

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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Cold with snow

As the month began most of the British Isles was covered by a ridge of high pressure extending from the Norwegian Sea to the Bay of Biscay with a depression centred over northern Germany moving away eastward and another over Greenland moving south-eastwards to form a complex low-pressure area north of the Azores. A depression moved down the North Sea from Norway early on the 6th to affect eastern England before moving over France. High pressure remained dominant over the British Isles apart, occasionally, from effects of depressions moving down the North Sea. From the 13th low pressure over France edged northwards into southern England and was then incorporated into a deepening depression moving eastwards across the Bay of Biscay into France on the 17th. By the 18th most parts of the British Isles except northern Scotland were in a complex low-pressure area which was itself replaced in the next few days by another low-pressure area crossing the British Isles from the eastern Atlantic. A temporary ridge of high pressure affected most of the United Kingdom on the 23rd, followed by a further succession of depressions and their associated frontal systems during the rest of the month.

Weather

Unsettled, mainly cold and wintry weather prevailed for the first three weeks, all parts of the United Kingdom having considerable snowfall at times with subsequent disruption to traffic in places. Thunderstorms occurred on the 5th at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on the 13th at Spurn Point, Humberside, on the 19th at Princetown, Devon and at a number of places in Scotland and Northern Ireland on the 22nd or 23rd. Hail was reported here and there during the month, mainly in south-west England in the first week and in Scotland and northern England during the latter part of the month.

Wind

Winds were mainly light or moderate during the earlier part of the month, but strengthened during the last ten days, especially in western coastal areas where winds were strong or gale force at times. There were gales in Scotland on the 22nd, especially in northern and eastern areas. The strongest gusts were mainly recorded in the latter part of the month, but places on the east coast of England recorded their maximum gusts on the 6th with 55 kn at Gorleston, Norfolk and at Manston, Kent. The maximum recorded in the last week of the month at a low-level station was 66 kn at Gwennap Head, Cornwall on the 27th. Wind directions were northerly until about the 10th, then variable, becoming easterly until the 21st, westerly until the 24th, and after a brief change to northerly again on the 26th, southerly for the rest of the month.

Temperature

Mean temperatures were below the monthly average over the whole United Kingdom. In the western half of Northern Ireland and south of a line from the Wash to Land's End values were mostly 3 °C below normal. Orkney, with only 1 °C below normal, was the least cold area.

On the 4th at Anvil Green, Kent the temperature remained below -4 °C all day and much of England and Wales was cold, while in Scotland and Northern Ireland temperatures remained near average. In the London area the 16th was the coldest day since 1963 with a maximum at Heathrow of -4.7 °C and in central London -3.2 °C. With a mild few days to end an otherwise cold or very cold month the mean temperature of 1 °C for England and Wales made it the coldest January since 1979, although in parts of the south-east it was the coldest since 1963. While, by the 22nd, most of southern England was thawing, in Scotland it remained cold. At Aviemore, Highland Region on the 22nd the temperature dropped below freezing and stayed below until the afternoon of the 27th; on the coldest day, the 25th, the temperature rose from an overnight value of -15 °C to an afternoon maximum of -8 °C before falling again during the following night to -22 °C.

Rainfall

Monthly rainfall totals, including the water equivalent of considerable snowfall in northern and eastern areas, were above the monthly average in eastern areas of Scotland and in eastern coastal areas of England as far south as the North Downs in Kent, and in southern parts of Devon and Cornwall. The eastern coastal strip across the Scottish border and a small area south of the Wash in East Anglia had over 150 per cent of average rainfall, and in Essex, Clacton-on-Sea was very wet with more than 200 per cent. In contrast, most western areas of the United Kingdom were comparatively dry, parts of Cumbria, western Scotland and North Wales having less than 50 per cent of average rainfall.

Snow

Snow showers over Kent turned to more general snow on the 4th, giving an accumulation of about 20 cm at Manston, Kent. By the following morning there was snowfall over much of England, the Channel Islands and southern Scotland. Further snow showers affected all parts except western Scotland and the northern isles between the 12th and 16th, with snow depths generally less than 5 cm except over hills and eastern coastal counties of England. Much of Kent and East Sussex had

more than 15 cm. During the 17th more general snow fell over South Wales and south-west England, giving depths of about 10 to 20 cm. Heavy snow combined with gale force winds in Scotland on the 22nd to create blizzard conditions and gave a depth of 50 cm of undrifting snow at Aviemore, Highland Region.

The number of days with snow or sleet falling was above normal everywhere, as much as three or four times the average in central and eastern England. The number of days with snow lying was also above average everywhere, as much as three times in parts of southern and eastern England.

Sunshine

Sunshine totals were above the monthly average in most parts of the United Kingdom west of a line from Cape Wrath, Highland Region to Worthing, West Sussex, with the notable exception of North Wales which had less than average sunshine. East of the line all areas except Shetland, Tayside and the south of the Grampian Region had below average sunshine.

Parts of the Western Isles, south-west Wales and south-west England were very sunny with over 150 per cent of the monthly average, while the north-eastern coastal areas of England were rather dull with only about 70 per cent of normal. The south coast between Hurn, Dorset and Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex had a bright day on the 22nd with about 8 hours sunshine.

Fog

Overnight fog formed in nearly all areas, particularly between the 8th and 12th, when in the south and east of England freezing fog was persistent for a time, and between the 16th and 21st, when it remained patchy, and the 25th and 30th. Fog was dense for a time in south-east England on the 30th. Coastal fog patches occurred in the last few days of the month. Patchy hill fog occurred mainly in the second half of the month.

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					% of average	
0 Scotland N	10.3	−23.4	−1.8	−1.8	−1.8	−1.5	−3	60	114
1 Scotland E	10.4	−22.7	−1.8	−1.3	−1.6	−0.5	0	87	103
2 England E & NE	11.8	−9.5	−2.2	−1.8	−2.0	−0.9	+5	108	80
3 East Anglia	11.6	−18.1	−2.5	−3.2	−2.9	−0.8	+2	108	91
4 Midland Counties	11.9	−15.4	−2.4	−2.9	−2.7	−1.0	0	79	97
5 England SE & Central S	11.9	−13.0	−2.8	−3.4	−3.1	−1.4	−1	94	104
6 Scotland W	10.6	−16.5	−2.2	−2.6	−2.4	−1.0	−6	44	131
7 England NW & Wales N	12.0	−10.2	−2.0	−2.3	−2.3	−1.1	−2	65	106
8 England SW & Wales S	12.8	−10.7	−2.3	−3.1	−2.9	−1.9	−1	80	139
N Ireland	11.7	−9.5	−2.4	−3.1	−2.7	−1.8	−3	72	125
Scotland	10.6	−23.4	−1.9	−1.9	−1.9	−1.0	−3	60	116
England & Wales	12.8	−18.1	−2.4	−2.8	−2.7	−1.2	+1	85	103

*Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations