associated frontal systems crossing all parts of the United Kingdom. As the low pressure area moved away across Scandinavia on the 3rd a further Atlantic depression moved over the British Isles, to be followed on the 5th by another depression from south-west of the British Isles that deepened and moved up the St Georges Channel, crossing Wales and northern England on the following day to move away over Denmark on the 7th. A transient ridge of high pressure then affected all parts of the United Kingdom before being replaced during the evening by fronts associated with another complex low-pressure system in the Atlantic. A ridge of high pressure affected most of Great Britain on the 11th and the influence of rising pressure over the continent extended to eastern areas of England on the 12th before further fronts crossed all areas. Low pressure gave way temporarily to high pressure on the 17th before low pressure and the associated frontal systems became dominant over the British Isles for the rest of the month.

Weather

The month started with fronts bringing heavy rain and some exceptionally mild conditions to England, Wales and Northern Ireland. By the 4th rain moved north-east across England and Wales, with some fairly heavy snow on the Pennines. Showers were widespread on the 10th, with sleet and snow over higher ground. On the 14th there was a little sunshine nearly everywhere; many eastern and south-eastern areas stayed dull and cold on the 15th. Heavy rain fell on north-western parts of the United Kingdom on the 17th; there was a return to cold weather on the 18th, and on the 20th and 21st it was very sunny. The month ended with further heavy rain. Thunder and hail were reported on 6 days, notably over England and Wales on the 4th and 6th. Hailstones of between 10 mm and 20 mm in diameter were reported in the Oxford area on the 4th. Thunderstorms were blamed for electricity cuts in south-west Wales on the 5th; about 20 people escaped injury when lightning demolished the steeple of a Swansea chapel, hurling masonry blocks into houses nearby.

Wind

Gale force winds occurred in the south-west on the 2nd bringing down several large trees, loosening slates and causing loss of power in north Devon. On the 4th gusts to 68 kn were measured at Aberporth and Brawdy, Dyfed respectively; a 13 000 tonne tanker was reported to have been blown away from its moorings at Milford Haven by very strong winds. In Cardiff three women were injured when winds sent glass roof panels crashing down on shoppers and stallholders at the Central Market, and a double-decker bus was blown into a wall injuring the driver and two passengers. On the 6th gales caused the closure of the Severn Bridge for the third time in its history when gusts overturned a high-sided lorry. A mean wind of 41 kn and gust of 64 kn was measured at Rhoose, South Glamorgan. In west Oxfordshire a motorcyclist was killed and his pillion passenger badly

injured when a gust of wind blew them into a tree. On the 24th gales occurred over northern Scotland and in western areas on the 31st. Wind directions were mainly southerly or south-westerly.

Temperature

Mean monthly temperatures were above normal nearly everywhere but near normal in north-west Scotland, ranging from 0.1 °C below the average at Tiree, Strathclyde to 2.4 °C above average at Gatwick, West Sussex. The month was generally warm, despite being at the same time very wet. The temperature at Madley, Hereford and Worcester reached 14 °C on the 1st. The highest temperature of the month was 14.9 °C at Aber, Gwynedd on the 8th; the lowest was -8.9 °C at Kinbrace, Highland Region on the 6th.

Rainfall

Mean monthly rainfall amounts were above normal everywhere except Shetland and the far north of Scotland, ranging from about 80 per cent of average in Shetland to over 250 per cent in parts of East Anglia.

January was a very wet month with record amounts of rainfall in parts of southern England and the east coast of Scotland. It was the wettest January in England and Wales since 1948, the wettest at Hampstead, Greater London since records began there in 1909 and one of the wettest months on record with more than 100 mm falling in central London, the most since the London Weather Centre started records in 1940, according to provisional figures. On the 2nd heavy rain caused a landslide on the road between Bideford and Torrington, Devon. On the 29th torrential rain fell in southern parts of England and Wales causing flooding as far apart as Gloucestershire and Wiltshire in the west and Essex and Kent in the east. Among heavy daily falls were 73 mm at Moel Cynnedd, Clwyd on the 1st, 87 mm at Inverailort, Highland Region on the 11th and 85 mm at Trassey Slievenaman, Co. Down on the 18th.

Snow

By the 4th there was a fairly heavy snowfall over

the Pennines. Precipitation fell as snow at times on the high ground of the north and west with 12 cm reported at Great Dun Fell on the 6th. Showers of sleet and snow were widespread over high ground on the 10th. On the 19th and 20th there were showers of sleet, snow or hail particularly in western coastal districts. Overnight on the 21st/22nd snow showers continued in Scotland; there was also considerable snowfall in central England, with depths up to 18 cm. On the 23rd sleet or snow preceded prolonged rain, as far north as the Forth-Clyde Valley; the sleet and snow was quite heavy for a time over Lincolnshire and north-east England. On the 24th much of Scotland had a wet day with snow in the mountains; strong winds developed in northern areas, together with sleet and snow over hilly areas in the north.

Sunshine

Sunshine amounts were average or above average everywhere except parts of southern Scotland and some eastern areas of England, ranging from 55 per cent of the average at Eskdalemuir, Dumfries and Galloway to 143 per cent in north-west Scotland. Much of mainland Scotland had a dull month, but sunshine was above average in many coastal areas. England and Wales on the other hand had a fairly sunny month. On the 28th the month's highest daily amount of sunshine, 8.2 hours, was recorded at the Lizard, Cornwall and on the 21st Eastbourne, East Sussex recorded 8.0 hours of sunshine. The highest monthly total was 82 hours at Penzance, Cornwall.

Fog

Overnight fog formed between the 14th and 18th, mainly over central, eastern and south-eastern areas of England and persisted in many places in central and southern England as well as some parts of Northern Ireland on the 16th. There was dense fog, slow to clear, on the 25th in parts of the Midlands and northern England. Some hill and coastal fog occurred in western areas on the 8th.

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	−8.8	+0.3	+0.4	+0.4	+0.2	+2	134	111
1 Scotland E	14.1	−6.9	+0.7	+0.9	+0.8	+0.9	+3	153	113
2 England E & NE	13.4	−4.2	+1.5	+1.7	+1.6	+1.4	+5	149	98
3 East Anglia	13.1	−3.3	+2.0	+2.0	+2.0	+2.2	+8	226	105
4 Midland Counties	13.4	−3.6	+1.9	+2.0	+1.9	+1.9	+8	177	109
5 England SE & Central S	13.2	−4.4	+2.1	+2.1	+2.1	+2.2	+4	222	112
6 Scotland W	12.5	−6.4	+0.7	+0.9	+0.8	+1.2	+6	152	91
7 England NW & Wales N	13.3	−2.2	+1.5	+2.0	+1.5	+1.9	+7	172	113
8 England SW & Wales S	13.8	−2.7	+1.9	+2.0	+1.7	+1.9	+9	175	112
N Ireland	12.5	−3.5	+0.5	+0.5	+0.5	+0.9	+5	161	118
Scotland	14.1	−8.8	+0.6	+0.7	+0.7	+0.8	+4	141	105
England & Wales	13.8	−4.4	+1.8	+2.0	+1.8	+1.9	+7	179	108

* Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations