

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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January 1966 — *Very cold mid-month, unusually mild later*

January provided a great variety of weather types ranging from predominantly anticyclonic on the 3rd-18th, though cyclonic in the north-west on the 5th-7th, to mainly cyclonic at other times during the month.

The month began with a day of squally thundery showers in a strong but mild westerly airstream with wind reaching gale force at times in southern England. The 2nd was also showery after a night of more continuous rain as disturbances moved eastwards across the country, but the showers gradually died out before a ridge of high pressure which moved from the west of Ireland to the North Sea on the 3rd-4th. There were good sunny periods on the 3rd but frontal rain, associated with a deep depression near Iceland, reached south-western districts on the morning of the 4th.

Meanwhile, an anticyclone over Germany had developed considerably and a south-easterly airstream on its western flank halted the advance of fronts which were giving widespread rain over the British Isles on the 5th. Later the fronts became inactive and moved westwards, and weather during the next three days in England and Wales was mainly dry, dull and misty with progressively decreasing temperature, but in Scotland it remained mild with rain at times.

The anticyclone had moved to Scandinavia by the 9th and associated easterly winds, bringing very cold air from eastern Europe, dominated the weather over the British Isles during the next week. The 9th was dry with good sunny periods in many places but on the 10th a small depression developed off Cornwall bringing periods of heavy rain to western districts, and, as it moved south-eastwards into northern France, snow to parts of central southern England. On the morning of the 11th snow lay 4-6 inches deep over parts of Salisbury Plain and 4 inches deep as far east as Long Sutton. During the next few days temperatures fell progressively and night frosts were severe locally; on the 14th air temperature at Wattisham failed to rise above -2°C . Snow showers interspersed with sunny intervals were frequent, specially in eastern districts, and by the 15th level snow had accumulated to a foot deep in parts of Kent.

The anticyclones to the north and north-west of the British Isles declined on the 16th and minor disturbances moving westwards from the continent brought periods of more continuous snow to east and south-east England but this slowly died out on the 17th as a small depression over the English Channel filled up.

A new anticyclone developed over Germany on the 18th bringing even colder air over the British Isles. Temperatures remained below freezing point in many parts of the country throughout the 18th and 19th, and on Salisbury Plain and in parts of Kent they failed to rise above -4°C on the 19th. Frost was severe at night; East Malling, with a minimum of -16°C , had its coldest night since February 1947. The sea froze in Pegwell Bay.

The cold spell began to break on the 20th as a small but deep secondary disturbance, associated with a complex low pressure area in the Atlantic, developed and moved eastwards to the mouth of the English Channel. Snow turned to freezing rain over much of southern England as temperatures slowly began to rise. The depression moved north-eastwards into the Southern North Sea on the 21st bringing fog and drizzle to much of the country, and fog was widespread and locally dense, with rain or drizzle at times, during the next three days as the thaw continued.

On the 25th a deep depression, which had been moving north-eastwards, became almost stationary off south-west Ireland. Winds reached gale force over much of south-west England, and associated fronts brought widespread rain, falls exceeding 1 inch locally in the north-west. During most of the remainder of the month a complex area of low pressure extended from near Iceland southwards to the Azores and troughs moving north-eastwards in the system brought periods of rain and progressively warmer air over the British Isles. The 26th-30th was exceptionally mild in southern England, temperature reaching 13°C locally on the 29th.

Pressure and Wind — Mean pressure was below the 1931-60 average at 9h over England and Wales but above average over much of Scotland, the deviation ranging from -6.4 mb at Scilly to $+5.7$ mb at Lerwick. Surface winds were west to north-west at first, variable on the 3rd, mainly south to south-east on the 4th-8th and then mainly from an

easterly direction on the 9th-26th. During the rest of the month south-westerly winds predominated. Wind reached gale force on about 10 days in England and Wales and 19 days in Scotland mostly during the first and last weeks of the month. Gales were widespread on the 1st and 2nd; a gust of 89 kt was recorded at Portland Bill on the 2nd.

Temperature — The outstanding feature of the month was the wide variation in temperature. After a mild start it became very cold from about the 10th-21st with day temperatures below freezing on some days. In contrast temperatures rose quickly during the last week, mean temperatures in places being about 10°C above the average around the 29th.

Extremes included (England and Wales) 14.4°C at Penketh on the 28th and at Bude and Preston Wynne on the 29th, -18.9°C at Elmstone on the 19th; (Scotland) 15.0°C at Kinlochewe on the 28th, -12.8°C at Glenshee Lodge on the 4th and Carnwath on the 15th; (Northern Ireland) 13.4°C at Ballykelly on the 28th, -8.3°C at Lislap Forest on the 15th and at Castle Archdale on the 18th.

Rainfall — Rainfall was below the average over the whole country except for small areas in south-west England, north-east Kent, the Eastern Highlands of Scotland and the Northern Isles. It was less than half the average over parts of the south Midlands and East Anglia, over most of north-west England and north and west Wales and over most of Scotland.

Snow and sleet fell mainly during the 10th-21st, but parts of Scotland reported falls during the first and last weeks. Much of eastern England was snow-covered from about the 14th to the 22nd, undrifted snow on the 17th lying 7 inches deep at Ushaw and 4 inches deep at Lowestoft; at Dover it was 10 inches deep from the 17th-20th. Western and southern districts had generally less snow though Alderney reported a fall of 8 inches on the 15th.

Thunder was heard in Scotland on four days towards the end of the month. In England and Wales it was heard on only 2 days, being fairly widespread in south-west England on the 1st and in south-east England on the 2nd.

Sunshine — Sunshine was below the average almost everywhere especially near the east coast. A few isolated places in the west recorded more than their usual amount. In England sunshine was only 34 per cent of the average at Clacton and it was the dullest January since 1912 at Worthing and Hastings. Many places in south and east Scotland had their dullest January for 20 years.

Fog — Fog at 9h was reported at one place or another on most days; many places in the Midlands had it on 10-12 mornings mainly during the latter part of the month.

Fog was widespread and persisted in many places throughout the day on the 21st to the 24th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — The aurora was visible in Scotland on 3 nights.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES, JANUARY, 1966

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE					EARTH TEMP.		RAIN DAYS	RAIN- FALL	SUN- SHINE
	*Highest Max.	*Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 1 ft.	Mean 4 ft.			
	Difference from Average									
0 SCOTLAND, N.	12.2	-6.7	-0.6	0.0	-0.3	-	-	-6	54	69
1 SCOTLAND, E.	12.2	-7.8	-0.9	0.0	-0.5	-0.7	-0.8	-2	64	54
2 ENGLAND, N.E.	11.9	-12.2	-1.5	-0.4	-0.9	-1.1	-1.2	+1	68	53
3 ENGLAND, E.	12.8	-11.7	-1.4	-0.2	-0.8	-1.1	-1.0	0	57	60
4 MIDLANDS	12.5	-9.4	-1.3	-0.2	-0.8	-1.1	-1.0	-3	57	74
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	13.3	-15.6	-1.3	-0.2	-0.7	-1.5	-1.3	-2	61	68
6 SCOTLAND, W.	11.0	-10.7	-0.8	-0.1	-0.5	-0.9	-0.7	-10	52	67
7 ENGLAND, N.W. and N. Wales	13.3	-6.7	-1.0	0.0	-0.5	-0.4	-0.6	-9	43	88
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S. Wales	12.8	-8.9	-1.3	+0.1	-0.7	-0.6	-0.8	-3	73	61
N. IRELAND	13.4	-8.3	-0.5	-0.1	-0.3	-	-	-7	64	61
SCOTLAND	-	-	-0.8	0.0	-0.4	-	-	-6	51	63
ENG. and WALES	-	-	-1.3	-0.1	-0.7	-	-	-3	62	67

*Highest Max. and Lowest Min. of the District Value Stations.