

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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January 1969 — Dull and exceptionally mild

Although the British Isles were under the influence of an anti-cyclone to the south-west for the first three days, cyclonic conditions persisted for most of the month with depressions mainly to the west and south-west. The resulting winds, predominantly from a southerly point, were largely responsible for the dull and mild weather. However, low pressure to the north brought cooler and brighter weather to many parts towards the end of the month.

Weather — Apart from a few brief cold spells at first, weather was mainly unsettled for much of the month and heavy rain on some days caused local floods. Although flooding was not serious, the dull weather and the absence of a drying wind led to waterlogging of fields; as a result, many farmers were behind schedule with preparations for spring sowing.

Wind — The frequency of gale-force winds was somewhat below average, gales being reported on 14 days in the south and on 10 days in the north, but some notable gusts occurred. The third week of the month was stormy, particularly in south and west England. Gales were widespread on the 17th and a gust of 79 kt was recorded at Scilly. In the same gale the Lyme Regis inshore lifeboat capsized and a member of the crew was drowned. Blustery winds occurred in Scotland during the last few days and on the 30th, at Earls Hill, near Stirling, a gust of 90 kt was recorded.

Temperature — It was a very mild month with mean temperature everywhere well above average. In the Midlands, east and southern England it was about 2 deg C warmer than normal and elsewhere mean temperature was between 1 and 2 deg C above average. A number of places had their mildest January for many years. It was the mildest January for 48 years at Hampstead, for 21 years at Oxford and for 20 years, apart from 1957, at Ross-on-Wye. Aberdeen Airport had its mildest January since records began in 1946. The period 20th to 26th was exceptionally mild in most places. For a few days around the 22nd, mean daily temperature was about 7 deg C above average in some places in the south. On the 21st, the temperature reached 15°C at Torquay, Teignmouth and Starcross (Devon) and, on the 22nd, at Camden Square (London): this is the highest January temperature at Camden Square during this century and at Torquay since 1923. Other extremes included: 13.9°C at Prestatyn on the 20th and at Colwyn Bay on the 21st; 13.3°C at Crossmyloof (Lanark) on the 3rd and at Cumbernauld (Dumbarton) on the 24th; 13.0°C at Ballykelly on the 24th.

Despite the overall mildness of the month some very low temperatures were observed during the cold spells in the early part of the month. They included the following, all of which occurred on the 6th: -20°C at Grantown-on-Spey (Nairn); -11.7°C at Lislap Forest (Co. Tyrone); -10.6°C at Moor House (Westmorland); -7.8°C at Alwen (Denbigh). On the same day, the noon temperature at Wick was only -10°C.

Rainfall — It was a rather wet month in most places. Rainfall was well above average in Co. Down and east Scotland with over twice the normal rainfall in Kincardine. In Pembroke, parts of Hampshire and the east Midlands, rainfall was more than fifty per cent above average. On the other hand, many inland areas of western Scotland received barely half their normal amount.

On the 7th, rainfall was heavy in Northern Ireland and Scotland; 53 mm were recorded in 24 hours at Foffany Reservoir (Co. Down) and 52 mm at Bridge of Dye (Kincardine). Foffany Reservoir featured

again on the 10th when a fall of 59 mm was measured and Spelga Dam, in the same county, had over 57 mm. Rain was particularly heavy and widespread on the 20th in Wales, Western England and the Midlands; 60 mm (about a third of the monthly total) fell at Ambleside (Westmorland) and 50 mm were recorded at Moel Cynnedd and Trawsfynydd.

Thunder was heard on 12 days in the south but only on four days in the north. Thunderstorms, accompanied by hail, were widespread in the south on the 8th and 17th; hailstones measuring 12 mm in diameter fell at Abingdon (Berks) on the 17th.

Snow — The frequency of snow or sleet (rain or drizzle and snow) was well below average and, in general, the few snowfalls were confined to high ground.

Sunshine — It was a dull month nearly everywhere especially in north-western districts where, in places, sunshine amounts were only about fifty per cent of average. At Llandrindod Wells the amount recorded was 42 per cent of normal and at Stonyhurst (Lancs) was 44 per cent of normal. At Tiree, in the Hebrides, it was the dullest January for 19 years but in east Scotland it was brighter with near average sunshine. The second and third weeks were particularly dull everywhere. At Stonyhurst there was no sun on 21 days during the month and the total of 18.6 hours was the lowest monthly total there for any month since December 1956.

Fog — Fog persisted all day in the West Country on the 1st and in south-east England on the 4th when the visibility was 10 yards in parts of Essex. Widespread freezing fog occurred in Northern Ireland on the 6th and similar conditions affected the Midlands, east and north-east England on the 9th. Dense fog occurred again in Northern Ireland on the 15th and caused considerable traffic dislocation. Extensive hill and coast fog persisted from the 21st to the 25th in south and west England.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — The aurora was seen on eight nights in Scotland.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES, JANUARY, 1969

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE °C					EARTH TEMP. °C		RAIN DAYS	RAIN-FALL	SUNSHINE
	*Highest Max.	*Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 30 cm.	Mean 122 cm.			
	Difference from Average					% of Average				
0 SCOTLAND, N.	11.7	-10.8	+0.8	+1.3	+1.0	+0.6	+0.3	+2	112	63
1 SCOTLAND, E.	12.8	- 8.3	+1.2	+1.4	+1.4	+1.0	+0.1	+3	113	93
2 ENGLAND, N.E.	13.3	- 6.1	+1.4	+1.7	+1.6	+0.8	0.0	-3	123	72
3 ENGLAND, E.	12.8	- 2.8	+1.9	+2.4	+2.2	+1.1	+0.2	+1	100	62
4 MIDLANDS	13.3	- 5.2	+1.9	+2.3	+2.1	+1.0	+0.2	+3	108	80
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	13.3	- 5.9	+1.6	+2.3	+1.9	+0.7	+0.1	+1	117	61
6 SCOTLAND, W.	11.2	- 5.6	+0.9	+1.4	+1.2	+0.3	-0.4	+3	78	76
7 ENGLAND, N.W. and N. Wales	12.2	- 6.1	+1.2	+1.9	+1.5	[+0.7]	+0.2	+1	92	63
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S. Wales	15.0	- 6.1	+1.4	+2.1	+1.7	+0.9	0.0	+2	109	70
N. IRELAND	13.0	- 9.4	+0.6	+0.7	+0.7	-	-	+4	121	63
SCOTLAND	12.8	-10.8	+1.0	+1.0	+1.2	-	-	+3	96	77
ENG. and WALES	15.0	- 6.1	+1.4	+2.1	+1.8	-	-	+1	105	68

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