

**JANUARY STATISTICS RECORDED
AT LERWICK OBSERVATORY**

	January 2009	Averages 1971-2000
Mean maximum temperature	6.1°C	5.6°C
Mean minimum temperature	3.3°C	1.5°C
Daily mean temperature	4.6°C	3.6°C
Mean sea-level pressure	1001.1 hPa (mb)	1006.7 hPa
Total rainfall	117.8 mm	135.4 mm
Wet days => 1 mm	19 days	21.3 days
Sunshine (electronic sensor)	34.1 hours	22.6 hours
Air frosts	7 days	8.4 days
Ground frosts	10 days	15.0 days
Snow/sleet	6 days	12.9
Days with gale	13 days	9 days
Maximum daily mean temp.	7.9°C on 11th	
Minimum daily mean temp.	0.3°C on 5th	
Highest maximum	10.6°C on 11th	
Lowest day maximum	2.7°C on 1st	
Highest night minimum	7.8°C on 12th	
Lowest minimum	-3.2°C on 5th	
Lowest grass minimum	-9.0°C on 5th	
Wettest day	16.8 mm on 19th	
Sunniest day	4.7 hours on 28th	
Highest hourly mean wind	41 knots on 10th	
Highest gust	58 knots on 10th	

A WINDY, SUNNY MONTH. A LITTLE COOLER THAN RECENT JANUARYS

The first week of January saw an anticyclone drifting south over Shetland. A thin snow cover occurred on a few days during this period. As the high continued south over central areas of the UK, the cool NE'ly winds veered to a milder SW'ly during the 7th-9th.

For most of the remainder of the month, with the high slipping well to the south of the British Isles, Atlantic depressions brought very unsettled conditions, with mild S or SW'ly and cooler W'lies alternating. Gales occurred on most days between the 8th and 22nd, with gusts often in excess of 60mph.

The month closed with a cooler S to SE'ly airflow for the 29th to 31st as high pressure intensified over Scandinavia.

Overall Shetland was a little milder than the rest of Scotland, and saw even less rain and slightly more sunshine.

With an anticyclone to the north of Shetland, the month began with cool N or NE'ly winds. During the first few days, as the anticyclone slipped south over Faeroe, generally cloudy conditions prevailed with wintry showers and the occasional longer outbreak of mainly light rain, sleet or snow. Overnight frosts were widespread

As the high slipped south over Shetland on the 4th, winds fell light and variable and a particularly cold night followed, The high then moved south over the Scottish mainland and freshening winds backed SW'ly as weak fronts approaching Shetland brought some rain or drizzle on the 5th. This cleared on the 6th, with lengthening clear spells and light winds leading to a ground frost overnight.

As an overnight ridge declined, a warm front moved east over Shetland on the 7th bringing sleet or snow, though this soon turned to rain as milder SW'ly winds strengthened.

With the anticyclone slow-moving over southern Britain, mild and strong SW'ly winds brought generally cloudy conditions with patchy rain or drizzle across Shetland on the 8th. Winds strengthened to gale-force overnight as an Atlantic front moved east towards Shetland on the 9th. The front eventually cleared later on the 10th,

with outbreaks of rain - heavy at times - followed by showers. S to SW'ly gale or severe gale-force winds - gusting to 67mph at Lerwick - eased a little overnight. The 11th was mild with further gales and rain as a deep Atlantic low moved towards Faeroe.

With a deep depression tracking east to the north of Shetland, strong to gale SW'ly winds veered W'ly on the 12th, bringing a mixture of bright spells and frequent showers. Winds eased and veered NW or N'ly on the 13th, with the day ending mostly dry as the depression moved away into Scandinavia. With a ridge bringing clearer skies and lighter winds, a widespread frost followed overnight, a scattering of wintry showers leaving a thin covering of snow.

The 14th was cool, and bright, with wintry showers leaving an early thin snow-cover. A dry evening followed but - as a weak ridge declined - cloud and rain spread from the west overnight and through the 15th, as a vigorous depression to the west of Ireland drove fronts northeast. Towards evening it became a little drier, with gale or severe gale SE'ly winds easing as the depression moved away towards Iceland.

Further rain spread east later on the 16th and S'ly gales developed. There were a few brighter spells but also some showery rain on the 17th, and strong to gale S or SE'ly winds eased for a time. More rain spread from the southwest overnight and S to SE'ly winds again increased gale to severe gale-force, as a rapidly deepening depression - rushing across the Atlantic towards northwest Scotland - drove fronts across the Northern Isles. Winds eased strong to gale S'ly, with brighter spells and a few showers following for the 18th as the low veered away towards Faeroe.

The 19th started mainly dry but, as a small low swung in towards the Hebrides, heavy rain reached Shetland during the afternoon and ESE'ly winds increased strong to gale. Shetland started cloudy with rain or sleet on the 20th, with brighter, drier conditions extending north later as the main centre of low pressure moved closer to Iceland and winds veered fresh SW'ly.

The 21st was mostly dry and bright with sunny spells and moderate or fresh SW'ly winds. These later backed SE'ly, with gales developing overnight ahead of fronts pushed north by a small but vigorous depression swinging in towards northwest Scotland. Rain also moved north overnight. After a wet and windy day with gusts to 70mph on Foula and 65mph on Fair Isle, brighter and drier conditions spread from the southwest late on the 22nd as gale-force winds moderated.

A vigorous deep depression between Scotland and Iceland maintained strong S'ly winds on the 23rd, bringing rather cloudy conditions with scattered showers. These became more widespread later and merged into a longer period of heavy rain overnight. Scattered showers died out on the 24th, with a touch of ground frost during the evening before cloud and rain returned overnight.

The 25th began dry and bright but, with yet another deep Atlantic low to the west, rain moved north over Shetland during the afternoon and SE'ly winds once more increased strong to near-gale. With the filling depression to the west of the British Isles and fresh - locally strong - S'ly winds, the 26th was mainly dry with bright or sunny spells.

Early rain on the 27th cleared to leave just a few well-scattered showers and bright conditions across the Isles. A cold night with a ground frost followed. After a few early showers, the 28th was dry and bright with fresh S'ly winds.

Though a depression tracked slowly north to the west, an intensifying anticyclone to the east prevented fronts from reaching Shetland, and little or no rain fell during the last four days of January. However, apart from the 28th - the sunniest day of the month - it was cloudy. SE'ly winds steadily strengthened gale-force on the 29th. The 30th continued cloudy, with gale or severe gale-force SE'ly winds, gusting to 62mph on Fair Isle. With the high to the east intensifying, the 31st continued windy with strong SE'ly winds persisting.

Dave Wheeler

Initial Statistical details for Scotland as a whole (1961-1990 average) for January:

Mean Temperature: 2.6°C (0.2°C above average)

Rainfall : 162.5 mm (95% of average)

Sunshine : 50.4 hours (147% of average)

Data from the UK Met Office