

**NOVEMBER STATISTICS RECORDED
AT LERWICK OBSERVATORY**

	November 2008	Averages 1971-2000
Mean maximum temperature	7.4°C	7.6°C
Mean minimum temperature	4.1°C	3.6°C
Daily mean temperature	5.7°C	5.1°C
Mean sea-level pressure	1005.3 hPa (mb)	1006.5 hPa (mb)
Total rainfall	118.2 mm	152.4 mm
Wet days => 1 mm	24 days	21.5 days
Sunshine (electronic sensor)	29.6 hours	33.0 hours
Air frosts	4 days	3.5 days
Ground frosts	13 days	10.5 days
Snow/sleet	8 days	6.8 days
Days with gale	6 days	5.5 days
Maximum daily mean temp.	9.6°C on 14th	
Minimum daily mean temp.	-2.0°C on 22nd	
Highest maximum	11.0°C on 14th	
Lowest day maximum	0.0°C on 22nd	
Highest night minimum	8.5°C on 7th	
Lowest minimum	-3.6°C on 22nd	
Lowest grass minimum	-5.7°C on 23rd	
Wettest day	13.0 mm on 14th	
Sunniest day	4.4 hours on 4th	
Highest mean hourly wind	39 knots on 27th	Direction WSW'ly
Highest gust	57 knots on 27th	

COOL, CLOUDY AND WINDY

This November the Icelandic low was deeper and displaced towards the Norwegian Sea, while at the same time the Azores anticyclone was slightly further north than its usual position. As a result - with just a couple of exceptions - low pressure dominated the month's weather patterns, bringing a cyclonic W to NW'ly airflow across Shetland for much of the time. It was probably the most 'northerly-type' November for the past four decades but, despite this, the month's mean temperature was still above the 1971-2000 average.

Early in the month a brief anticyclonic spell occurred, as a small high drifted northeast over Shetland. Shortly after mid-month, a marked outbreak of cold Arctic air brought a snowy period, as low pressure moved east and the rather persistent anticyclone in mid-Atlantic ridged north.

Though a ridge of high pressure lay across much of Scotland, Shetland - in the SW'ly airflow on its northern edge - saw mild and cloudy conditions during the first few days of the month. Weak fronts, associated with low pressure to the north, brought periods of mainly light rain or drizzle and some misty conditions with hill fog. However, as an anticyclone - developing over northern Scotland - moved closer to the Northern Isles, easing winds veered N'ly, skies cleared later on the 3rd and temperatures fell sharply, with a frost developing overnight. After a cold start, the 4th was a fine, sunny day.

The small high then drifted northeast across Shetland into southern Scandinavia, with SE'ly winds increasing strong, bringing cloudy and misty conditions with patchy drizzle during the next couple of days. The 8th was a drier and brighter day as fronts cleared north and strong winds veered S'ly.

Between the 9th and 11th a developing low - tracking north to become slow-moving to the northwest of Scotland - brought a mixture of sunny or clear spells and heavy showers or longer periods of rain. S'ly winds increased strong to gale-force for a time but then moderated and backed NE'ly, as the filling low drifted east over the north of mainland Scotland.

As the filling low moved away over southern Scandinavia and pressure built to the west, a colder Arctic airflow brought sunny spells and scattered showers for the 12th. However, the cold spell was short-lived, with strong to gale-force SW'ly winds bringing much milder and cloudy conditions - together with outbreaks of heavy rain or drizzle - during the following two days, as the next Icelandic depression pushed fronts east over northern Scotland.

The next two days were cooler and brighter with showers - some wintry - as the low continued east over the Norwegian Sea. As pressure built to the west, W to NW'ly winds increased strong to gale-force. Gusts to 63 mph were recorded in Lerwick, 61 mph on both Foula and Fair Isle on the 15th, and 68 mph on Foula early on the 16th.

Winds then eased as a ridge declined southeast over the area early on the 17th, with a fresh SE'ly wind bringing patchy rain or drizzle later in the day, as a low tracked east over northern Scotland. This was followed on the 18th by cooler and showery conditions, accompanied by strong NW'ly winds, as pressure again built to the west. With a depression over the north of Scandinavia and an anticyclone in mid-Atlantic, strong to gale-force W to NW'ly winds continued through the 19th and, after a mild start with temperatures around 11° Celsius, much cooler conditions followed by the end of the day

On the 20th a frontal trough - moving south in a cold Arctic airflow - saw wintry showers of rain, hail and sleet turning to a longer period of snow as temperatures continued to fall towards zero. Strong NW'ly winds eased significantly, and many places saw a thin covering of snow by the evening. On the 21st there were frequent, heavy and prolonged showers of snow with drifting in the strong N'ly winds, as temperatures fell to -1° or -2° Celsius. With temperatures dropping to between -3° and -4° Celsius overnight and struggling to reach 0° Celsius during the day, the 22nd was even colder with further snow showers. Most places had several centimetres of lying snow, with 8 cm reported from Fair Isle. However, as N'ly winds eased, drifting of the lying snow became less of a problem.

A ridge crossing the Northern Isles was quickly followed on the 23rd by milder temperatures, as a depression slipped southeast from Iceland across Orkney and strengthening SE'ly winds backed NE'ly through the day. N'ly winds followed on the 24th but, circulating around low pressure to the east, these were not of Arctic origin and so temperatures were not particularly low. As a result, despite some of the frequent and heavy showers being wintry in nature, a steady thawing of the lying snow continued,

The showers died out on the 25th as a ridge toppled across the area and easing winds backed SW'ly. Later in the day, as the next depression moved into the Iceland area, strengthening W'ly winds brought cloudy conditions and patchy rain. With pressure remaining low to the north and a front - trailing around the northern flank of an anticyclone - slow-moving close to Shetland, strong to gale-force W'ly winds, carrying outbreaks of rain or drizzle across the Isles, continued for the next couple of days.

As a small low moved east to the north of Shetland early on the 27th, a cold front sank southeast into Scotland. This introduced cooler and showery conditions across the Northern Isles, with W'ly winds gusting to 65 mph early in the day. By evening winds had fallen light and variable as a slack area of low pressure formed over northern Scotland and the southern Norwegian Sea. This persisted through the 28th and 29th. On the 30th low pressure moved east and a cold Arctic airflow - sweeping down over Iceland and the north-east Atlantic - gradually extended over Shetland. As it did so, showers turned wintry and NNE'ly winds increased strong to gale, gusting to 63 mph in Lerwick by the end of the day.

Dave Wheeler

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

Mean Temperature – 4.8°C (0.5°C above average)

Rainfall – 140.3 mm (89% of average).

Sunshine – 52.1 hours (108% of average).

Data from the UK Met Office