

February 2018

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1981-2010.

The first half of February was rather unsettled and temperatures were somewhat below average. The weather did settle down a bit after mid-month, becoming predominantly dry and a little milder, but in the final few days it steadily became colder and snow was an issue in many areas at month-end.

The provisional UK mean temperature was 2.4 °C, which is 1.3 °C below the 1981-2010 long-term average. This was colder than February 2013 but not as cold as February 2010. Both maximum and minimum temperatures were between 1.0 and 1.5 °C below average in most areas. Rainfall was 73% of average, and a few places had less than half the average rainfall total for the month, with only a few areas near or above average. Sunshine was 137% of average, with few places failing to exceed their average, and it was provisionally the second sunniest February in the UK in a series from 1929, with only 2008 having been sunnier.

The UK monthly extremes were as follows: A maximum temperature of 14.2 °C was recorded at Cardiff Bute Park (S Glamorgan) on the 19th. A minimum temperature of -11.7 °C was recorded at South Farnborough (Hampshire) on the 28th. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 GMT on the 13th, 49.6 mm of rain fell at Loch Shiel, Polloch (Argyll). A wind gust of 69 knots (79 mph) was recorded at Capel Curig (Gwynedd) on the 10th. A snow depth of 21 cm was recorded at Copley (Durham) on the 28th.

Weather impacts

On the 4th and 5th south-eastern England experienced travel disruption, with delays and multiple accidents on the M20 and delays to rail services between Hastings and Eastbourne. In Northern Ireland, there were some accidents on the M2. The north-east of England and Scotland saw some road closures and accidents.

On the 8th and 9th, some schools in Pembrokeshire were closed due to icy conditions with difficult driving conditions reported. In Cornwall there were about 35 road traffic collisions, with bus services, outdoor attractions and schools affected by icy conditions. On the 10th, 11th and 12th there were travel delays and some school closures in Wales. In Scotland, there were accidents and delays on the M74; a hillwalker got stranded in a blizzard in the Glen Feshie area which resulted in a nine-hour rescue operation. There were further travel delays and disruption on roads across western and central parts of England with some cars abandoned in North Wales. As the disruption to travel continued, there were school closures across Northern Ireland, the Highlands and the Central Belt of Scotland. Some lorries got stuck on the A87, and there were also road closures and power outages. Later on the 12th, wind and rain in the south-west led to some roads being flooded, and snow on other roads caused problems. Parts of the M5 and other roads were closed due to flooding, landslips and fallen trees. Power outages and fallen trees also caused delays to rail travel. Numerous road accidents occurred due to heavy rain and flooding, with serious accidents at junctions 25 and 28 of the M5.

The month ended cold and wintry as 'The Beast from the East' set in. On the 27th, a large number of schools across eastern England, North Wales and Scotland took a pre-emptive decision not to open. There was widespread travel disruption; across eastern and south-east England some roads became impassable with severe delays on the M20 and elsewhere. There were large numbers of road traffic accidents, with driving conditions described as hazardous. In East Anglia more than 950 trains were cancelled, with numerous train operators suffering from delays and cancellations, and there were delays and cancellations to flights too. On the 28th, there was widespread severe travel disruption, with congestion and delays on the roads and railways. Air transport was severely disrupted, Glasgow airport closed and there were delays and cancellations to flights

across the UK. Over 1000 schools in England and Wales and many schools in Scotland were closed. There were unusually high numbers of road traffic collisions, some roads were closed, and many main routes were reduced to one lane. About 27,000 homes in Aberdeen lost power.

England diary of highlights

February started with a chilly northerly flow, and the rest of the first week was generally cold with some north and east winds. The middle fortnight of the month was often milder with westerly and south-westerly winds, and it turned changeable in the second week. A settled spell followed, then from the 26th a very cold easterly flow brought increasingly widespread snow and some notably low daytime temperatures for the end of February. It was a generally sunny month, especially in the west and south.

The mean temperature for February was provisionally 1.4 °C below the 1981-2010 long-term average. It was a dry month for most but rainfall was slightly above normal in the east of East Anglia, and England as a whole had 74% of average rainfall. Sunshine was above average except in some coastal parts of the north-east, with 134% of average overall.

1st to 7th

The 1st started mainly dry and sunny, but rain, with sleet/snow locally, moved southwards down eastern areas, reaching the south-east by dark, and there were isolated showers in central and south-western parts. It was sunny and mainly dry for most on the 2nd but cloudier with scattered showers in the south-west and east. The 3rd started with a widespread frost in the north, then it was generally cold and wet with snow on higher ground, but drier and milder in southern areas. The 4th was generally sunny after a frosty start, but wintry showers persisted in the east. The 5th started with a widespread frost and was generally cloudy, with wintry showers over the north and east, sunnier through the Midlands. Wintry showers persisted over East Anglia and the south-east on the 6th; rain, sleet and snow over the north and south-west moved south and became lighter and patchier during the day. The 7th began with a widespread frost, severe especially in the north, and there were wintry showers over the south-east and south-west; generally sunny elsewhere before clouding over from the north-west with rain, sleet and snow reaching the north-west by late afternoon.

8th to 13th

Following another widespread frost, the 8th was sunny in the south-east but cloudy with patchy rain and drizzle elsewhere; heavy rain spread east into the north-west by dusk, and this gave 26.1 mm at Hazelrigg (Lancashire). Rain in the north and south-west moved south-east on the 9th, with sleet and snow on high ground in the north, followed by mainly dry bright weather but with scattered showers in the south-west. The 10th started wet in the north and west and the rain moved south-east to remaining parts, clearing the country around dusk, staying cloudy, with patchy rain and drizzle, especially in the north-west and south-west. The 11th had sunshine and scattered showers of sleet and snow, with hail in the south, and the showers became widespread but the north-east remained dry. Sunshine, with wintry showers mainly over the north and west, on the 12th, dry in the south and east. The 13th was windy with rain for most, gusts to 71mph recorded at St Mary's (Isles of Scilly), with snow on higher ground, turning brighter but showery from the west in the afternoon.

14th to 20th

Rain in the west on the 14th spread eastward to all parts by mid-afternoon. The 15th had sunshine and scattered showers in the north, wintry on high ground, but showers were more isolated in the south. The 16th was mainly dry and sunny but with isolated showers in the north-east and the south-west. Rain and drizzle in the north died out as it moved south-eastwards on the 17th, dry and sunny in the south-east, with heavy rain and drizzle briefly affecting the far south-west by dusk. The 18th was mainly cloudy; rain and drizzle spread from the west during the afternoon, reaching far northern and western parts by dusk, but it stayed sunny and dry in the south-east. Cloudy and mild on the 19th, overnight minima no lower than 9.3 °C at St Mary's (Isles of

Scilly), and a maximum of 13.5 °C at Levens Hall (Cumbria); patchy drizzle affected the far south-west, and rain and drizzle moved eastwards, affecting mostly central and eastern areas, tending to die out by dusk. The 20th was wet for East Anglia and the south-east, but generally dry and sunny elsewhere.

21st to 28th

The 21st was cloudy with showers for central and eastern parts, generally dry and sunny elsewhere. The 22nd was dry with variable cloud. Cloudiest in the east with a few showers on the 23rd, generally bright or sunny elsewhere. Variable amounts of cloud again on the 24th, burning away by lunchtime, leaving almost unbroken sunshine for all except the far south-west. The 25th started with a widespread moderate frost, with persistent cloud around the north-east, and almost unbroken sunshine everywhere else, with 10 hours of sunshine recorded at Willington (Derbyshire), Tibenham (Norfolk), Yeovilton (Somerset), and Wellesbourne (Warwickshire). Wintry showers in eastern regions on the 26th gradually spread westwards during the day. The 27th was very cold with widespread snow showers, heaviest across eastern districts. Bitterly cold with sunshine and frequent snow showers on the 28th, the showers heavy at times and locally thundery in the north and east, and there was a minimum temperature of -11.7 °C at South Farnborough (Hampshire), and a maximum of only -4.8 °C at Spadeadam (Cumbria).

Wales diary of highlights

February began with a week of generally cold weather with winds often from the north or east, followed by changeable weather and mainly westerly winds during the middle fortnight of the month, but there was often plenty of sunshine in between the rain belts. There was a settled spell from the 20th to 25th, then at the end of the month easterly winds brought exceptionally cold weather with increasingly widespread snow.

The mean temperature was provisionally 1.2 °C below the long-term average. Rainfall was near normal in the north and west but below normal towards the south-east, with 72% of average overall. Sunshine was 132% of average and it was a particularly sunny month in the south.

1st to 7th

The 1st was a day of sunshine and scattered showers, the showers wintry over higher ground, sunniest in the south-east. Sunshine and scattered showers on the 2nd, the showers mostly in the south and west and dying out by dusk, sunniest in the far south and east. The 3rd was generally wet with showers or longer spells of rain, with sleet or snow over higher ground. The 4th had a sunny start but turned cloudier during the afternoon. Widespread frost on the 5th, then mainly cloudy but dry, sunny in the far south. Generally wet on the 6th with rain, sleet and snow, turning drier into the evening with some coastal showers. Very cold bright start to the 7th, with some coastal wintry showers, then it clouded over in the afternoon with rain, sleet and snow reaching the west by dusk.

8th to 13th

The 8th started frosty in rural areas, then it was cloudy with patchy rain and drizzle which turned more persistent and increasingly heavy in the afternoon, giving 46.6 mm at Capel Curig (Gwynedd). There were scattered showers on the 9th, wintry over high ground, mostly dying out by afternoon and becoming sunny. Cloudy and very windy on the 10th, with a gust to 79 mph at Capel Curig (Gwynedd); heavy rain at first soon cleared south-eastwards, followed by patchy rain and drizzle. The 11th had sunshine mixed with sleet and snow showers. Sunshine and showers on the 12th, the showers wintry over higher ground. A wet morning with snow on higher ground on the 13th, much drier and sunnier in the afternoon.

14th to 19th

Cloudy, wet and mild on the 14th. Sunshine and isolated showers on the 15th, the showers wintry over higher ground. The 16th was mostly sunny with isolated showers in the south and west, but rain and drizzle moved

into the far south-west by dusk. Patchy rain and drizzle at first on the 17th, becoming brighter, sunniest in the north-west, but there were scattered showers in the south during the afternoon. The 18th was mainly overcast; rain and drizzle moved in from the west during the afternoon, reaching most parts by dusk. It was cloudy and mild on the 19th, overnight temperatures not falling below 8.1 °C at Gogerddan (Dyfed) and there was a high of 14.2 °C at Cardiff Bute Park (South Glamorgan), with patchy drizzle around south-western coasts.

20th to 28th

Generally dry, bright or sunny on the 20th, and the 21st was dry but cloudy. The 22nd was another dry cloudy day, and a bit cooler. The 23rd was dry and mostly sunny. Almost unbroken sunshine for the 24th, albeit colder. The 25th started with a widespread frost, followed by a day of almost unbroken sunshine with 10.1 hours at Aberdaron and Valley (Gwynedd). Bright initially on the 26th but with wintry showers spreading west, becoming widespread by late afternoon. The 27th began with some fairly persistent snow in many areas, turning showery in the afternoon, and the showers became isolated into the evening, while Prestatyn (Clwyd) reported 4 cm of lying snow. Bitterly cold with sunshine and frequent wintry showers on the 28th, the showers occasionally heavy in places, with an overnight minimum of -8.9 °C at Bala (Gwynedd) and a maximum of only -4.8 °C at Lake Vyrnwy (Powys).

Scotland diary of highlights

February began with a rather cold northerly flow and it remained colder than average for most of the first week. Westerly winds prevailed in the second week and brought rain at times, and further snow for some, especially over high ground. It was milder in the third week, then after a settled spell, from the 26th a notably cold easterly flow brought increasingly widespread snow. Sunshine was plentiful for much of the month, especially in the west.

The mean temperature for February was provisionally 1.0 °C below the 1981-2010 average. It was a dry month except in parts of the Western Isles and some southern and eastern fringes, with 70% of average rainfall. Sunshine was above average except locally near the east coast, especially so in the north-west, with 144% of average overall; provisionally the second sunniest February in a series from 1929.

1st to 7th

There were frequent showers in the north on the 1st, wintry over higher ground, but central and southern parts stayed mainly dry and sunny. Sunny and mainly dry on the 2nd, but with isolated showers in the north and east, wintry over high ground, and cloud increased from the west later. There was persistent rain through central and eastern parts on the 3rd, and showers for the west which were wintry over higher ground. After a widespread frost, the 4th was mostly sunny but with isolated wintry showers. The 5th had another widespread frost, and it was sunny in the far north but cloudy elsewhere with isolated wintry showers; rain moved into the west by evening. Rain, sleet and snow affected the Borders on the 6th and cleared south, otherwise it was a day of sunshine and widespread wintry showers. The 7th had another widespread frost, severe in many places with -10.1 °C recorded at Tulloch Bridge (Inverness), sunny in the south and east initially before rain, sleet and snow over the west spread to all parts by dark.

8th to 15th

There was an early frost in some rural areas on the 8th, and the day was mainly cloudy with patchy rain and drizzle though with brightness in the far north and east, then there were showers ahead of heavy rain moving east into the north-west by mid-afternoon. Mainly dry and sunny on the 9th, after early rain and snow in the south moved away, but there were isolated wintry showers in the north and west. The 10th had a wet start in the south, otherwise it was dry and bright in the north and east with scattered showers in the west, then heavy rain moved into western parts by dusk. The 11th had sunshine and frequent sleet and snow showers in the west but it was mostly dry in the east. Generally sunny on the 12th, with wintry showers mainly across the

north and west, but more general rain moved into the west by late evening giving 49.6 mm of rain at Loch Shiel (Argyll). Wet for most on the 13th with snow even to low levels, with 14 cm of snow at Tulloch Bridge (Inverness); turning brighter from the west in the afternoon but with wintry showers. It was very windy on the 14th with rain, sleet and snow in the west spreading east to all parts by mid-afternoon, and South Uist (Western Isles) recorded a gust of 73 mph. Frequent wintry and blustery showers in the north and west on the 15th, mainly dry and sunny in the east and far south-west, again with 14 cm of snow at Tulloch Bridge.

16th to 20th

The 16th started sunny for most, especially the east, but there were scattered showers which merged into longer periods of heavy rain in the afternoon, especially in the north-west, drier elsewhere. Sunny and dry in the north-east on the 17th, elsewhere bright with scattered showers, especially in the north-west and the Central Belt. The 18th was mainly cloudy, with some early brightness in the north before rain and drizzle moved in from the west to reach most parts during the afternoon. Mild and mainly cloudy on the 19th, with an overnight minimum of 6.4 °C at Tiree (Argyll) and a maximum of 12.8 °C at Drumnadrochit (Inverness) and Grangemouth (Stirling), with patchy rain and drizzle in the east slowly clearing during the afternoon; more rain and drizzle moved into the west in the afternoon. Dry and mostly sunny on the 20th with showers for the north and west.

21st to 28th

Dry and sunny on the 21st after a widespread, moderate frost. Cloudy with showers over the west on the 22nd, dry and sunny in the east. Variable amounts of cloud on the 23rd, brightest in the east. There was less cloud on the 24th but it was colder. The 25th started with a widespread moderate frost, with persistent cloud through central parts and along the east coast, and almost unbroken sunshine everywhere else. It was cloudy and very cold on the 26th with wintry showers developing during the morning but staying confined to the south, sunnier in the north with 9.6 hours of sunshine recorded at Lerwick (Shetland). There was snow for most on the 27th which turned showery by afternoon. It was bitterly cold with sunshine and frequent snow showers on the 28th; some heavy and locally thundery showers especially affected the Central Belt, and the temperature at Braemar (Aberdeenshire) rose no higher than -4.9 °C.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

The first week was generally cold with frequent north and east winds, then the middle fortnight was changeable with mainly westerly winds and it turned milder in the third week, though in between the rain belts there was often plenty of sunshine. It was settled from the 21st to 25th, then a notably cold easterly flow brought increasingly widespread snow and low daytime temperatures on the last three days.

The mean temperature was provisionally 1.4 °C below the long-term average. Rainfall was 88% of average and sunshine was 137% of average, and much of the country was sunnier and slightly drier than average with the highest sunshine anomalies in the west.

1st to 7th

It was very windy on the 1st with sunshine and blustery showers, the showers wintry over higher ground, cloudier in the north and west, and Orlock Head (County Down) recorded a gust of 70 mph. Starting sunny and dry in the east on the 2nd, with scattered showers in the north and west, but clouding over with patchy rain by dusk. The 3rd was a day of sunshine and showers. The 4th was mostly sunny with just a few isolated showers, following a frosty start. The 5th started off cold and clear, but rain, sleet and snow moved in from the west by late afternoon. Sunshine and wintry showers on the 6th. The 7th started with a widespread frost, then turned wet everywhere by early afternoon, with snow at times even to low levels; becoming drier and milder by evening.

8th to 13th

Mainly cloudy on the 8th, with early patchy fog in the east, and there were showery outbreaks of rain, especially late afternoon. Frosty start for some on the 9th, sunny with scattered wintry showers in the north and west, dying out late afternoon, but persistent rain spread from the west during the evening, giving 30.4 mm of rain at Killowen (County Down). Mainly cloudy on the 10th, with patchy rain and drizzle; heavier rain moved in from the west during the afternoon. The 11th saw a mix of sunshine and frequent sleet and snow showers with isolated thunderstorms. Sunny with wintry showers on the 12th, resulting in 10 cm of lying snow at Ballypatrick (Antrim), then clouded increased ahead of overnight rain. Sunny with a few coastal wintry showers on the 13th.

14th to 20th

The morning of the 14th was wet with rain, sleet and snow for all parts, then sunshine and showers for the afternoon. Sunshine and scattered wintry showers on the 15th, showers more frequent in the north-west. The 16th started sunny, but patchy rain and drizzle moved in from the west during the afternoon. Mainly dry and sunny on the 17th, isolated light showers in the afternoon, particularly in the west. Overcast on the 18th, and rain and drizzle, heavy at times, moved in from the west, reaching all parts by midday. It was mainly mild and cloudy on the 19th, with an overnight minimum of 6.8 °C at Killowen and a maximum of 13.6 °C at Derrylin (Fermanagh), before patchy rain and drizzle reached the west before dusk. Sunny on the 20th with a few isolated showers in the afternoon.

21st to 28th

Dry and sunny on the 21st after a very frosty start, then the 22nd was cloudy with a few isolated showers. Brighter but colder on the 23rd. The 24th was a dry cloudy day. A widespread frost early on the 25th was followed by a sunny but cold day, and Aldergrove (County Antrim) recorded 9.6 hours of bright sunshine. Cloudy and cold on the 26th with wintry showers developing in the east from late afternoon. Severe frost in places on the 27th, with a minimum of -6.8 °C at Altnahinch (County Antrim), then frequent and widespread wintry showers developed from early afternoon. Bitterly cold with sunshine but frequent and occasionally heavy wintry showers on the 28th, and Killylane (County Down) reported a maximum of only only -2.1 °C.

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