

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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Mild, then cool, with frequent wintry showers, especially in the north

A depression, part of a complex low-pressure area stretching from Greenland through Iceland to the Western Isles, moved over Scotland on the 1st before breaking away eastwards and filling slowly. The associated frontal system brought moist westerly air to all areas.

After the passage of a weak warm front on the 9th an intensifying anticyclone moved northwards to become centred over the south-west approaches on the 10th and over south-west England on the 11th before moving rapidly away north-eastwards by midday on the 12th. An anticyclone which formed over the North Sea on the 14th moved away north-eastwards while a complex area of low pressure in the eastern Atlantic gradually pushed eastwards. A deepening low centred over the British Isles on the 21st moved away south-eastwards and filled rapidly, giving way to a ridge of high pressure which controlled the weather for the rest of the month.

Weather

Apart from a period of mainly dry weather from the 9th to the 18th with the occurrence of overnight frost and fog patches, it was a month of mostly cool, changeable weather with rain at times. Snow showers occurred mainly in the north, but there was a period of heavy snowfall on the 19th over Northern Ireland, Wales and the moors of south-west England for a time.

Frost occurred overnight on the 12th; temperatures were kept below freezing all day by dense fog in parts of the Midlands and north-west England. Freezing temperatures persisted throughout the day until the 17th in parts of the Midlands, after which frost only occurred overnight. Scattered thunderstorms were reported on a few occasions, notably in Strathclyde, and in Orkney and Shetland on the 6th, and in the north Midlands and places in south-east England on the 8th. Outbreaks of thunder were accompanied by hail in the Channel Islands on the 21st.

Wind

Until the 10th winds were mainly fresh to strong westerly, the windiest days being the 6th and 8th. Gusts of over 60 kn were reported, inland as well as near coasts; structural damage was done to buildings and travel was badly disrupted. A gust of 78 kn was reported at Collafirth, Shetland on the 4th, whilst 93 kn was recorded at Point of Ayre, Isle of Man on the 8th. Gales moderated during the 8th as the Azores anticyclone quickly built a ridge across the British Isles.

In the south on the 6th there were reports of trees blown down, power lines down in the Newbury area, and damage to property. Five roofs were reported to have been ripped off at Shepperton, Middlesex, whilst near Ascot, Berkshire a train was derailed by a fallen tree. Then on the 8th a further trail of damage was caused by the passage of the cold front from North Wales to south-east England in which there were reports of trees being uprooted, a chimney stack collapsing, roofs being damaged, and a 33 kV steel pylon blown down, interrupting power supplies.

Temperature

Except in northern Scotland where it was very mild, monthly mean temperatures for February were near normal. Differences ranged from nearly 2 °C above normal in the Highlands of Scotland to 1 °C below normal in parts of central England, most of the Midlands and East Anglia being just below normal.

On the 3rd it was very mild over the United Kingdom and exceptionally mild in the southern half of England with a highest maximum of 13.2 °C at Bournemouth (Hurn) Airport in Dorset. On the following day a maximum of 13.5 °C was recorded at Great Malvern, Hereford and Worcestershire. For the rest of the month 12 °C was only exceeded once, when 12.3 °C was recorded at Kilkeel, Co. Down on the 29th. The coldest period occurred between the 13th and 15th when Fylingdales, North Yorkshire had the lowest maximum of -2.0 °C on the 16th and the lowest minimum was -8.2 °C, recorded at St Harmon, Powys on the 15th.

Rainfall

The generally unsettled weather continued over the whole of the United Kingdom for the first eight days of the month, giving precipitation that was often wintry, especially over the higher ground of Scotland, northern England and North Wales. The east and south-east of England, however, had only small amounts of rain in the same period.

The distribution of precipitation was uneven over the United Kingdom as a whole. In Scotland most fell in the first week to 10 days. Measurable rain was reported on 10 to 14 days in the east and on 20 to 22 days in the west. The greatest fall on any one day in Scotland was 25.4 mm at Kildonan, Isle of Arran on the 4th. Northern Ireland had one of the wettest Februarys since 1937, giving a rainfall average of over 150 per cent. The largest fall was 24.9 mm at Kilkeel, Co. Down on the 19th. The wettest days of the month over large areas were the 1st, 6th/7th and 20th to 22nd. In England, the greatest falls in one day were 96.5 mm at Bleaberry Tarn and 53.2 mm at Honister Pass, both in Cumbria, and 33 mm at Bastreet, Cornwall, all on the 5th.

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	11.7	-6.0	+0.8	+1.9	+1.3	+0.3	+2	108	59
1 Scotland E	12.0	-10.3	+0.4	+1.3	+0.8	+0.2	0	109	72
2 England E & NE	12.6	-5.0	-0.2	+0.2	+0.1	-0.2	-1	80	84
3 East Anglia	12.5	-6.2	-0.3	-0.1	-0.2	+0.2	-1	92	103
4 Midland Counties	13.2	-6.0	-0.3	-0.2	-0.3	+0.1	0	95	79
5 England SE & Central S	12.8	-4.7	0.0	+0.2	+0.1	+0.2	0	71	108
6 Scotland W	10.8	-10.1	+0.1	+1.3	+0.7	+0.2	+2	121	70
7 England NW & Wales N	13.6	-5.6	0.0	+0.5	+0.2	-0.1	-1	95	83
8 England SW & Wales S	13.0	-5.4	+0.2	+0.5	+0.2	+0.5	-2	89	83
N Ireland	13.7	-5.5	+0.4	+0.7	+0.6	+0.5	0	148	69
Scotland	12.0	-10.3	+0.4	+1.5	+0.9	+0.2	+1	113	67
England & Wales	13.6	-6.2	-0.1	+0.2	0.0	+0.1	-1	87	90

* Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations

Snow

Showers or longer periods of sleet or snow occurred rather widely until the 10th and between the 18th and 27th. Snow was quite heavy for a time on the 19th over Northern Ireland, Wales and the moors of south-west England. On the 20th there was heavy snow for a time in northern England and southern Scotland, followed by snow showers on the 21st and 22nd. Snow was lying on high ground in most of Scotland and in northern England. Remnants of the deep drifts at higher levels in Scotland persisted until the end of the month.

Sunshine

While sunshine totals were below the monthly average in most parts of the United Kingdom, south-east England had generally above-average sunshine and several places in Kent exceeded 120 per cent. Northern Ireland had one of the dullest Februarys since 1941 with as low as 54 per cent reported in the north and west of the Province. Parts of western Scotland and southern Shetland were below 50 per cent. The sunniest days generally in England and Wales were the 8th and the 9th and, in the southern half of the country only, the 13th and the 18th. The highest total recorded in one day was 9.1 hours at East Hoathly, Sussex on the 13th.

Fog

Overnight fog patches formed in all areas around mid month and became dense in parts of the Midlands and north-west England on the 12th and slow to clear. Between the 13th and 18th fog became more widespread. Coastal fog patches occurred in the first half of the month, mainly in the south-west, and rather more extensively in the west towards the end of the month. Patchy hill fog occurred fairly frequently in all areas, becoming widespread around the 4th and the 10th/11th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

In the morning of the 8th tornadoes occurred on a cold front which swept rapidly across the country from north-west to south-east. There were numerous reports of structural damage and travel was disrupted in many places from North Wales to Kent and Sussex.