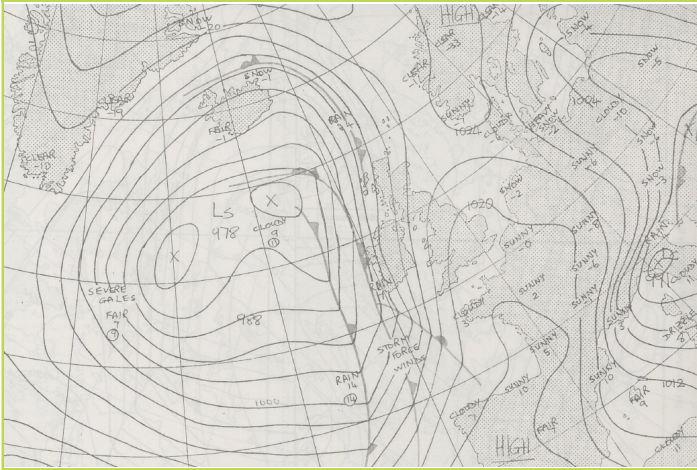


Weather chart for 1200 UTC on 19 December 1981



General summary

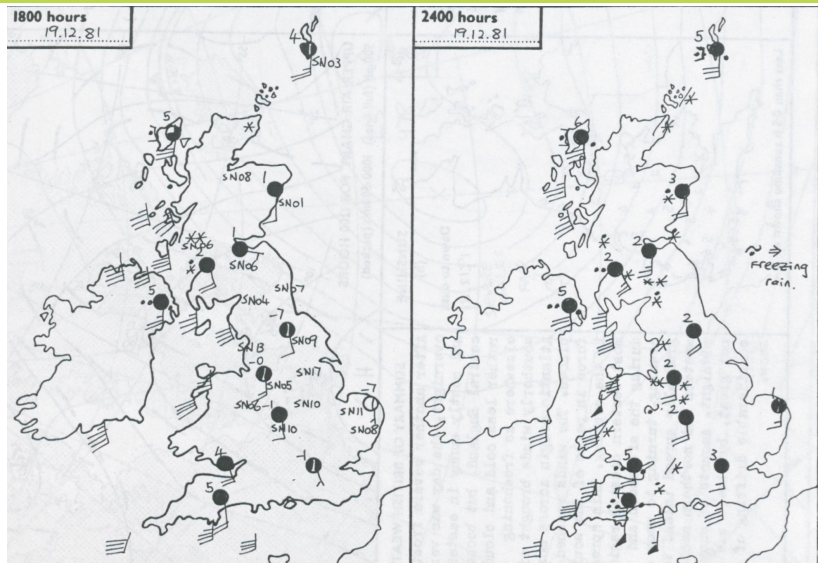
After another severe frost overnight, the day was very cold and mostly sunny in eastern and central England, but became rather less cold and cloudy elsewhere as freshening southerly winds brought air of Atlantic origin across most places. The winds reached storm force in parts of South West England during the evening.

Rain spread to most western coastal regions during the afternoon and evening, turning to snow as it gradually spread inland to other western and northern areas by midnight. Amounts of snow were not great, but there was considerable drifting of old snow.

Significant weather event

After a quiet start to the day, a moderate to fresh southerly wind developed across South West England. The wind continued to strengthen during the afternoon reaching storm force 11 by evening. During the evening the coaster Union Star got into difficulties in heavy seas off the south coast of Cornwall and the RNLI Penlee lifeboat, Soloman Browne, went to her rescue. Unfortunately both the Soloman Browne and the Union Star were lost in the storm along with both crews. In total 16 people died during this rescue attempt. At the height of the storm, winds gusted to hurricane force 12 and waves of 60 feet were reported.

Highest gust speeds:
Gwennap Head 72 knots (83 mph)
Scilly: St Mary's 70 knots (81 mph)



Plotted observation charts for 18:00 and 24:00 hours on 19 December 1981 showing gale to storm force southerly winds across parts of South West England.

Daily weather extremes

Highest Maximum Temperature
9.8 °C at Lizard and Culdrose (both Cornwall)

Lowest Minimum Temperature
-16.4 °C at Grantown-on-Spey (Highland)

Most Rainfall
82.2 mm at Swincombe and Venford Reservoir (both Devon)

Most Sunshine
6.5 hours at Wattisham (Suffolk)