

## January 2020

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

At the start of January, high pressure lay over southern parts of the UK, bringing settled weather but generally with plenty of cloud. This gradually moved away south-eastwards allowing frontal systems in from the west, and from the 7th to 17th the weather was mild, unsettled and also very windy at times. High pressure brought settled weather from the 18th to 25th, with plenty of sunshine initially but by the 22nd most places were overcast. Wet and windy weather returned from the 26th, and there was snow in some areas on the 27th and 28th, mainly on high ground, but very mild air returned on the last three days.

The provisional UK mean temperature was 5.6 °C, which is 2.0 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average, making it the 6th warmest January in a series from 1884. Mean maximum temperatures were generally around 2.0 °C above average and mean minimum temperatures were mostly 2.0 to 2.5 °C above average, but in Northern Ireland both mean maximum and minimum temperatures were only around 1.0 °C above average. Frosts were notably fewer than average. Rainfall was 100% of average, and it was a wet month in western Scotland but drier than average in eastern Scotland, north-east England and Northern Ireland. Sunshine was 94% of average, and it was a dull month in western Scotland and north-west England, but sunnier than average in north-east England.

The UK monthly extremes were as follows: A maximum temperature of 15.5 °C was recorded at Achfary (Sutherland) on the 7th. A minimum temperature of -7.9 °C was recorded at Braemar (Aberdeenshire) on the 10th. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 GMT on the 11th, 138.0 mm of rain fell at Skye Alltdearg House. A wind gust of 76 knots (87 mph) was recorded at South Uist (Western Isles) on the 13th. A snow depth of 15 cm was recorded at Tulloch Bridge (Inverness-shire) on the 28th.

### Weather impacts

Strong winds affected some northern areas of the UK on the 7th. In Scotland, the A1 between Haddington Junction and Thistly Cross was pre-emptively closed, despite which there was a report of an overturned vehicle at Thorntonloch. The Forth Road Bridge was closed to double-decker buses, motorcycles, cyclists and pedestrians, while the Tay Road Bridge was closed to double-decker buses with a speed restriction for other vehicles. Speed restrictions were imposed on East Coast Main Line trains, a number of tourist sites were closed in Edinburgh, and there were flight delays, ferry disruptions and road closures, with some power outages near Thurso. In Northern Ireland, the Foyle Bridge was closed to high-sided vehicles.

Wind and rain again affected northern parts on the 10th and 11th. In Gateshead, power lines were brought down, with some travel disruption arising on the Newcastle Metro. Several roads around Newcastle were closed due to fallen trees, with further disruption on flights from Newcastle airport and on the Shields Ferry service. In Scotland, the Tay Road Bridge was closed to all vehicles. Railway lines were flooded between Kingussie and Aviemore, between Larbert and Croy, and between Carlisle and Lockerbie, with flooding also on the B829 and in the village of Glenfarg, and weather-related collisions on the M8 and M9.

On the 13th and 14th wind and rain affected western areas. In Scotland, numerous fallen trees blocked roads and rail lines; all schools in the Western Isles and some in Highland Region were closed. Rail services were suspended at Saltcoats due to overtopping waves crashing onto the tracks, and a fallen tree caused a power outage which affected some rail services between

Glasgow and Edinburgh as well as services between Milngavie and Cumbernauld; numerous roads were closed too. In Northern Ireland, sailings between Larne and Cairnryan and also the Rathlin Island Ferry were cancelled, while the Foyle Bridge was closed to high-sided vehicles. A number of fallen trees blocked roads, with some reports of surface-water flooding and coastal flooding, and the A2 in Warrenpoint and Carrickfergus flooded due to overtopping waves and suspected damage to the sea wall. Trains were delayed due to fallen trees, and NI Power reported that 3500 customers lost power. In Wales, numerous fallen trees, debris and flooding caused some road closures, and around 1000 homes lost power for a short time.

On the 14th snow caused problems on the A9 in Scotland, and locations in the Western Isles were flooded. There was widespread travel disruption across the east and south-east of England due to fallen trees, debris and some flooding. The Orwell Bridge was closed, and major delays arose on the M25, A12 and M11. There were some power outages, a landslip between Horsham and Dorking, and trees on train lines caused delays and cancellations. Some flights to Gatwick were diverted to alternative airports, and fire services rescued a number of drivers that had driven into floodwater. In Wales, the roof of a primary school at Maerdy in the Rhondda Valley blew off in the strong winds.

After a quieter spell, the last week of January saw a series of snow and ice warnings for Scotland. A number of roads were closed while gritters cleared them, and HGVs struggled for traction on the M8, A98 and other roads. Drivers were stranded on the M74 for several hours overnight. On the 29th some A-roads in Scotland saw flooding, and the A83 at Rest and Be Thankful was closed for a number of days after a landslip. Snow and hail in Wales on 28th may have contributed to some road collisions. On the evening of the 30th in Whickham near Newcastle a couple of large trees were brought down in strong winds.

## England diary of highlights

**January was mostly mild and unsettled with westerly and south-westerly winds. There was some quieter weather early in the month and more especially between the 18th and 25th, when high pressure brought fine weather initially, but in most areas it turned cloudy. Wet and windy weather returned from the 26th.**

The mean temperature for January was provisionally 2.1 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average, making it the equal fifth warmest January in a series from 1884. Rainfall was 86% of average and sunshine was 104% of average. Sunshine was below normal in the north-west, but it was drier and sunnier than average in the north-east, while in the south rainfall and sunshine were mostly near normal.

### 1st to 5th

High pressure was often close to the south, but it turned increasingly unsettled. The 1st was a sunny day in the north with some frost in places, but it was cloudier in the south with some morning fog patches, and the south-west had some light rain. A band of rain spread south-eastwards across the country on the 2nd and 3rd, with brighter weather and just isolated showers following behind to most areas on the 3rd. High pressure gave mostly dry and benign weather on the 4th and the 5th, albeit generally cloudy with some patchy light rain and drizzle.

### 6th to 17th

A belt of locally heavy and thundery rain spread from the west on the 6th. Over the next few days further bands of rain moved across the country at frequent intervals with a mild westerly or south-westerly flow. The 7th was a windy day, with fog over the south-west, and rain over the Midlands and north eventually spread into East Anglia and the south-east. A mild night followed with Bude (Cornwall) falling no lower than 10.3 °C, and the 8th was cloudy again with rain spreading from the

south-west late in the day. Sleet and snow fell over higher ground early on the 9th with 4 cm at Spadeadam (Cumbria). Further wet and windy weather crossed the south and the south Midlands and East Anglia on the 9th. A ridge of high pressure brought most places a dry sunny day on the 10th, but further rain moved into the north and west on the 11th giving 67.6 mm at Honister Pass (Cumbria). The rain cleared eastern parts on the 12th leaving a breezy day with isolated showers, but further wet and windy weather spread from the west on the 13th and persisted in most areas on the 14th. It was very mild and windy, with a high of 14.7 °C at Westonzoyland (Somerset) on the 14th and a gust to 82 mph at the Needles (Isle of Wight). The rain slowly cleared East Anglia and the south-east on the 15th leaving sunshine and showers, then further persistent rain spread from the west on the 16th and turned heavy in the north. Another belt of rain crossed the country on the 17th and the south had frequent showers, some thundery.

### **18th to 25th**

High pressure dominated, initially bringing mostly sunny weather, and with clear skies and light winds, frost and fog patches became widespread by night. Fog was slow to clear in some places, resulting in a maximum temperature of only 1.2 °C at Yeovilton (Somerset) on the 21st, but meanwhile there were 8.4 hours of sunshine at East Malling (Kent) on the 21st. It turned cloudier in the north between the 19th and 21st and this cloudy weather spread to most parts on the 22nd, but there were breaks in the cloud sheet in north-east England, and Thornes Park (West Yorkshire) reached a high of 14.7 °C. Most places were dull on the 23rd and 24th, with fog patches in places, but again parts of north-east England and Lincolnshire had some sunshine. All parts were cloudy on the 25th, with patchy light rain and drizzle although many places stayed dry.

### **26th to 31st**

A belt of rain spread from the west on the 26th, as unsettled weather returned. The 27th and 28th were colder with sunshine and showers, and some longer outbreaks of rain in the south on the 27th. On the 28th, the showers were wintry on high ground and locally to low levels, especially in the north. Showers were fewer on the 29th but more general rain, with sleet and snow on high ground for a time, spread from the west later, mainly across northern counties. It turned very mild on the 30th and 31st, with plenty of cloud and rain or drizzle, and gales in exposed places on the 30th. Many areas, particularly the far north-east, brightened up later on the 31st.

## **Wales diary of highlights**

**January was a generally mild and unsettled month with westerly and south-westerly winds, but the weather was quieter at the beginning of the month and between the 18th and 25th.**

The mean temperature for the month was provisionally 1.7 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average. Rainfall was 91% of average and sunshine was 93% of average. Sunshine was generally below normal in the west and near normal in the east.

### **1st to 5th**

High pressure was close to the south-east at times, but occasional frontal systems moved in from the west. The 1st was generally dry and cloudy, but brighter in the far north and with some light rain in the south. A belt of rain spread from the west on the 2nd, followed by a brighter day on the 3rd with scattered showers. A ridge of high pressure brought generally dry cloudy weather on the 4th and 5th, with a little drizzle.

### **6th to 17th**

During this period the weather was very unsettled and generally mild. Rain, heavy in places, spread eastwards across the country on the 6th. The 7th was cloudy, windy and very mild with an overnight minimum of 9.2 °C at Dale Fort (Dyfed) and a maximum of 15.2 °C at Hawarden

(Clwyd). The 8th and 9th were generally cloudy, with some rain spreading into western and southern parts. A ridge of high pressure brought a mostly dry sunny day on the 10th, but the 11th was cloudier with light rain at times as a frontal system spread from the north-west, giving 62.4 mm at Capel Curig (Gwynedd). The 12th was brighter with a few showers, then another area of wet and windy weather moved in from the west on the 13th, with gusts to 79 mph at Capel Curig (Gwynedd) and Mumbles (West Glamorgan). Wet weather persisted on the 14th, followed by sunshine and scattered showers on the 15th. Another area of rain spread from the west on the 16th, clearing on the 17th followed by sunshine and showers.

### **18th to 25th**

High pressure dominated during this period, and to begin with it was dry and sunny with widespread overnight frosts. St Harmon (Powys) fell to a minimum of -6.3 °C early on the 19th, Llysdinam (Powys) only reached 3.0 °C on the 20th, and Hawarden (Clwyd) recorded 7.1 hours of sunshine on the 20th. It remained sunny in the south on the 21st but was much cloudier further north. From the 22nd to 25th anticyclonic gloom set in with some drizzle and fog patches in places, although northern parts turned brighter on the afternoon of the 23rd.

### **26th to 31st**

Rain crossed the country on the 26th, heavy in some places. It turned colder on the 27th and 28th with sunshine and wintry showers and longer spells of rain, sleet and snow. Lying snow was mostly confined to high ground, with 1 cm of lying snow at Lake Vyrnwy (Powys) on the 28th. The 29th was milder, with some rain in the north, mainly becoming confined to coastal locations, and some sunshine elsewhere. The 30th was generally cloudy with some light drizzle, and on the 31st it remained very mild as a band of more persistent rain and drizzle crossed the country.

## **Scotland diary of highlights**

**January was a mild and unsettled month with mainly westerly and south-westerly winds bringing rain at frequent intervals, and just brief cold snaps, chiefly on the 9th/10th and 27th/28th. There was a settled spell from the 18th to 25th, but it was mostly cloudy except in the north-east.**

The mean temperature for January was provisionally 2.1 °C above the long-term average, making it the 5th warmest January in a series from 1884. It was a wet month in the north-west, but a dry month in the north-east, while sunshine was below normal in central and western areas, but above normal near the east coast. Overall, Scotland had 119% of average rainfall and 72% of average sunshine.

### **1st to 7th**

High pressure brought a generally dry cloudy day on the 1st, then on the 2nd an area of rain spread east to all parts except the far north, and another band of rain moved into the west towards dusk. The rain cleared by the 3rd, leaving a day of sunshine and scattered showers, the showers wintry on high ground and in the far north. High pressure built to the south on the 4th and 5th, but a westerly flow brought cloudy weather with light rain and drizzle. The night of the 5th/6th was very mild with Poolewe (Ross & Cromarty) falling no lower than 9.2°C, and a broad belt of rain, some heavy, crossed the country on the 6th. The 7th was very wet and windy with gusts exceeding 60mph, but despite the cloud and rain it was very mild with a high of 15.5 °C at Achfary (Sutherland).

### **8th to 17th**

The weather remained unsettled with areas of rain moving through at frequent intervals. There was a mix of sunshine and showers on the 8th, most of the showers in the west and north, and a

belt of more persistent rain affected southern and central counties early on the 9th, clearing away eastwards. It also turned cold on the 9th with a high of only -0.2 °C at Balmoral (Aberdeenshire), followed by a frosty night with a minimum of -7.9 °C at Braemar (Aberdeenshire) early on the 10th. Mild wet weather returned from the west on the 10th, with considerable orographic enhancement giving 138 mm at Skye Alltdearg House. The rain persisted for much of the 11th but cleared slowly south-east followed by brighter weather with showers, and the showers turned wintry in the north. The 12th was brighter but with showers in the north and west, these occasionally thundery and/or wintry. Storm Brendan brought a very wet and windy spell of weather on the 13th, with gusts to 87 mph at South Uist (Western Isles). The 14th had sunshine and wintry showers for most, but southern areas had a spell of persistent rain, and the 15th had sunshine and showers, the showers mainly in the north and west, heavy and thundery at times with hail. Further rain spread from the south-west on the 16th, followed by sunshine and showers on the 17th, though many eastern parts stayed dry.

### **18th to 25th**

High pressure brought a spell of settled weather, but it was often overcast away from sheltered north-eastern parts. The 18th was sunny for most but there were still some wintry showers in the north and west. Frost was quite widespread in central and southern parts early on the 19th, followed by some sunshine, but it was cloudier further north with some rain for the Northern Isles. The 20th and 21st were sunny in the north-east, with 6.5 hours of sunshine at Durriss (Aberdeenshire) on the 20th, but cloudy elsewhere with drizzle in the far north-west. Similar conditions persisted from the 22nd to 25th also, with some sunshine in the north-east and grey drizzly weather elsewhere.

### **26th to 31st**

The weather turned unsettled from the west. Rain crossed the country on the 26th followed by sunshine and blustery showers, then the 27th and 28th had sunshine and wintry showers with some longer outbreaks of precipitation, giving 15 cm of lying snow at Tulloch Bridge (Inverness-shire) on the 28th, although eastern parts stayed mainly dry and sunny. More general rain spread from the west on the 29th, with sleet and snow for a time in some places, but introducing milder air. The 30th and 31st were mostly cloudy with rain at times, and gales for some exposed areas on the 30th, but the 31st was drier and brighter in the far east.

## **Northern Ireland diary of highlights**

**It was a generally mild and unsettled month with westerly and south-westerly winds, but rain often fell in small amounts and as a result the month was drier than average. The weather was more settled near the beginning of the month and between the 18th and 25th, but generally cloudy.**

The mean temperature for January was provisionally 1.1 °C above the long-term average. Rainfall was 59% of average and sunshine was 90% of average.

### **1st to 6th**

Pressure was often high to the south-east, but a moist south-westerly flow kept the weather mostly cloudy with rain at times. After a dry cloudy day on the 1st, rain crossed the country on the 2nd followed by sunshine and showers, and the 3rd was a day of sunshine and scattered showers. The 4th and 5th were mild and cloudy with some patchy light rain and drizzle, and overnight 5th/6th the temperature fell no lower than 8.5 °C at Magilligan (County Londonderry). Rain spread from the west on the 6th, followed by sunshine and scattered showers.

### **7th to 17th**

The weather was often wet and windy during this period, with westerly or south-westerly winds. The 7th was cloudy, very windy and mild, with some rain; gusts exceeded 60mph in places, with a high of 15.3 °C at Murlough (County Down). The 8th was brighter and less windy with scattered showers. On the 9th, after early rain in the north and east, most areas became dry and bright, especially the south-west. This dry bright weather persisted into the 10th before rain slowly spread from the west, giving 25.6 mm at Derrylin (County Fermanagh), which was slow to clear south-eastwards on the 11th. The 12th was brighter with scattered showers, then more wet and windy weather crossed the country on the 13th with gusts reaching 65 mph at Orlock Head (County Down). The 14th and 16th both started with broad areas of rain, clearing to leave sunshine and showers, while the 15th and 17th had sunshine and showers all day, most of the showers in northern counties.

### **18th to 25th**

High pressure moved in from the south-west, and the 18th was a mostly sunny day with much fewer showers. This was followed by a cold night in some places with a minimum of -6.2 °C at Katesbridge (County Down), and then a dry day with variable amounts of cloud, sunniest towards the north and west. There was some sunshine in most places on the 20th, again following a frosty start in some places, but it clouded over in the afternoon. It was generally overcast from the 21st to 25th inclusive, with some fog patches and drizzle, though many places, particularly in the east, brightened up late on the 22nd.

### **26th to 31st**

The weather turned much more unsettled from the west. Rain spread eastwards early on the 26th, followed by brighter weather and scattered showers. It turned colder for a couple of days, and the 27th and 28th both had sunshine and wintry showers, the showers merging at times into longer spells of rain, sleet and snow. The temperature only reached 2.3 °C at Altnahinch (County Antrim) on the 27th, and there was 4 cm of lying snow at Lough Navar Forest (County Fermanagh) on the 28th. A belt of rain crossed the country on the 29th, introducing milder weather. It was very windy for a time on the 30th with gales in some exposed parts, but the sun broke through in far western parts. Rain cleared eastwards on the 31st, followed by brighter weather with some showers.