

February 2019

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

February started off cold, with snow showers for many northern and eastern areas and some more general areas of snow in southern England. In contrast, the rest of the month was very mild. It was rather mild and changeable from the 4th to 12th with westerly winds, then a southerly incursion from north Africa brought very mild and sunny weather to most parts from the 13th to 15th, although it stayed cloudy with some rain in the north-west. After another changeable spell from the 16th to 20th, the southerly type returned from the 21st to 27th bringing record-breaking temperatures and plenty of dry sunny weather by day, but frost and fog became increasingly widespread by night. The fine spell broke down from the west on the 28th.

The provisional UK mean temperature was 6.0 °C, which is 2.4 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average. Mean maximum temperatures were between 2.5 and 4.0 °C above average, while mean minimum temperatures were mostly between 0.5 and 2.0 °C above. The mean maximum temperature for the UK was the highest for February in a series from 1910, while the mean temperature was the second highest in the series (behind 1998, due to 1998 having had a much higher average minimum). With 82% of average rainfall and 144% of average sunshine, the UK as a whole had a rather dry and particularly sunny month, but many western and southern areas had near-average rainfall while the north-east was generally drier than average. It was the UK's second sunniest February in a series from 1929, just behind 2008, and the sunniest in the series for England, but in contrast sunshine was below normal in north-west Scotland.

The UK monthly extremes were as follows: A maximum temperature of 21.2 °C was recorded at Kew Gardens (Greater London) on the 26th. A minimum temperature of -15.4 °C was recorded at Braemar (Aberdeenshire) on the 1st. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 GMT on the 8th, 50.8 mm of rain fell at Capel Curig (Gwynedd). A wind gust of 73 knots (84 mph) was recorded at Capel Curig on the 8th. A snow depth of 33 cm was measured at Tomnavoulin (Morayshire) on the 2nd.

Weather impacts

February began cold with widespread disruption due to snow. On the 1st, major roads including the A9 in Scotland, A1 in north-east England and roads in Wales were affected by snow and ice with traffic accidents and delays to car travel and public bus services reported. Part of the M3 was closed, and flights at Heathrow, Bristol, Gatwick and London City airports were delayed or cancelled. There was no London Overground service between Willesden Junction and Watford with reports of a problem to power supplies, and there were widespread school closures. There were reports of temporary power loss to properties in parts of mid Wales. There were reports from Luton of cancellations to bin services and to elderly transport to day care centres with alternative arrangements to check on the elderly put into place. Parts of Scotland were affected with travel disruption and school closures on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th also.

Wet and windy weather set in on the 6th, peaking on the 8th/9th with the arrival of Storm Erik. In Scotland, a fisherman was reportedly rescued from the water in the Moray Firth after his boat capsized. Scot Rail reported significant rail delays and cancellations due to lines being blocked by trees and damage to power lines. Restrictions were placed on the Tay and Forth Road Bridge with ferry services also disrupted. There were reports of flooding on Orkney with some tourist

attractions closing due to the strong winds. In Northern Ireland, the Rathlin Island ferry was cancelled and the Foyle Bridge had restrictions to high sided vehicles. There were reports of flooding in Derry/Londonderry and Belfast with fallen trees and debris causing travel disruption. In Wales, there were reports of power outages, and some surface water flooding on roads and the rail line between Mountain Ash and Aberdare. Speed restrictions were placed on the Britannia Bridge, the old Severn Bridge and a raised section of the M4 due to the strong winds. In Carmarthenshire there were reports of a fatality following a collision between a vehicle and a fallen tree. Across the east of England there were reports of fallen trees blocking roads, power outages to a few hundred homes and the temporary closure of the Queen Elizabeth 2 Bridge. There were reports of snow causing some travel disruption across high level routes of the Peak District and some roads across the Pennines.

The second half of February was far more benign, but fog caused some disruption. There were some reports of road traffic accidents and diversions and delays to flights to and from affected airports. The Strangford Lough ferry was suspended due to fog on the 27th. On the 26th, there was a gorse fire at Arthur's Seat in Scotland, a fire in Ashdown Forest, Sussex and a large wildfire broke out on Saddleworth Moor, Peak District. During this period there were reports of a number of grass fires around Wales that got out of control after controlled burning.

England diary of highlights

February began cold with some persistent snow in the south and snow showers in the north-east, but from the 5th onwards it was generally mild. It was unsettled until the 10th and to a lesser extent between the 16th and 20th, but very mild and sunny weather developed widely between the 13th and 15th and again between the 21st and 27th, with record-breaking daytime temperatures in the latter spell. Overnight minima were less remarkable during these periods, and overnight frost and fog developed quite widely at times.

The mean temperature for February was provisionally 2.3 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average. The mean maximum temperature was the highest for February in a series from 1910, but due to some cooler nights, the mean temperature was only the 5th highest. Rainfall was 81% of average and sunshine was 163% of average, making it provisionally the sunniest February in a series from 1929, just ahead of February 2008.

1st to 3rd

In contrast to the rest of the month, temperatures were well below the seasonal norm on the first three days. On the 1st an area of sleet and snow moved slowly eastwards across southern England, where there was 19 cm lying at Odiham (Hampshire) by evening and the temperature only reached -0.5 °C at Okehampton (Devon). Sleet, snow and hail showers, accompanied locally by thunder, affected the north-east with 16 cm of snow reported at Copley (County Durham). It was mainly cold and sunny on the 2nd and 3rd, but sleet and snow showers persisted in eastern coastal areas on the 2nd, and rain and hill snow spread south-eastwards into most northern areas on the 3rd, reaching the north Midlands by dusk. Night frosts were widespread with a minimum of -11.7 °C at Chillingham Barns (Northumberland) early on the 3rd.

4th to 10th

The weather turned unsettled and mild with mainly westerly winds. Rain and sleet cleared south-eastwards on the 4th followed by much brighter weather, which led to another frost early on the 5th except in the south-east. Cloudier weather soon returned, and another belt of rain moved

eastwards overnight 5th/6th, followed by a mainly dry bright day for most on the 6th, but fog and mist affected some eastern areas on both days. Another belt of rain moved north-eastwards overnight 6th/7th followed by a day of sunshine and showers in most places on the 7th. Storm Erik brought very windy weather on the 8th and 9th, with a gust of 82 mph at Needles (Isle of Wight) on the 8th. Rain slowly cleared south-eastwards on the 8th followed by sunshine and showers, with fewer showers on the 9th, before persistent rain moved into the south-west by dusk. Rain slowly cleared eastwards on the 10th followed by sunshine and scattered showers, but the far north remained bright all day.

11th to 15th

The weather continued mild and it was generally more settled, especially in the east, with mostly southerly winds. Most places had a dry sunny day on the 11th, with slight overnight frost in some places overnight 10th/11th and 11th/12th. A mild south-westerly flow took over on the 12th bringing mostly cloudy weather with some light rain for the north-west, but some sunshine broke through in parts of southern England. On the 13th the sun shone more widely in central and southern areas. Clear sunny weather then gradually extended into northern parts too, reaching all counties by the 15th. Temperatures continued well above normal by day, but the 14th and 15th dawned frosty and foggy in many central and southern areas and in some places the fog did not clear until noon.

16th to 20th

It temporarily turned more unsettled as high pressure moved further away to the east. The 16th was quite sunny in the north but cloudier in central and southern areas, with some early fog again, then the 17th was mostly mild and sunny but cloud increased from the west with a band of rain spreading across the south-west. The rain slowly moved eastwards through central and eastern areas on the 18th, with sunshine and showers for the north and west. Showers in the north-west faded on the 19th leaving a generally sunny day, but it turned cloudier from the west, and rain reached many western areas, especially the north-west, on the 20th, but with sunshine in the south-east.

21st to 28th

High pressure and southerly winds brought mainly dry sunny weather and record-breaking temperatures. The 21st started off cloudy and mild with a minimum of 10.4 °C at Bude (Cornwall), but sunshine increasingly broke through in most areas. Most places were sunny on the 22nd and 23rd, with a high of 17.8 °C at Kew Gardens (Greater London) on the 23rd, although low cloud lingered near the south coast on the 22nd and some high cloud spread into northern and western parts on the 23rd, and some fog patches formed overnight. The 24th, 25th and 26th were generally very mild and sunny by day but with some overnight frost and fog in low-lying areas, and fog was slow to clear in the Vale of York on the 25th. There was a high of 20.4 °C at Northolt (Greater London) on the 25th, and this was exceeded again on the 26th with 21.2 °C at Kew Gardens. The 27th was generally a little less warm, but it was again dry and sunny for most with 10.6 hours of sunshine at East Malling (Kent). The settled spell ended on the 28th with rain and drizzle in the north-west and scattered showers and sunny intervals in central and southern areas, the north-east remaining dry but cloudy.

Wales diary of highlights

This was a very mild month overall, but the first two days were cold with snow in some areas. It was mostly unsettled and mild from the 4th to 20th but with a sunny interlude on

the 14th and 15th. The mild sunny weather resumed from the 21st to 27th with record-breaking temperatures, followed by a breakdown from the west on the 28th.

The mean temperature for February was provisionally 2.4 °C above the long-term average. It was the third warmest February in a series from 1910 for mean temperature, and the warmest for maximum temperature. It was generally a rather dry month with 84% of average rainfall overall. With 150% of average sunshine, it was the second sunniest February (after 2008) in a series from 1929.

1st to 3rd

The month started off cold: the 1st had 9 cm of lying snow at Velindre (Powys) and a high of only 0.3 °C at Tredegar (Gwent) and Libanus (Powys), as snow cleared away from the south-east in the morning. There were scattered wintry showers on the 2nd but most areas were dry and sunny with widespread frost inland. The temperature fell to -9.3 °C at St. Harmon (Powys) early on the 3rd, which was a cloudier milder day with some rain in the north and south-west of the country during the afternoon.

4th to 12th

A spell of generally mild and unsettled weather followed with westerly winds. Cloudy skies cleared southwards on the 4th leaving most places sunny, but the 5th was cloudier with some rain. The rain cleared by the 6th, which was a mostly cloudy and dry day with isolated showers, and breezy along south and west-facing coasts. A belt of rain cleared the north on the 7th, giving 50.8 mm of rain at Capel Curig (Gwynedd), followed by brighter weather with scattered showers. Storm Erik brought very windy weather on the 8th and 9th, and Capel Curig reported gusts of 84 mph on the 8th. Rain spread from the west on the morning of the 8th, followed by sunshine and showers, and the bright showery regime continued on the 9th and 10th. There was a little rain in the north-east early on the 11th but it generally brightened up. The 12th started frosty towards the south-east but was generally cloudy and mild with some light rain, this mainly in the west.

13th to 20th

The 13th was another mostly cloudy day but some sunshine broke through especially in the south, as drier clearer air moved up from the south. Most places were sunny and very mild on the 14th and 15th, and Colwyn Bay (Clwyd) reached 18.2 °C on the 15th, though there was some frost and patchy fog by night. It turned cloudier on the 16th, and a belt of rain moved eastwards across the country on the 17th followed by brighter weather. After that it became more unsettled, with rain followed by sunshine and showers on the 18th, and a cloudy showery day on the 19th with more general rain spreading from the west from late afternoon. The 20th was a mild cloudy day with some rain at times, this mainly in the west.

21st to 28th

The very mild and sunny southerly type returned for much of this period and brought record-breaking temperatures. The 21st started off cloudy but some sunshine came through in most places, and following a foggy start in south-eastern areas, the 22nd was a dry sunny day and very mild with a high of 18.1 °C at Gogerddan (Dyfed). The 23rd was cloudy with some light rain in the west, brighter in the east, after an overnight minimum of 11.4 °C at Gogerddan, and Colwyn Bay again reached 18.2 °C. Sunny and exceptionally mild weather followed from the 24th to 27th, although it was cooler near windward coasts, with some frost and patchy fog overnight. Gogerddan set a new February temperature record for Wales with 19.1 °C on the 24th, but this was exceeded on the 25th with 20.6 °C at Trawsgoed (Powys) and again on the 26th with

20.8 °C at Porthmadog (Gwynedd). Valley (Gwynedd) also recorded 10.1 hours of sunshine on the 26th. After another mild sunny day on the 27th, the fine weather broke down on the 28th which was a mostly cloudy showery day with more general rain at times in the far north.

Scotland diary of highlights

February started off cold with snow showers affecting many areas and sharp night frosts, but otherwise it was a very mild month. It was generally unsettled and cloudy until the 20th, but the last week saw plenty of dry sunny weather and record-breaking temperatures especially for central, southern and eastern areas.

The mean temperature for February was provisionally 2.5 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average. Both the mean temperature and the mean maximum temperature were the second highest in a series from 1910. Rainfall was 82% of average overall, mostly near normal in the west and below normal in the east. Sunshine was 110% of average, and it was a very sunny month in the south but duller than average in the north-west.

1st to 5th

In contrast to the rest of the month, the first three days were cold. The 1st dawned with a widespread frost and a minimum of -15.4 °C at Braemar (Aberdeenshire); wintry showers and longer spells of snow in the north spread into central areas, but it stayed sunny in the south. Showers became more confined to north- and east-facing coasts on the 2nd, when Tomnavoulin (Morayshire) reported 33 cm of snow and the temperature only reached -1.2 °C at Cromdale (Morayshire). Temperatures again fell to around -10 °C in places early on the 3rd, but a band of rain and hill snow moved eastwards during the day, followed by sunshine and showers for the north and west, bringing a change to unsettled weather and near-average temperatures. The 4th had some rain, sleet and snow in the north but it was drier and brighter elsewhere. A cold dry start to the 5th was followed by rain spreading eastwards across the country.

6th to 12th

The weather turned somewhat milder, while remaining unsettled. The 6th and 7th were mostly showery days with some sunny intervals, then Storm Erik brought gales on the 8th and 9th, with 49.4 mm at Achnagart (Ross & Cromarty) on the 8th. The persistent frontal rain took until the 9th to clear the north-west, and it was followed by sunshine and blustery showers, and Dundrennan (Kirkcudbrightshire) recorded gusts of 74 mph on the 9th. The 10th was another showery day but with generally fewer showers except in the far north and west, and some of the showers were wintry especially on high ground. A ridge of high pressure brought a frosty start and a mainly dry bright day on the 11th but cloud increased from the north-west during the afternoon, and a mild cloudy south-westerly set in on the 12th which saw persistent rain in western areas but with some sunshine breaking through at times in the north-east.

13th to 20th

Unsettled and mild weather continued but there was a quieter spell from the 13th to 15th in central and eastern areas. The 13th and 14th had rain at times across the west and the far north but there were some sunny breaks across the north-east on the 13th. The north-west stayed cloudy on the 15th with a little rain but most central and eastern parts were sunny and mild, after slight overnight frost in the south-east. Mild south-westerly winds continued on the 16th with some light rain, but also some brightness for the north-east. Rain spread erratically eastwards on the 17th, and the 18th had showers and longer spells of rain in central and western areas but it stayed

mainly dry in the east. There was rain at times on the 19th and 20th, mainly in central and western areas, though with some sunshine in the east and especially north-east.

21st to 28th

Southerly winds brought record-breaking temperatures and plenty of dry sunny weather to central, southern and eastern areas. The 21st was drizzly in the west but brighter further east, where the temperature reached 18.3 °C at Aboyne (Aberdeenshire) - a new February record for Scotland. The 22nd and 23rd saw some sunshine in eastern areas but it was generally cloudy in the west with some rain at times, and the temperature fell no lower than 13.9 °C at Achnagart (Ross & Cromarty) on the night of the 22nd/23rd - a new February minimum temperature record for Scotland. Some eastern parts had mist and fog patches early on the 23rd and again early on the 24th. Sunshine broke through more widely on the 24th, but with some rain spreading into the Hebrides and western coasts and eventually the Northern Isles. Rain affected northern areas on the 25th but central and southern areas were mainly sunny after clearance of early fog patches, while Shetland stayed foggy all day. The cloudy skies persisted in the north on the 26th but it was sunny and very mild elsewhere after a foggy start in places. Some local temperature records were broken and Dundrennan recorded 9.6 hours of bright sunshine. It stayed sunny in most areas on the 27th, though not generally as warm as on the 26th, but cloudier in the north and near western coasts. The fine weather broke down on the 28th which was a mostly dry cloudy day with some light rain for the far north-east and south-west, but with some sunshine for the Northern Isles.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

February started off cold with snow in places but from the 5th onwards it was generally mild. It was mostly unsettled with westerly and south-westerly winds until the 20th, but became more settled from the 21st to 27th, and plenty of sunny spells developed from the 25th to 27th.

The month's mean temperature was provisionally 2.3 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average, making it the joint third warmest February in a series from 1910, and the mean maximum temperature was the second highest in the series. Rainfall was 90% of average and sunshine was 119% of average, and it was a sunny month in the east but with near average sunshine further west.

1st to 4th

The month began fine and cold, with a widespread frost on the 1st and a minimum of -7.0 °C at Katesbridge (County Down). There was a high of only 2.2 °C at Banagher (County Londonderry) and 10 cm of snow at Lough Navar Forest (County Fermanagh). The 1st and 2nd were bright with just isolated wintry showers, but the 3rd turned milder and generally cloudy with some rain, sleet and snow early in the day and more general rain spreading from the west from mid-afternoon. The 4th was a sunny day with well-scattered showers.

5th to 13th

The 5th started with a widespread frost, but then the weather turned unsettled and mild with mainly westerly winds. Two belts of rain spread from the west on the 5th, and the 6th was a showery day with some longer spells of rain at times in the north, with 35.5 mm at Trassey (County Down), though it became drier and brighter after midday. Showers were more isolated on the 7th, but then Storm Erik brought wet and windy weather in from the west overnight 7th/8th, with gusts to 75 mph at Killowen (County Down) on the 8th. The rain soon cleared followed by

sunshine and showers, and it remained showery on the 9th and 10th with a longer spell of heavy rain spreading from the north-west on the afternoon of the 10th. After a dry and sunny start on the 11th, cloud and light rain spread from the west, mainly affecting northern and western counties, and it was generally dull with patchy light rain on the 12th and 13th.

14th to 20th

The mild and unsettled weather continued, with southerly winds more frequent. The 14th and 15th were dry with plenty of high cloud but some sunshine getting through in places. The 16th was cloudy with some light rain at times, and more general rain moved north-eastwards overnight 16th/17th, followed by sunshine and a few showers. Showers were more widespread and frequent on the 18th, and the 19th was a wet day with fronts bringing persistent rain. Rain was lighter and more patchy on the 20th, but still rather persistent at times especially in the west.

21st to 28th

As high pressure built to the east, the weather turned more settled and exceptionally mild. The 21st and 22nd were cloudy with isolated pockets of drizzle in the west, but some sunny spells developed in eastern areas. Some rain spread eastwards on the 23rd with a minimum temperature of 11.7 °C at Magilligan (County Londonderry). The 24th was a generally cloudy day with some fog patches. There was more sunshine on the 25th, though cloud increased from the west during the afternoon. The 26th and 27th were very mild and sunny, with a high of 17.1 °C at Armagh (County Armagh) on the 26th, but frosty in places on the intervening night. Aldergrove (County Antrim) recorded 9.4 hours of sunshine on both the 26th and 27th. The westerlies returned on the 28th which was a cloudier day with some light rain and drizzle.