



Weather Front

January 2019/1919

January 2019.

Observers Notes.

Derby: Mild start, cold end, balanced out at close to normal temperatures! January 2019 was the fifth driest January on the local record since 1901. Late January (21st-31st) was the coldest since 1996.

Bablake: This has been the driest January since 2006 (19.2 mm).

Middleton: The driest January since 2006 and the fifth driest on the station record (1977).

Mickleover: The third driest January on the station record (1981). The maximum rainfall in 24 hours (5.1 mm) was the lowest on the station record (1981).

Mountsorrel: The first half of the month was mainly dry, cloudy but mild. The second half was colder with frequent NW winds. There were some snow showers, but no snow was lying at 0900.

Pitsford: Anticyclonic during the first half with some colder and milder spells; becoming more unsettled later.

Ely: Often mild in the first half but generally cold and frosty second half with snow at end of the month. Driest January since 2006.

January 1919.

Observers Notes.

Derby/Burton on Trent: The maximum temperature was around 11 C on the 14th. The overall mean temperature was between 1 and 2 C with 17 air frosts. It seems probable that the precipitation was wintry on several occasions.ⁱ

Copdock, Ipswich: Very dull and wet, yielding the largest number of rain days, and the least number of days with sunshine, since 1901.

Kenninghall, Norfolk: Very changeable weather, with no frosts of any account till the last few days.

Oundle, Northants: Very cold sunless month.

Warlingham, Surrey: The total rainfall has been exceeded on only two occasions during the past 26 years.ⁱⁱ

Dull and Wet.

While January 1919 was a dull and wet month with wintry conditions at the beginning and end of the month, there was a mild period between.

District Values for temperature were below average everywhere, ranging from [-0.4 C] in the east and south-east of England and along the English Channel, to [-0.8 C] in eastern Scotland and [-0.9 C] in southern Ireland. Absolute maxima exceeded [10 C] at a great many stations but, at Bawtry, Westminster and Guernsey it reached or exceeded [13 C]. At the end of the month however maxima at Rothamstead and Hitchin dropped to [-2 C] and at Hemel Hempstead to [-3 C].

At a few stations the minimum temperature never rose above [1 C] but it rose above [5 C] in the majority of places and on the 15th it did not fall below [9 C] at Cheltenham and Clifton and [10 C] at Bournemouth, Teignmouth and Guernsey. Apart from the Channel Isles minima everywhere fell to, or below, freezing, reaching [-7 C] at Garforth and Porton, and [-8 C] at Leyland, Stonehenge and Eskdalemuir by the end of the month.

Ground frosts were numerous, with grass temperatures reaching [-10 C] at Bennington, Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead, [-11 C] at Garforth and Bradford and [-14 C] at Bucklebury Place in Berkshire.

Except for northern Scotland, where rainfall was 65% of average, rainfall in the remainder of the country was above average, but amounts varied considerably. In western Scotland it was only 107% of average, but in the Channel Isles 203% was recorded. Over England as a whole the greatest falls were in south west England (155%) and south east England (202%).

Monthly totals at many stations were more than double the average for January, with 230% at Portsmouth, 231% at Portland Bill and 252% at Bournemouth.

The heavy rainfall was not due to any exceptional daily falls. Only a few stations recorded more than 25 mm per day, the largest being at Sheepstor in Devon (41 mm) on the 14th. Here the observer noted "a deluge of rain for more than 24 hours". On the 20th the observer at Belper reported "it never ceased raining", at York "steady rain" and at Lincoln "rain through day and night".

Thunderstorms occurred at many places throughout the month. At Sheepstor, on the 25th, the observer reported, “after a very wild night with incessant rain” from 8 hr to 20 hr there was “one terrific crash of thunder instantly after very blue lightning”.

Hail was reported on most days during the first three weeks and every day in the last. Most of the falls being confined to the south of the country from Kent to Cornwall and the Channel Isles.

Snow was recorded throughout the Midlands and the northern counties of England during the first few days of the month and was lying for some time. Depths varied from 3 inches at Belper to 14 inches at Buxton on the 3rd, and on the 4th from 2.5 inches at York to 7 inches at Huddersfield. There was considerable damage to telephone and telegraph wires. At Meltham, “most of the telegraph wires were broken down by the wet snow”, while at Bakewell the town was completely cut off from the telephone and telegraph systems. During the last few days snow fell over the greater part of the country, with depths ranging from 2 inches at Birmingham and Tunbridge Wells to 9.5 inches at Rothamsted and 11 inches at Hemel Hempstead.

The wet character of the month resulted in serious flooding. At Southport, the “flooding was more extensive than at any time since 1882”, while “the Nene Valley from Northampton to Peterborough was one huge lake”. Flooding was also reported along the Shannon valley at Athlone.ⁱⁱⁱ

January 1919 was a cold, dull and wet month.

Central England Data: (Average is for period 1881 to 1910).

Mean Maximum Temperature: 5.2 C, Average: 6.0 C.

Mean Minimum Temperature: 0.6 C, Average: 1.1 C.

Mean Temperature: 2.9 C, Average: 3.5 C.

England and Wales Rainfall: 122.4 mm, Average: 73.4 mm.

Midlands Mean Maximum Temperature: 4.6 C.

Midlands Mean Minimum Temperature: -0.4 C.

Midlands Mean Temperature: 2.1 C.

Midlands Rainfall: 101.5 mm.

ⁱ D J Stanier, by email, 2 February 2019.

ⁱⁱ Monthly Weather Report, January 1919, HMSO, 1919, p. 13.

ⁱⁱⁱ Monthly Weather Report, January 1919, HMSO, 1919, p. 13.