

February 2006

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1961-1990.

UK overview

Mean temperatures ranging from below average across south-west England to above average across Scotland. Rainfall well below average across Northern Ireland, with parts of south-east England and East Anglia, experiencing above average rainfall.

Grantown-on-Spey recorded a temperature of -12.2°C and Aviemore -11.6°C , both on 1st February. Twenty-four hour maximum temperature at Leek was -2.3°C on 1st. Hastings recorded 31.2 mm of rain in the 24 hours ending 1800 on 20th.

England and Wales diary of highlights

Temperatures close to average, but the coldest February since 1996.

1st to 7th It was a dry start to the month as high pressure remained dominant across England and Wales. It was cold with freezing fog patches in many places and snow grains reported from southern England and East Anglia. Leek in Staffordshire remained below freezing all day on the 1st, recording a 24-hour maximum of -2.3°C .

8th to 10th A cold front pushed southwards on the night of the 7th-8th allowing a brisk northerly wind to sweep across the country, bringing plenty of wintry showers. As pressure built in from the west the wintry showers become confined to eastern parts of England. There were good spells of sunshine through this period but with widespread overnight frosts, Benson (Oxfordshire) falling to -8.2°C in the 10th.

11th to 17th It was very unsettled through this period with plenty of showers or longer spells of rain. Capel Curig recorded 43.8 mm in 24 hours ending 1800 on the 12th. Indeed the 12.8 mm recorded in London was the first substantial rainfall since 30 December. Strong west to south-westerly winds occurred on the 14th and 15th with gusts up to 50 knots over parts of Wales and along the English Channel coast.

18th to 22nd On the 18th an Atlantic depression moved into the Bay of Biscay but over the next few days became slow moving over northern France. This allowed cold, brisk easterly winds to spread across England and Wales with wintry showers in places. Hastings recorded 31.2 mm of rain in the 24 hours ending 1800 on the 20th.

23rd to 26th This period continued the cold and showery nature of the weather with brisk east to north-easterly winds and further snow in places. It did allow some reasonable sunshine with Torquay recording 8.8 hours on the 25th.

27th to 28th The 27th was largely cloudy with a few showers down the eastern coastal fringe of England. During the evening a cold front pushed southwards across England and Wales, clearing the south coast by dawn on the 28th. This allowed brisk north-westerly winds to feed further wintry showers into Wales and western parts of England during the day.

Scotland diary of highlights

Anticyclonic and dry, apart from an unsettled spell in mid-month. Mild spells at first, but cold later.

High pressure covered the British Isles during the first four days of February. On 1st and 2nd it was cloudy over much of Scotland but it was clear over the central Highlands and Grampian region with severe night frost. On the 1st the temperature at Aviemore ranged between -12 °C and -1 °C. By the 4th a light westerly wind developed and the cloud broke more widely with much milder conditions and the temperature reached 13 °C at Aboyne.

From the 5th to the 7th the anticyclone was centred near the western English Channel and a mild westerly airflow covered Scotland. It was cloudy with rain, mostly in the north-west, and on the 6th the temperature reached 13 °C at Tain.

The anticyclone shifted to the mid-Atlantic on the 8th before advancing to cover the country on the 10th. Northerly winds that gusted to 59 knots at Kirkwall brought showers to the north but the weather soon settled down with sun in the south.

An unsettled spell began on the 11th as the high pressure retreated into Europe and south-westerly winds covered Scotland. Fronts brought spells of rain and it became mild with temperatures reaching 11 °C on the 13th.

Low pressure became slow moving near the Faeroes from the 14th to the 16th and brought heavy showers, and it was cold enough for snow on the hills. From the 17th to the 19th the low pressure extended to cover Scotland, bringing light winds with some sun in the south and west, although it remained cloudy in the north-east.

On the 20th high pressure built to the north-west of Scotland and then moved towards Greenland, bringing cold weather from the north and east. Until the 22nd the anticyclone was close enough to give fair weather in the west, although there were showers in the east. On the 24th a band of thicker cloud with some rain spread from the east, but it was soon replaced by dry weather with breaks in the cloud.

On the 27th a band of cloud and slight rain spread south across the country, bringing cold Arctic air. The next day frequent snow showers affected the northern half of the country with temperatures not rising above freezing and gusts reaching 59 m.p.h. at Baltasound. In contrast, it was sunny in the south.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

A dry and sunny month, with near average temperatures.

The first three days of the month were dry and settled with high pressure dominating. Sunny spells occurred by day with frost at night and fog persisted all day in places on the 3rd. Daytime temperatures were between 5 and 7 °C but locally near 1 to 3 °C where fog lingered.

The period between the 4th and the 7th were less cold and rather cloudy. Some rain spread across all areas on the afternoon of the 7th giving 2 to 5 mm in places. Ground frost on the morning of the 7th cleared to give a mostly dry and bright day with sunny spells and just a few well-scattered showers. The fine and settled weather continued into the 9th and 10th but frost overnight was sharp and quite widespread with minimums well inland down to between - 4 to -6 °C.

The 11th to the 17th was the most unsettled period of an otherwise dry month and fronts crossed the Province giving spells of wet and quite windy weather. The bulk of the month's rain occurred in this spell and parts of East Down recorded 20-25 mm on the 13th and 14th. It was mild however with temperatures between 10 and 12 °C by day and nights were frost-free.

High pressure became re-established for the period 18th to the 27th and it again became mostly dry with some sunshine and overnight frosts. Overnight minimums again fell to -6 °C in some inland areas over the

weekend of the 18th and 19th. Cold east to north-east winds made some of the days in this spell feel particularly cold.

The month ended with Arctic air arriving and giving heavy snow showers throughout the last day of the month. Lying snow occurred early on the morning of the 28th and again after dusk.

Last updated: 27 February 2013

