

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

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Mainly mild at first, very cold later; often windy.

After the first few days of the month, when depressions crossed central and northern districts (that on the 2nd was particularly intense), low-pressure centres were generally well to the north of Scotland. Frontal troughs continued to affect all areas at times, but pressure was often high to the south and a separate centre formed over south-western districts around mid month. By the 19th, the Azores anticyclone had receded and from the 24th to 26th the mainly westerly airflow became northerly. An anticyclone began to build over Scandinavia on the 28th and a south-easterly airstream from the continent soon covered the British Isles. A front associated with a depression in Biscay affected south-western England on the 30th.

Weather

Most districts had wet weather during the first week of the month, there was snow in the north, and severe gales swept across the United Kingdom on the 2nd. Rain, wintry showers and local gales continued to affect northern areas and spread to many districts from the 18th; thunder was reported in the north. It became very cold between the 24th and 26th with heavy falls of snow in the north and east. After a short break cold weather returned towards the end of the month and heavy snowfall occurred on Dartmoor.

Wind

The gale on the evening of the 2nd was one of the most severe to affect the British Isles this century. At least 23 deaths were caused, public services were widely disrupted, and the total national damage was estimated to be between £50 million and £100 million. Many stations reported gusts above 70 kt and a number of new records were established: the high level station at Lowther Hill (Strathclyde) recorded a gust of 116kt and at Wittering (Cambridgeshire) the wind gusted to 91 kt. Both the gust and hourly mean speeds over the south and east Midlands reached a level likely to be exceeded on average only once in 40 years. The gale was followed by a tidal surge along the east coast, but the sea defences were breached in relatively few places, mainly in Humberside and north Norfolk. During the month as a whole, fresh or strong winds occurred frequently on exposed western and northern coasts, reaching gale force locally; gales returned to many areas between the 19th and 22nd, but although these were severe in places, they did not match the severity of the gale on the 2nd. Wind directions during the month were generally between south-west and north-west, but there was a short northerly spell from the 24th, and from the 28th winds were mainly south-easterly.

Temperature

Although the end of the month was very cold, monthly mean temperatures were above average almost everywhere, ranging from 2 to 3 degC above normal in inland areas of England and southern Scotland and from 1 to 2 degC above normal in most other districts: only in Shetland and the extreme north-west of Scotland were mean temperatures below average.

Although many districts had mild weather during the first three weeks, a number of places in northern and eastern Scotland had their coldest night of the month on the 1st/2nd, when Braemar (Grampian Region) recorded -13.0°C. Temperatures exceeded 14°C, however, at several places in south-west England on the 2nd, and in Scotland the temperature rose to 15.1°C at Stonehaven (Grampian Region) on the 11th. Cold conditions spread to almost all districts by the 24th and the rest of the month was often very cold, the temperature falling to -10.6°C at Honington (Suffolk) on the night of the 27th/28th. Frost occurred most frequently in inland areas in the north.

Rainfall (including melted snow)

Monthly rainfall totals were above average almost everywhere in Northern Ireland and over most of Scotland, except in the south-east and in a fairly wide strip extending southwards from Aberdeen. Elsewhere in Scotland totals generally ranged from 100 to 150 per cent of average, but increased towards the north to around 250 per cent of normal in a band from the shores of the Moray Firth to Wester Ross. Parts of North Wales and much of northern England, except for the north-east, were also wetter than usual, with totals exceeding 150 per cent of average in a few places on the western side of the Pennines. In general, however, rainfall totals decreased southwards and were less than half the normal south of a line from South Wales to the Naze (Essex); a number of places in southern England had less than 20 per cent of their usual rainfall. The month started wet everywhere, Ysppyty-lfan (Gwynedd) recording 124 mm in the 24 hours from 1545 GMT on the 1st. Precipitation occurred on almost every day of the month in north and north-west Scotland, but southern districts of England and Wales were often dry between the 7th and 17th. Most areas had rain or wintry showers from the 18th to 26th, but the rest of the month, except in the south-west, was mainly dry.

Snow

Snow or sleet fell mainly in Scotland and over high ground in northern England and Wales during the first week, but occurred in many districts from about the 20th. Heavy falls of snow in Scotland and north-east England on the 24th soon spread southwards, particularly affecting eastern counties until the 26th. Heavy snowfall occurred on Dartmoor on the 30th. Undrifting depths of 20 to 25 cm were reported during the month in the Scottish mountains, and in eastern counties of England one or two places measured undrifting depths of at least 20 cm. Snow lay on high ground during snowy period and throughout the month on the slopes of the higher Scottish mountains.

Sunshine

Monthly sunshine totals were near or above average in south-east England, in much of central and eastern England and in south-west Scotland and the central lowlands. The London area, with about 180 per cent of average, had the most sunshine. Elsewhere, totals were generally between 50 and 100 per cent of the normal, but the Northern Isles, one or two places on western coasts, and the Channel Isles had only about half their January average. Long sunny periods occurred most frequently in southern and south-eastern England towards the end of the month.

Fog

Fog occasionally formed on coasts and hills, mainly in the north and west and sometimes in precipitation. Patches of overnight fog developed in inland areas on one or two occasions, but dispersed by mid morning; freezing fog patches in extreme eastern England early on the 28th also soon cleared.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

The aurora was observed in Scotland on 5 nights.

Table 1 District values

District	air temperature °C					mean 30-cm earth temp °C	rain-days	rainfall	sun-shine
	Highest Max.*	Lowest Min.*	max.	min.	mean				
	difference from average								
0 Scotland N	12.0	-6.0	+0.7	+0.7	+0.7	+1.3	+3	175	66
1 Scotland E	13.8	-13.0	+1.7	+2.1	+1.8	+1.9	+2	103	79
2 England E & NE	13.0	-5.6	+2.3	+2.0	+2.1	+2.0	-3	97	108
3 East Anglia	13.6	-6.6	+2.9	+1.6	+2.2	+2.3	-4	72	116
4 Midland Counties	13.4	-4.4	+2.4	+2.7	+2.6	+2.2	-4	71	113
5 England SE & Central S	14.0	-6.6	+1.9	+2.3	+2.1	+2.0	-7	24	118
6 Scotland W	12.7	-7.0	+1.8	+2.2	+2.0	+2.0	+4	133	95
7 England NW & Wales N	13.2	-4.8	+1.8	+2.8	+2.3	+2.3	0	116	85
8 England SW & Wales S	14.2	-5.8	+1.3	+2.3	+1.8	+1.9	-4	48	87
N Ireland	12.0	-3.7	+1.5	+2.1	+1.8	+2.2	+3	120	80
Scotland	13.8	-13.0	+1.4	+1.7	+1.5	+1.7	+3	137	80
England & Wales	14.2	-6.6	+2.1	+2.3	+2.2	+2.1	-4	71	105

*Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations.

Additional to Monthly Parts, each Annual Volume of the Weather Report includes an explanatory Introduction and a Summary for the Year.