

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

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Mostly changeable and mild; very dry in east but wet in north-west.

For a few days at the beginning of the month pressure was high to the east and low to the west of the British Isles. On the 5th the high pressure gave way and for the next week or so a series of fronts moved eastwards across all districts. Cold fronts were delayed by waves over southern England on the 7th and over the Irish Sea and the south of Scotland on the 9th and 10th.

On the 14th an anticyclone developed over Northern Britain. During the following two days the high became established over Scandinavia while between the 17th and 20th weakening fronts moved westwards across the United Kingdom. On the 21st the anticyclone began to move away allowing Atlantic fronts to resume their eastward movement, into western areas at first and across all districts from the 25th.

Weather

The weather was changeable for much of the month although not always with a great deal of rain. While the north-west was wet with heavy rainfall at times central and eastern areas were often mainly dry, much of the east being very dry. Although the first half of the month was mild generally there were some snow showers in the north during the second week. A rather cold spell followed, most areas having a little wintry precipitation while the north-west was mainly dry. Temperatures rose over the last few days and the month ended very mild in most parts. Isolated thunderstorms were reported on a few occasions during the first two weeks over Scotland, around mid-month in the Midlands and south-east England and early and late in the month over Northern Ireland.

Wind

Over exposed western and northern areas winds were often fresh or strong with gales at times, particularly during the second week and last few days of the month. The gales were severe locally while on the 12th and 13th storm force winds were recorded at a few places in the north of Britain with gusts of 77 kn at Duirinish (Highland Region) and 76 kn at the Royal Observatory, Blackford Hill, in Edinburgh. Elsewhere winds were lighter generally, especially during the second half of the month. Wind directions were mostly south or south-westerly but, except in the far north of Scotland, they were generally from an easterly point between the 15th and 22nd.

Temperature

Mean temperatures were above the monthly average everywhere with values ranging from about 0.5 °C above in Jersey and at a few places in Suffolk and the Isle of Wight to nearly 2.5 °C above in isolated parts of Grampian and Borders Regions and in Northumberland. Both Scotland and Northern Ireland had their mildest February since 1974.

For much of the first half of the month it was very mild, although during the second week temperatures were nearer normal in the far north. On the 9th the temperature reached 15.7 °C at Llangenny (Powys) and 15.6 °C at Bude (Cornwall). For about ten days from the 14th it was colder generally with night frost at times. Frost was severe locally on a few occasions, particularly in Scotland; on the 17th a minimum of -12.2 °C was recorded at Grantown-On-Spey (Highland Region). Milder weather then returned to all areas. On the 28th temperatures exceeded 13 °C in places, especially in east and north-east England.

Rainfall

Monthly rainfall totals were below normal over much of the United Kingdom. Less than half the average was recorded over most eastern areas of Britain from Orkney to the east of Kent, much of Cheshire and the northern half of the Midlands and at one or two places elsewhere. Rainfall was above normal, however, over many western parts and also in a few areas further east. More than 150 per cent of average fell in scattered areas of Scotland and Northern Ireland. The total of 136.7 mm (185 per cent of average) at Tiree (Strathclyde Region) was within 2 mm of the highest in February since records began there in 1927.

After a mainly dry start to the month all districts were unsettled with periods of rain or showers from the 5th to the 13th. The next ten days were again mainly dry although most areas, particularly the south and north-east, had some wintry precipitation around the 17th while the far west was wet on the 21st. Further rain reached the west on the 24th and all parts had rain or showers at times during the remainder of the month. Throughout the month rainfall was heavy at times in the west, particularly in the north-west. Large daily totals included 56.7 mm and 51.8 mm at Seathwaite Tarn (Cumbria) on the 8th and 9th, and 90.8 mm at Waen Sychlwch on Black Mountain (Dyfed) and 56.6 mm at Clatteringshaws (Dumfries and Galloway Region) on the 12th. But over central and eastern areas rainfall was often only slight.

Snow

Snow showers were reported at times over Northern Ireland and Scotland, mostly in the north-west, between the 6th and 14th. A few longer periods of sleet or snow occurred during the second half of the month, particularly on the 17th and 18th in most areas and on the 21st and 22nd in the west. Amounts of snow lying were mostly small and, except over the highest ground, short-lived. On the 11th 5 cm were reported at Knockanrock (Highland Region) while on the 18th 6 cm were measured at Okehampton (Devon).

Three climbers were killed and five seriously injured by avalanches on and near Ben Nevis (Highland Region) on the 15th.

Sunshine

There was less sunshine than usual in most areas. It was particularly dull in some southern and western parts of the Midlands and in part of Hampshire with less than 50 per cent of average being recorded. But over much of the far north of Scotland, in Jersey and isolated areas elsewhere sunshine was above normal, values ranging from 100 to nearly 120 per cent of average.

While it was mainly sunny in the west and north between the 13th and 16th and in eastern parts of England from the 21st to the 24th, in general sunshine was rather variable. The Midland Counties, in particular, had many mainly dull days, 14 being completely sunless at Emdon Airport, Birmingham.

Fog

Overnight fog patches formed from time to time. On most occasions the fog cleared during the morning, but on others it was widespread and persisted or was slow to clear, especially on the 15th in the north of England, on the 22nd and 23rd over Northern Ireland, also on the 23rd in central England and on the 24th in the south-east of England where many flights were delayed at London's Heathrow Airport. Hill fog occurred frequently over western areas except around mid-month. It also formed widely over central and eastern areas between the 17th and 19th and in central and southern parts from the 25th to the 28th. Patches of coastal fog were reported at times, mostly during the first week and last two days of the month when they were rather widespread in the south-west.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

Early on the 11th deposits of reddish-brown sand, almost certainly of Saharan origin and washed out by the rain, were reported at many places in southern England.

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						
0 Scotland N	12.5	−3.9	+1.5	+1.6	+1.5	+0.7	−2	106	89
1 Scotland E	12.5	−10.2	+1.9	+1.8	+1.8	+1.1	−3	92	96
2 England E & NE	14.6	−5.9	+1.5	+1.1	+1.3	+1.1	−5	46	89
3 East Anglia	14.2	−5.6	+0.9	+1.1	+1.0	+1.1	−3	47	87
4 Midland Counties	15.1	−5.3	+1.4	+1.4	+1.4	+1.1	−2	62	62
5 England SE & Central S	12.9	−5.4	+1.0	+1.5	+1.2	+1.1	−2	72	82
6 Scotland W	13.0	−7.7	+1.6	+1.9	+1.8	+0.9	+3	137	80
7 England NW & Wales N	14.7	−7.5	+1.4	+1.4	+1.3	+0.7	+1	94	89
8 England SW & Wales S	15.6	−4.6	+1.2	+1.5	+1.3	+1.4	+1	104	78
N Ireland	13.1	−4.0	+1.1	+1.3	+1.2	+0.8	+2	120	90
Scotland	13.0	−10.2	+1.7	+1.8	+1.7	+0.9	−1	112	88
England & Wales	15.6	−7.5	+1.2	+1.3	+1.3	+1.1	−2	71	81

*Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations