

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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Summary of observations compiled from returns of official stations and voluntary observers

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January 1962 — *Changeable and mostly mild; sunny.*

The weather was predominantly westerly cyclonic in character but anti-cyclonic and cold for the first few days, and again for a short period towards the end of the month.

The year opened bright and cold with the depression, which had given widespread snow at the end of December, moving away to the Baltic. Snow lay 6-8 in. deep over most of the country and as much as 12 in. deep in a few places. During the next three or four days a ridge of high pressure extended from the region of the Azores over the British Isles and weather remained dry and very cold with fog patches, but also sunny periods. Night frosts were unusually severe. By dawn on the 1st, temperatures in many parts of England and Wales were below -12°C , and over most of the country they remained below freezing point during the first two days of the month; the maximum at Pershore on the 1st was only -5°C . Extensive fog formed during the evening of the 2nd and persisted throughout the 3rd and 4th in many industrial areas. However, milder air reached Scotland on the 4th leading to a general thaw the next day.

A stormy period began on the 6th as a deep depression approaching Iceland brought strong south-westerly winds to all parts of the British Isles with a rapid rise of temperature and widespread rain which effectively cleared the remaining snow. Temperatures in the south-west rose to 12°C . Strong to gale force winds continued for the next three days and gales became severe for a time in south-west Scotland on the 8th ahead of a trough which gave widespread rain, and, locally, heavy thundery rain and thunderstorms. After a temporary lull, the 11th was an exceptionally stormy day. A vigorous depression from the Atlantic, which deepened still further as it moved east across Scotland, was preceded by widespread and at times heavy rain on the night of the 10th/11th and was followed by squally showers of rain or hail with local thunder and severe north-westerly gales. Over many northern and western districts mean hourly wind speed at times exceeded 50 kt. The next day another depression moving on a similar track brought heavy falls of snow to parts of Scotland and northern England; in north and east Scotland there were drifts up to 5 ft. deep.

Sunny periods accompanied the passage of a weak ridge across the country on the 14th but on the 15th an intense depression moving northwards off the west of Scotland brought widespread rain and severe gales to the west and north. Over most of the country it was the wettest day of the month; parts of western Scotland had over 3 in. of rain and there was considerable flooding. The rough weather continued for another two days as a deep depression from the Atlantic moved eastwards across Scotland.

A quieter period followed with sunny spells alternating with belts of frontal rain, mainly slight. However a deepening depression moving north-east towards the Shetlands brought a return of heavy rain and gales to most districts on the 21st. The next day all areas had squally, thundery showers, with sleet or snow in the north. Warm front rain spread eastward across the country on the 23rd and rain was heavy in the north on the 24th as the main depression crossed Scotland.

On the 26th a ridge extended northward over Ireland from an anti-cyclone over the Bay of Biscay, and during the next few days the high pressure system moved northward to become centred over southern Scandinavia on the 29th. At first weather was cloudy and

mild in the south and south-west but brighter elsewhere with frost and fog at night. The fog persisted in many industrial areas throughout the 27th and 28th. It became colder on the 29th as an easterly airstream from Scandinavia extended over southern England. The anticyclone moved eastwards on the 30th and fronts associated with a depression approaching Scotland brought snow to most parts of the British Isles with falls of up to 3 in. locally.

Pressure and Wind — Mean pressure was below the average except in the extreme south-west, the deviation at 9 hr ranging from -8.4 mb at Lerwick to $+0.3$ mb at Scilly. Surface winds were mainly light and variable on the 1st-4th and 26th-29th, otherwise they were predominantly south-westerly. Wind reached gale force on 24 days in Scotland and on the 3rd, 7-17th, 19th-26th and 31st (21 days) in England and Wales. Gales were widespread on the 8th, and 11th/16th, and were particularly severe on the 11th and 16th. A gust of 82 kt was recorded at the Lizard on the 11th, one of 90 kt at Hartland Point on the 11th, and one of 89 kt at Stornoway on the 21st.

Temperature — Mean temperature was above the 1921-50 average in Great Britain $+0.4^{\circ}\text{C}$ in England and Wales, $+0.2^{\circ}\text{C}$ in Scotland and below the average -0.4°C in Northern Ireland. Weather was cold at the beginning and towards the end of the month, but from the 6th to 26th day temperatures were mainly above average, especially in south-east England.

Extremes included: (England and Wales) 14.4°C at Bramham on the 24th, -21.1°C at Corwen on the 2nd; (Scotland) 13.6°C at Huntly on the 31st, -16.1°C at Carnwath on the 2nd; (Northern Ireland), 12.8°C at Armagh on the 30th and at Garvagh Forest on the 31st -11.1°C at Knockmany Forest on the 2nd.

Precipitation — The general rainfall expressed as a percentage of the 1916-50 average was 112 for England and Wales, 123 for Scotland and 106 for Northern Ireland. Rainfall was 150 per cent of the average over some areas in south-west England, in Cumberland and over much of southern and western Scotland, including the Hebrides.

Thunder was heard in Scotland on 11 days and in England and Wales on the 8th, 10th-13th, 16th, 17th, 21st, and 22nd (9 days). Thunderstorms were fairly widespread on the 8th and during the night of the 21st/22nd.

Snow or sleet fell at one place or another in Scotland every day and was reported lying on 26 days. In England and Wales it fell fairly widely on the first four and last two days of the month; it lay 6-12 in. deep on the 1st and was still 2-3 in. deep in many places on the 4th.

Sunshine — The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the 1921-50 average was 135 in England and Wales, 123 in Scotland and 114 in Northern Ireland. Sunshine was more than twice the average locally in the Midlands and in the London area, and it was around 150 per cent of the average over much of eastern England.

Fog — In Scotland fog was reported at one place or another on 19 days and in England and Wales on the 1st-8th, 10th-12th, 14th, 21st and 24th-31st (21 days). It was widespread on the 1st-4th and 27th-29th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — The aurora was visible in Scotland on 11 nights. A minor tornado at Egremont, Cumberland, caused damage to houses on the night of the 16th/17th.