



Weather Front.

January 2023/1923

January 2023

Observers Notes.

Bablake: The mean temperature for the first fifteen days was 7.8 C, for the following ten days it was just 1.0 C! 96% of the monthly total rainfall fell in the first two weeks however, the total sunshine for the month was the highest since 2001; there were only two Januarys with higher totals of sunshine since 1895, 93.9 hours in 2001 and 93.8 hours in 2000.

Middleton: A marked contrast between the first and second halves of the month. If the mean temperature for the first half had continued to the end of the month January 2023 would have been the mildest on record. Similarly, the first half of the month was the wettest on record but, the second half was the third driest on record. With just 6.6 hours of sunshine in the first half of the month, if this had continued, January 2023 would have been the dullerest month of any month on record. However, with 50.9 hours during the second half, if replicated in the first half of the month, January 2023 would have been the sunniest January on record.

Mountsorrel: January had a very mild and wet first half. Almost all the month's rain fell in the first fifteen days. The second half was dry and much colder, but not as cold as that of the preceding December. The most notable weather event was the "thunder snow" episode on the 16th when 2 cm of snow fell at lunchtime in an intense snow shower accompanied by thunder and lightning. The onset of the cold spell at this time resulted in the moderate amount of snow lying around in patches for nearly a week.

Coton-in-the-Elms: A very mild and unsettled first half, followed by a cold period with sharp frosts; overall, it was slightly milder than average. Rainfall was a little below the thirty-year mean, with a wet first half and a dry second half.

Mickleover: Snowfall on the 18th and 19th gave only a thin covering.

Derby: The wintry precipitation was of minimal consequence. The sleet/wet snow on the 16th gave a 90% dusting at 0900. On the 18th there were snow showers in the morning and,

on the 19th, up to 1 cm was recorded for only a short time before thawing. A very mild early January, about 3 C above average, and the third mildest early January on record since 1952.

Ely: Mild for the first fortnight followed by a very cold ten days but, overall, close to average and similar to 2022. Only 2.1 mm of rain after the 14th, also the lowest minimum temperatures in January since 2013.

Desford: Mild and dry with one short wintry spell that gave a dusting of snow.

Pitsford: Unsettled during the first half with frequent rain showers and feeling mild. A cold snap then followed through the third week before turning slightly milder again as the month came to a close. Some prolonged spells of sunshine through the second half. ⁱ

Weather Impacts

Unsettled first half of month; particularly heavy rain 10th-15th causing flooding • Impacts from heavy snow showers around 16th-20th, then a quieter spell The unsettled weather of the first two weeks, especially the 10th to the 13th, saw numerous warnings issued, and numerous impacts resulting. Prolonged heavy rain early on the 12th caused widespread impacts to travel across South Wales, especially in the Valleys, with road closures and flooded rail lines, and power outages in the Newport area, possibly linked to strong winds. Reports of localised property flooding were received from Rhondda Cynon Taff borough. The river Severn in the south-west Midlands overtopped in several places on the 12th, with parts of Tewkesbury impacted by floodwater, and more than 40 properties were impacted by flood water adjacent to the River Exe. Further widespread rain on the 13th caused flooding across the Somerset Levels, whilst road and rail travel were impacted in Shropshire and Herefordshire, as well as across south-west and central southern England. The night of the 15th/16th brought a spell of heavy rain across southernmost counties, resulting in numerous road closures and rail disruption from flooding, notably across Hampshire and in particular Sussex with the A21, A28 and A29 all affected. In Hastings up to 24 homes were evacuated and 130 properties lost power due to flood water. Further north, an influx of much colder air arrived, with accumulating snow affecting Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Grampian and Highland regions of Scotland bore the brunt of the snow between the 16th and the 20th, but even further south into England and Wales snow showers developed at times giving localised accumulations. Impacts to road travel in particular were reported across much of the UK. On the morning of the 17th heavy snow showers and rapid accumulations across Cornwall resulted in blocked roads, most notably the A30 near Newquay and the A39 near Truro. On Shetland schools were reportedly closed on successive days as snow hampered access across the mainland. Hazardous road conditions and school closures were also reported from North Wales on the 17th as heavy snow showers drifted in off the Irish Sea. Treacherous road conditions in County Londonderry on that same day resulted in school closures and disrupted council services. Much of the Highland and Grampian regions of Scotland, with frequent heavy snow showers, suffered from airport runway closures, disrupted rail services, road closures and school closures. Manchester Airport was closed for around two hours on the morning of the 19th as heavy snow showers necessitated urgent runway clearance. Meanwhile in South Wales, as many as 48 higher-lying schools were closed in Rhondda Cynon Taff borough. As the cold spell began to wane, Grampian NHS reported a four-fold increase in the number of icerelated casualties in A&E departments in the seven days up to the 20th compared to the week

before. The remainder of the month was relatively benign with high pressure dominating, especially across southern areas of the UK where several fog warnings were issued. Despite the drier weather, several sections of A-roads in southern England remained closed due to excess water from earlier in the month running off fields, with one report of high-volume pumps being employed to resolve the problem.ⁱⁱ

January 1923

Observers Notes.

Alfriston (Sussex): On the 20th the first snow fell since October 29th, a period of 82 days.

Ardingly (Sussex): A very mild month.

Hodsock Priory (Nottingham): A very mild month with no wintry weather; vegetation unusually forward.

Ipswich: A mild dry bright month.

Isleworth: A spring-like month, fine and mild, with only three days of bad weather.

Skegness: The month has been remarkable for the absence of any easterly wind; the sunniest January since 1910, and generally mild.

Southport: By far the most persistently westerly January during the 52 years of observations and one of the mildest and most equable of the months of that name.

Totland Bay (Isle of Wight): On the 13th the screen temperature fell below 30.5 F [-0.8 C] for the first time this winter. On the 31st cowslips were in full bloom.

Cargen (Kirkcudbright): Pasture extraordinarily verdant. Buds of trees prematurely active; garden and farm work well advanced.

Dublin City: Some cold spells of brief duration occurred during the first fortnight, otherwise the month was distinctly mild ranking in this respect next to January 1916, and January 1921. Snow and sleet fell on only one day.

The MWR also notes that, "At Willoughton [Lincolnshire] near the end of the month pansies and primroses were in bloom and roses were budding."ⁱⁱⁱ

Derby/Burton-on-Trent: Quite a dry month, with most stations a little either side of 30 mm rainfall totals. Temperatures varied between a minimum of around -2 C on the 23rd, and a maximum of around 13 C on the 21st. Despite the modest extreme minimum, in Burton-on-Trent there were thirteen air frosts. The overall mean temperature was around 4.6 C, [slightly lower than both the Central England Mean and that of the Midlands, but still higher than the average for both areas].^{iv}

Summary January 1923

January 1923 was a mild, sunny, month in the south of the country but there were frequent gales in the north. Depressions from the Atlantic, during the first few days, produced unsettled weather and, at times, heavy rain. There were, however, considerable brighter intervals. Coastal gales were reported on the 2nd, and on the 9th and 10th, when a deep depression passed to the north of Scotland. In the wake of this depression the northerly airstream produced showers of hail, sleet, and snow over Scotland. While the temperature was generally above average there were some cold days. On the 17th a small anticyclone, with its' centre over the London area, allowed frost and fog to influence many parts of London, the maximum temperature at Kew reaching only 29 F [-2 C]. However, along neighbouring coasts temperatures were 10 to 15 F [2 to 3 C] higher with 6 to 7 hours of bright sunshine being noted.

The mean temperature for the country, as a whole, was 43 F [6 C] with each part of the country being above average. The greatest departure from average was eastern Scotland, +4.5 F [+2.2 C], the mean being 42 F [5.5 C]. In the Channel Islands the departure from average was only +1.8 F [+0.9 C] with the mean being 46 F [7.8 C]. The abnormal mildness of the winter in Scotland was continued into January and had only been experienced twice during the preceding 60 years, in 1898 and 1916; only once, in 1897-8, had the period November to January had a higher mean temperature.

There were several areas in England and Wales with rainfall over 100% of average. The two main ones being, an area of northern Lancashire and the Lake District, and parts of [The old counties] of Cardigan, Merioneth and Montgomery. There were three small areas of less than 50% of average, the largest being parts of Northumberland, [the old county] of Cumberland, and Durham. Apart from the above, average precipitation ran through Ireland and Scotland, the north-west of both countries being wet and the south-east being dry. In the north-west there were areas exceeding 150%. In Scotland one area included Ross and Cromarty and parts of Inverness and Sutherland. At Glenquoich, in western Inverness, a total of 615 mm was recorded, and represented 176% of average; this amount, in January, was only exceeded, in the previous forty years, in 1916 and 1921. In Ireland the "wet areas" extended from Donegal Bay into Tyrone and Fermanagh. In south-east Scotland rainfall was well below average, some places recording the sixth successive month with below average rain.

There was an unusual absence of snow throughout the month, although a few light falls occurred in northern Scotland. Thunderstorms occurred locally, mainly between the 9th and 11th. Hail also occurred on occasions, but not in large quantities.

Fog was reported locally, but was neither extensive nor serious, except in parts of London on the 17th. This was patchy with many sudden changes from thick fog to bright sunshine in

a short distance. Some places had fog all day, such as at South Kensington and Hounslow, while places such as Hamstead had no fog at all.

Generally, therefore, January 1923 was a mild month.^v

The Rest of The World

There were reports of floods and heavy rain or snow in various parts of Europe. On the 1st, floods were noted in the Seine valley and in the lower valley of the Loire and Sevres. It was also reported that Nantes had been flooded. On the 3rd the Rhine had reached an unusually high-level while, on the 12th, the Seine was again high. Heavy snow was reported to be falling in Central France from the 22nd to the 24th. In Switzerland the snowfall, during the month, was heavy enough to contribute to avalanches, which caused lives to be lost.

In Ceylon unusually heavy rainfall was experienced resulting, on the 14th, in flooding in the vicinity of the ruined city of Anuradhapura. The flooding was made worse by the collapse of an old reservoir, which led to serious railway accidents.

A “cloud burst” at Devil’s Kantur [South Africa?] led to a railway bridge being washed away. At Pietersburg [South Africa?] 114 mm of rain fell in two hours.^{vi}

January 1923.

Central England Data.^{vii} (Averaging period is 1891 to 1920.)

Mean Maximum Temperature: 8.4 C. Average: 6.3 C.

Mean Minimum Temperature: 2.8 C. Average: 1.3 C.

Mean Temperature: 5.6 C. Average: 3.7 C.

England and Wales Rainfall: 63.5 mm. Average: 77.1 mm. 82%.

Midlands Data. (Averaging period is 1911 to 1920).

Midlands Mean Maximum Temperature: 8.0 C. Average: 5.9 C.

Midlands Mean Minimum Temperature: 2.0 C. Average: 0.7 C.

Midlands Mean Temperature: 5.0 C. Average: 3.3 C.

Midlands Rainfall: 49.9 mm. Average: 72.2 mm. 69%.

January 2023 (Provisional)^{viii}

Central England (Averaging period is 1991-2020).

Mean Maximum Temperature: 8.4 C. Average: 7.4 C.

Mean Minimum Temperature: 1.9 C. Average: 2.0 C.

Mean Temperature: 5.2 C. Average: 4.7 C.

England and Wales Rainfall: 97.9 mm. Average: 94.2 mm.

ⁱ Headline, Monthly Weather Summary, January 2023, Pitsford Weather Centre, February 2023, p. 3.

ⁱⁱ Monthly Weather Summary, January 2023, Meteorological Office, February 2023.

ⁱⁱⁱ Monthly Weather Report, January 1923, Meteorological Office, HMSO, April 1923, p. 3.

^{iv} D J Stanier, by email, 2 February 2023.

^v Monthly Weather Report, January 1923, Meteorological Office, HMSO, April 1923, p.3.

^{vi} Meteorological Magazine, February 1923, p. 21.

^{vii} Hadley Centre, Central England and Midlands, Meteorological Office.

^{viii} Monthly Weather Summary, January 2023, Meteorological Office, February 2023.