

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

Summary of observations compiled from returns of official stations and voluntary observers

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December 1965 — *Very wet in England and Wales*

The weather was predominantly cyclonic in character and so it was a wet month. However, there was more than average sunshine almost everywhere, especially in east England.

The bright and cold weather at the end of November continued on the 1st, but widespread rain that night, with snow in the north, persisted in north Scotland on the 2nd, gradually giving place to thundery showers, as a complex depression moved south-eastwards across Scotland to the North Sea. Another complex area of low pressure gave considerable rain on the 4th and 5th, rainfall being heavy at times and exceeding 1 inch locally in the south-west as a deepening depression moved eastwards across southern England. A northerly airstream in the wake of the depression brought thundery showers to most districts on the 6th and 7th, the showers being of snow in parts of Scotland; however many south-coast resorts had more than 6 hours of sunshine.

Rain associated with a rapidly deepening depression approaching northern Scotland reached western districts early on the 8th and rain became widespread and weather stormy on the 9th as the depression moved across Scotland to the North Sea. Gales were widespread and severe at times, gusts exceeding 70 kt at places as far apart as the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. A northwesterly airstream behind the depression brought sunshine and showers on the 10th and 11th but the heavy rain and the rapid thaw of the snow cover in the milder weather of the previous few days led to widespread floods. Rain from the Atlantic on the 12th continued in eastern England well into the 13th as a small disturbance moved across southern districts, but wind fell light that night and fog formed in many areas persisting in places throughout the day on the 14th.

The mild wet weather continued into the third week, rain being widespread on the 15th as a trough, associated with a deep and complex depression near Iceland, moved slowly eastwards across the country. The 17th was a very mild and wet day. Rain reached western districts early in the morning and in 24 hours more than 4 inches was recorded at Llwynon and over 3 inches at Cwmystwyth. Day temperatures over much of southern England exceeded 13°C, and Kew had the mildest December night since records began there in 1871. A slow moving cold front which lay across the Midlands maintained generally wet weather over southern and central England for another 24 hours, but there were long sunny periods on the 19th as winds veered towards the north-west. Winds became northerly on the 20th as an anticyclone to the west of Ireland increased in intensity and moved south-eastwards, but by the 21st winds were already backing again to the south-west heralding another wet day on the 22nd with more than 1 inch of rain in many western districts.

A complex area of low pressure covering the British Isles gave dull wet weather on the 23rd-24th, but on Christmas Day, although rain persisted for a time in south-east England, northerly winds brought snow showers to parts of Scotland and there were long sunny periods in the west; at Glasgow it was the sunniest Christmas Day on record.

Fine sunny weather became general during the next few days but it was much colder, with day temperatures about 6°C below normal and with severe frost at night. Temperatures remained below freezing point at many places throughout the 28th. Winds freshened from the south on the 29th reaching gale force in many southern districts as rain, preceded in many places by snow, spread from the west — ground became snow-covered for a time in many central and northern districts. Temperatures

continued to rise as another disturbance from the Atlantic brought rain to most districts on the last day of the month.

Pressure and Wind — Mean pressure was everywhere below the 1921-50 average the deficit at 9h ranging from 13.5 mb at Leuchars to 8.9 mb at Scilly. Surface winds were mainly westerly during the first half of the month apart from north-westerly winds on the 6th-7th and 10th-11th and southerlies on the 14th-15th. During the second half of the month a period of very variable winds on the 19th-28th was preceded and followed by about three days of southwesterlies. Wind reached gale force in Scotland on 20 days and in England and Wales on the 2nd-6th, 8th-12th, 17th-19th, 22nd-24th, 27th-29th, 30th and 31st (20 days). Gales were widespread on the 9th when a gust of 77 kt was recorded at Bidston.

Temperature — Mean temperatures over the month as a whole were a little above average in southern England but below average in the north, especially in northern Scotland. Two very cold days near the end of the month served to keep mean maximum temperatures near the average over England and Wales; in Scotland weather was somewhat colder overall.

Extremes included: (England and Wales) 15.0°C at Faversham and Colwyn Bay on the 17th and at Southgate on the 18th, -12.2 at Chapel en le Frith on the 28th and Moor House on 29th; (Scotland) 13.4°C at Point of Ayre on the 17th, -16.1 at Braemar on the 2nd; (Northern Ireland) 13.4°C at Ballykelly on the 17th, -12.2 at Newry Abbey on the 28th and at Lisnafillan on the 29th.

Rainfall — In England and Wales rainfall was more than twice the average over the greater part of the Midlands and Wales, and also over parts of Devon, Norfolk and Sussex; it was more than three times the average locally in Staffordshire. In north-east England rainfall was below the average. In Scotland it was below the average over a wide belt extending north-westwards from the Firth of Tay to the Minch. In most other districts it was above the average.

At the beginning of the month snow lay 6-12 inches deep over much of northern England; over higher ground near Buxton and Malham Tarn it was 12-18 inches deep. In north-east England further falls on the 2nd locally increased the depth from 17 to 19 inches. Except in the extreme north of England and over higher ground most of the snow had gone by the end of the first week, but at Malham Tarn ground was snow-covered until the 15th. During the cold spell towards the end of the month occasional snow fell from the 25th until the 29th and lay 1-2 inches deep in some places in northern England, Wales and Devon on the 28th and 29th and up to 9 inches deep in Shetland.

Thunder was heard in Scotland on 11 days and in England and Wales on the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 9th, 25th, 30th and 31st (8 days). Thunderstorms were widespread in southern districts on the 2nd.

Sunshine — It was a sunny month in spite of the unusual amount of rainfall; it exceeded the average over the whole of Scotland except the extreme north and north-east. In England and Wales percentages ranged from 235 at Buxton to 68 at Aberystwyth.

Fog — Fog was observed a 9h at one place or another on 23 days in Scotland and on every day except the 1st and 3rd in England and Wales. There were patches of freezing fog in the South and Midlands on the 26th-28th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — The aurora was reported in Scotland on 7 nights.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES— DECEMBER, 1965 (1908, revised 1928, 1941, 1956 and 1964)

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE					EARTH TEMP.		RAIN DAYS	RAIN-FALL	SUNSHINE
	*Highest Max.	*Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 1 ft.	Mean 4 ft.			
	Difference from Average					% of Average				
6 SCOTLAND, N.	12.2	-8.0	-1.9	-2.3	-2.1	-	-	+3	129	99
1 SCOTLAND, E.	12.2	-7.2	-1.9	-1.5	-1.7	-	-	+4	104	99
2 ENGLAND, N.E.	13.0	-7.8	-1.0	-1.3	-1.2	-0.9	-0.7	+4	128	121
3 ENGLAND, E.	14.4	-6.7	0.0	-0.5	-0.2	-0.1	-0.7	+3	183	211
4 MIDLANDS	13.9	-7.3	+0.3	-0.3	0.0	-0.4	-0.8	+4	209	161
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	13.2	-8.7	+1.0	-0.1	+0.4	-0.3	-0.9	+4	161	127

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE					EARTH TEMP.		RAIN DAYS	RAIN-FALL	SUNSHINE
	*Highest Max.	*Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 1 ft.	Mean 4 ft.			
	Difference from Average					% of Average				
6 SCOTLAND, W.	12.5	-11.2	-0.9	-1.3	-1.1	-1.3	-0.7	+4	112	170
7 ENGLAND, N.W. and N. Wales	13.5	-9.4	-0.2	-0.5	-0.3	-0.5	-0.5	+4	192	120
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S. Wales	13.9	-7.8	+0.5	+0.2	+0.3	0.0	-0.4	+5	190	128
N. IRELAND	13.4	-9.6	-0.4	-1.4	-0.9	-	-	+4	127	123
SCOTLAND	12.5	-11.2	-1.6	-1.7	-1.6	-	-	+4	110	123
ENG. and WALES	14.4	-9.4	+0.1	-0.4	-0.2	-	-	+4	181	145

*Highest Max. and Lowest Min. of the District Value Stations.