

February 2009

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1971-2000.

UK overview

A cold first half of the month followed by a mild second half resulted in mean temperatures for the whole month being close to the 1971-2000 normal over most of the UK. Temperatures over Northern Ireland and parts of north and east Scotland were slightly above average, by about 0.5 °C, whereas in parts of south-west England they were 0.5 °C below average. Rainfall was well below average in Northern Ireland, Wales, and western Scotland, all of which had the driest February since 1993. It was also much drier over much of western England. In contrast, rainfall was above average in East Anglia and parts of south-east England and eastern Scotland, largely due to the snowfalls early in the month. Sunshine was generally below normal across most of the UK, and it was the dullest February since 1998 over Scotland and Northern Ireland and the dullest since 1993 over England and Wales.

A maximum temperature of 16.2 °C was recorded at Faversham (Kent) on 27th. Aviemore (Highland) recorded a minimum temperature of -18.4 °C on 9th. Deancombe (Devon) recorded 52.8mm of rainfall on 9th. Balmoral (Aberdeenshire) recorded 42 cm of lying snow at 0900 UTC on 7th. A wind gust of 67 mph was recorded at Needles Old Battery (Isle of Wight) on 10th.

England diary of highlights

The first half of the month was very cold with some heavy snowfalls. Thereafter the weather became much milder and more settled. The mean temperature for the month was close to normal. Sunshine duration was below normal; it was the dullest February since 1993. Rainfall varied from well below normal over north-west England to above normal over parts of East Anglia and south-east England.

1st to 7th: It was very cold during the first part of the month with snowfalls in many areas. This was the most widespread snowfall as a whole since February 1991. Frequent snow showers affected many eastern areas on the 2nd, especially south-east England where 15 to 30 cm accumulated in parts of London and the Home Counties. In the evening the heaviest snowfall moved northwards into north-east England. On the 3rd there were further heavy snow showers across south-west England. Overnight there were some sharp frosts in places with -9.6 °C at Odiham (Hampshire) and -9.4 °C at Mickleham (Surrey). On the 4th, a band of rain moved up from the south during the evening, turning readily to snow as it moved towards the Midlands, with 16 cm of snow at Upper Lambourn (Berkshire) and 11 cm at Boscombe Down (Wiltshire). Overnight on the 5th/6th a slow-moving front spread initially rain, which turned to snow across south-west England, and many inland areas recorded 15 cm or more. On 6th, places across southern England were very cold as temperatures struggled above freezing, with 1.7 °C at Writtle (Essex). The 7th remained cold, but was mainly dry with sunny spells.

8th to 16th: A mixture of rain, sleet and snow spread eastwards on 8th and further rain moved in to southern and central areas during the 9th. Overnight and into the morning of 10th wet and windy weather moved eastwards across southern England, with snow over the higher parts of the west country. Gusts of 40-50 m.p.h. occurred and the combination of rain and thawing snow led to flooding in places. The 11th saw sunshine and wintry showers. On the 12th snow gradually spread southwards across north-east England at first, then East Anglia and south-east England, with accumulations of 5 to 10 cm locally over higher ground. Daytime temperatures were very cold or cold across eastern parts of England, with maximum temperatures of 1 to 3

°C. From the 13th the weather became more settled with no further widespread snow, but it remained cold with temperatures as low as -5.8 °C at Farnborough (Hampshire) overnight on the 13th. It wasn't until the 16th that daytime temperatures rose above 10 °C.

17th to 22nd: High pressure was established in the second half of the month bringing milder and generally dry conditions for all, although mainly weak fronts brought occasional light rain and drizzle to many parts at times. Generally mild, with a top temperature of 13.3 °C at Boscombe Down on the 22nd.

23rd to 28th: A mild period with temperatures generally above the monthly average. Little in the way of any significant rainfall. The 27th was exceptionally mild with temperatures around 15 °C in the London area; 15.4 °C was recorded at Kew Gardens (Greater London).

Wales diary of highlights

The first week was very cold with some snowfalls and it was also cold in the second week, with occasional overnight frosts and some rain or sleet at times. The second half of the month was milder and generally dry. The mean temperature for the month was close to normal. Sunshine duration was below normal and it was the dullest February since 1993. Rainfall was well below normal and it was also the driest February since 1993.

1st to 7th: The month started largely dry, but cold with overnight frosts, and temperatures struggled to rise above freezing during the day. On the 2nd, the maximum temperature at Sennybridge (Powys) was -1.9 °C as wintry showers spread across many areas. Further snow fell across many parts on the 3rd with 14 cm reported at Sennybridge. After a very cold night, conditions turned a little less cold on the 4th with rain, sleet or snow. Further snow fell on the 5th and 6th with temperature maxima of 1.8 °C at Sennybridge and 2.1 °C at Lake Vyrnwy (Powys) on the 6th. A few wintry showers on the 7th, but turning drier.

8th to 19th: Conditions generally turned milder on the 8th with rain preceded by sleet or snow over the hills at first. Outbreaks of rain spread from the south on the 9th, with sleet or snow over high ground, then bright spells and scattered showers developed on the 10th and 11th with overnight frosts. It then slowly became milder on the 12th as a band of rain or drizzle spread from the north-west, this band of cloud lingering across Wales from 13th to 15th with a little rain or drizzle at times. On the 16th it generally became brighter and dry with temperatures rising above 10 °C for the first time in many days. This milder air persisted from the 17th to 19th although with more cloud at times, and temperatures reached 12 °C in places on the 18th; 12.7 °C was recorded at Llandeilo (Carmarthenshire).

20th to 28th: Largely dry and mild on the 20th with broken cloud and bright or sunny spells. Again largely dry and bright on the 21st and 22nd with mild temperatures. For the remainder of the period conditions were generally settled with weak weather fronts bringing sometimes large amounts of cloud and occasional light rain or drizzle from the 26th to 28th, but also with occasional brighter spells.

Scotland diary of highlights

The first half of the month was cold, with frequent snow and severe frosts. The second half was much milder, with rain at times. The mean temperature for the month was slightly above normal. Sunshine duration was below normal and it was the dullest February since 1998. Rainfall was also below normal, particularly over western Scotland where it was the driest February since 1993.

1st to 13th: The 1st was dry for much of the day with some sunshine. Sleet and snow showers affected many areas on the 2nd. On the 3rd more persistent sleet and snow spread northwards, turning to rain at most levels and giving 20 mm in places. Southern areas became sunny later and remained clear or sunny on the 4th, whereas rain, sleet or snow affected the north. The 5th saw outbreaks of sleet and snow, with 21 cm reported at Aviemore (Highland).

It was cold on the 6th, with -10.4 °C recorded at Dalwhinnie (Highland), and further wintry showers, heavy and prolonged for a time across Moray and Aberdeenshire. Continuing cold on the 7th with further snow showers over the north and east. Cold on the 8th, with Dalwhinnie recording -15.3 °C, and snow spread across the south later. The 9th saw a scattering of wintry showers and an overnight minimum of -18.4 °C at Aviemore. There was a mix of sunshine and scattered wintry showers on the 10th and 11th.

Night frosts were severe with Altnaharra (Highland) recording -14.4 °C. More widespread snow spread south-eastwards on the 12th, with 20 cm recorded at Lerwick (Shetland). The west coast turned milder, with Tiree (Argyll and Bute) reaching 10.5 °C. The 13th was cloudy and mild with rain at times in the far west. Elsewhere it was mainly dry with sunny spells, but still cold with Kinbrace (Highland) recording a minimum of -14.5 °C.

14th to 28th: Rather cloudy with outbreaks of rain on the 14th and 15th with some brighter, clearer spells in the east. The 16th was mild and rather cloudy with persistent rain in the north and east during the morning, then a little rain in the north-west later. Drier elsewhere. Mainly dry and rather cloudy on 17th with a little drizzle. Very mild, with Aboyne (Aberdeenshire) reaching 13.9 °C.

The 18th was mostly cloudy and dry, but a few sunny intervals broke through. A weak band of rain moved south on the 19th followed by sunshine and isolated showers. Cloudier on the 20th with occasional rain. The 21st was cloudy, breezy and mild with some patchy rain in the west. Fairly bright on the 22nd before more general rain spread in from the north-west in the evening. Rather cloudy on the 23rd with outbreaks of rain, and a maximum temperature of 14.6 °C at Strathallan (Perth & Kinross).

Dry with some sunshine across the south and east on the 24th with some rain across the north and west. Brighter on the 25th with blustery showers and severe gales in the north, with a gust of 68 m.p.h. at Kirkwall (Orkney). Mainly cloudy on 26th with rain, heaviest in the north-west, but drier in the east and less windy. Rain spread eastwards on the 27th, though most areas brightened later, with Leuchars (Fife) reaching 13.6 °C. The month ended with fine weather in the east but rain spread into the west.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

The first 11 days were very cold, with frequent snow and frost. The rest of the month was mild with rain at times. The mean temperature for the month was slightly above normal. Sunshine duration was below normal and it was the dullest February since 1998. Rainfall was well below normal and it was the driest February since 1993.

1st to 11th: The 1st was dry, cold and sunny. Wintry showers affected the east on 2nd with more persistent sleet and snow in the evening. This turned to rain before clearing on the 3rd which was mostly sunny, although rain and snow reached southern areas in the evening. This cleared overnight leaving much of the 4th bright, but more rain, sleet or snow arrived later. Sleet and snow on the 5th brought 10 cm of lying snow in places, before gradually clearing to sunny spells and a few showers. A cold day on the 6th, with sunny spells and scattered wintry showers, most frequent in the north-west and a minimum temperature of -7.7 °C was recorded at Katesbridge (County Down). The cold theme continued on the 7th with more wintry showers in the north. Staying cold on the 8th with a band of snow crossing the province. On the 9th, early fog patches cleared to leave a mainly dry day, with a top temperature of 2 °C. The 10th and 11th brought a mix of sunny intervals and scattered showers. Daytime temperatures rose to nearer average but night frosts were sharp.

12th to 28th: The 12th started cold and drizzly then turned mild and sunny, Ballykelly (County Londonderry) reaching 11.5 °C. Rather cloudy from the 13th to 15th with patchy light rain. Mainly dry, mild and rather cloudy on 16th. Similar on 17th although there was more sunshine, lifting the temperature to 12.8 °C at Ballykelly. Less mild on the 18th, rather cloudy but dry with light winds. Rain early on the 19th cleared to sunny intervals. The 20th started frosty then clouded over, although most areas stayed dry. The 21st was cloudy and mild, with Ballykelly reaching 12.9 °C. Cloudy from the 22nd to 24th with a few light showers. Brighter, quite

windy but mild on 25th with a few showers. Cloudy and mild on the 26th and 27th with patchy light rain, though mostly dry. The month ended cloudy with rain turning heavier later.

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