

The history of British winters

Written by D.Fauvell and I.Simpson this page covers many winters from the 17th Century right up to the current day. It includes the 'little ice age' period which many people yearn to see again!

1616: Hot summer with drought similar to that of 1612

1620-21: **Frost fair held on the Thames**

1626: Dry and hot summer

1635: **Severe winter, Thames froze over**

1636: Severe drought, rainless for months (reputedly)

1638: Not linked so much to winter, but tornadoes were reported in the South West.

1644: **Late January snowfall, lasted 8 days**

1648: Interestingly was very wet, and the summer was described as "worse than some of the past winters" ie. It was cool and wet!

1648-49: **Thames froze over**

1657-58: **Beginning a period of long lying snow, lasting from December through until March!**

1658: A 'wild stormy night' when roofs were blown down, as well as Chimneys. Noted as the night Oliver Cromwell died.

1662-67: **3 of 5 winters in this period were described as cold, with severe frosts. Skating was launched on the Thames, for the pleasure of King Charles 2nd.**

1664-65: **Reputedly the coldest day ever in England, with a severe frost lasting about 2 months.**

1665: In November, a deep depression was recorded, possibly the lowest recorded in London, of 931 millibars! Still stands today?

1666-67: **Thames covered in ice**

1669: A cold year in regards to the milder ones proceeding it. Thames froze over, again.

1674: March snowfall, lasted for 13 days, described as 'The thirteen drift days'. Most of the sheep perished, unfortunately.

1676: June exceptionally hot (notice the correlation with 1976! lol)

1677: Thames froze, again! Becoming a regular occurrence.

1680-81: Winter was severe, with lots of Easterly winds. The Easterlies brought dry air.

1683-84: Now when people think of 'The Big One' in terms of winters, they think of 1947, 1963 etc. But there was one winter that easily surpassed both! This winter! Mid December saw the 'great frost' start in the UK and Central Europe. The Thames was frozen all the way up to London Bridge by early January 1684. The frost was claimed to be the longest on record, and probably was. It lasted kept the Thames frozen for 2 months, it froze as deep as 11 inches. Near Manchester, the ground had frozen to 27 inches, and in Somerset, to an astonishing 4 feet! This winter was the coldest in the CET series, at -1.2! (1739-40 was -0.4) This winter was described by R.D. Blackmore, in his book 'Lorna Doone'. In mid February there was a thaw.

1688-89: Long and severe frosts, Thames froze over.

1690-99: 6 out of 10 of the winters in this period were described as severe, judging by their CET. Meaning their average temperatures for December, January, February and March were below 3c. 1694-95 heralded deep snow, with falls of continual snow affecting London. This lasted for 5 weeks, along with the freezing of the Thames. This heavy snow and frost theme, continued for a good long while. In fact 1695 is believed to have been one of the coldest years ever recorded, the severe snowy winter ended around mid April, at which time arctic sea ice had extended around the entire coast of Iceland! 1695-96 saw -23c (?) in the UK. A severe winter. The autumn of 1697 was very cold, with snow persisting, and ice forming. The winter of 1697-98 was severe, with a CET of about 1c. Snow and ice built up. Ice on coasts built up to 8 inches in

parts. Spring very cold. Generally the late 1600s were very cold, and people probably were affected very badly by this. The cold probably brought famine to the poor, as livestock perished, and crops failed. And without central heating, it must have been unbearable in parts. The 'Little Ice Age' lived up to its name. The final few years weren't as bad, but harvests were still ruined generally as wet weather took over from the cold.

The 1600s were generally a period of harsh severe winters, and cool/wet springs/summers. At points the Thames was frozen for months, although I think it would have been wider then (?) and shallower (?) so easier to freeze when the temperatures were right.

New century, similar pattern..

November 1703: A 'great storm' in England, although thought to be the worst in the record books, I don't wish to pursue any information in regards to it, as no snowfall came of it!

1708: The coldest Spring, Summer, and Autumn for 47 years, other than 1698! (see part 2)

1708-09: Severe winter, the frost lasted for over 3 months! Temperatures plummeted to -18c. Thames froze in London, once again! Severe winter by CET values (1.2c).

1715-16: Thames frozen for 2 months, frost fair took place. Ice on Thames in London lifted around 15 feet by a flood tide but remained intact! The ice must have been astonishingly strong.

1725-26: Severe winter.

1728-29: Severe winter, frost and snow remained for at least a month. Very cool spring.

1731: Very dry, after a 'great frost' at the start of the year. Very cold first period of the year, with much snow and ice. London recorded -18c. A warm summer. This year resembles 2003 quite closely, very dry with a minimum of -18 recorded in London (-18c recorded in Aviemore January this year? (2003)) followed by a warm summer (ours has been hot 100F reached and breached) But the similarities are evident, especially on the side of drought.

1739: October, Easterly wind set in heralding frosts. The beginning of another 'Big One!'.

1739-40: Severe winter, one of the worst. May have been worse than that of 1715 (?). Late December saw a severely strong Easterly gale set up, brining very cold air over the UK. Ice formed on the Thames, once again. Streets were blocked up with ice and snow, which made travelling hazardous. The Thames remained frozen over for about 8 weeks (?). Some reports said this winter was the most severe on record, with temperatures falling to -24c in early January (1995 beat this and holds the record for the coldest minima in the UK ever). The Easterly gale persisted, with snow and frost becoming an increasing hazard to all. Northerlies also started up, very strong in places, with again snow and ice. This winter can be noted as one of the most severe of all time (since records began).

1740: Coldest October on record, with ice already formed in parts. 1740 was very cold as a whole, the spring was also cold.

1742: Ice in the Thames, very cold once again.

1748: Severe frost in November in London and the South.

1749: Severe frost in November, again in the South and London.

1762: Snow fell early on (late October) in London and the South.

1762-63: Intense frost and strong Easterlies prevailed from Christmas day right through January in London and the South.

1765-66: Severe winter, cold persisted from early on (November) until February.

Early 1767 and 1768: Started with frosts comparable to that of 1739-40.

1767: Snow came late (May)

1768: January saw severe frost and deep snow.

1770: Late snowfall (May) in South.

1775-76: Severe winter. From early January to early February much of the UK and Europe was very cold. The Thames froze. Stormy February followed.

1779-80: Severe winter. Coldest winter in the series in Edinburgh (series from 1764-65 to 1962-63)

1783-86: Two successive severe winters. The Thames froze completely in both, almost continuous frost lasted from early to late winter. Snow remained for as long as 4 months. Attributed to an Icelandic volcanic eruption, although details regarding this are slim. Heavy snow also fell early on in both years, with snow falling as early as October. 1784 was a cold year generally. Sleet was recorded near the coast of the Moray Firth in August! Heavy snow fell in the South in October. The year was ranked in the top 10 coldest years recorded in the CET series. 1785 was very dry and cold, with again early snow in October. 1786 had a very dry summer, and was persistently cold from September to November.

1788-89: Long frost lasting from late November, until early January. The Thames froze completely, and a 'Frost Fair' was held on it.

1794-95: Exceptionally severe winter. The cold beginning on Christmas Eve, and lasting until late March, with a few temporary breaks. January was particularly cold, with a CET of 0.8c. It was the coldest January in the instrumental era, beginning 1659. The Severn and The Thames froze, and 'Frost Fairs' started up again. An extremely bitter temperature of -21c was recorded in London, on January 25th. In early February, there was a rapid, but only temporary thaw. Flooding ensued. The severe cold returned slightly later (mid February) and continued well into March. There were many recorded snow events. The winter was anticyclonic (High Pressure dominated) and Easterlies were dominant throughout. Up in Scotland, it was the seventh coldest at Edinburgh, in the series 1764/65 1962/63. (coldest 1779/80). The winter was memorable for all.

1796: December was severe, with frosts in London and elsewhere. -21c was recorded in London, as was -19c.

1798-99: Severe frost lasted from late December to early January in London and the South. Heavy snowfalls were recorded, especially in North Eastern Scotland, where transport was dislocated for quite some time.

1799: Spring was very cold, and was recorded as being very cold in the CET series.

One thing I have noticed about the 1700s, is their Easterly dominated winters. Last winter, we saw that in a smaller scale here in the UK. Most records came from London at the time, and so widespread detail wasn't available. If it was, I think rural locations in Central and Northern parts, may have seen very cold minimums and maximums, possibly into the mid 20s below, like that of 1995. A set up like that of 1794-95 could happen again soon if High Pressure establishes itself in Greenland and Scandinavia. A thing to watch in the coming winter, although a winter on the same scale as 1794-95 is very unlikely, as it was extreme, even for the 'Little Ice Age'!

New century! Some big winters this century.

1811: A late start for severe winters in the 1800s, but January of 1811 saw the Thames freeze, once again!

1812: A year later, and March this time. 1ft of snow fell in Scotland, around the city of Edinburgh (I think Edinburgh and London had the most weather records of anywhere in the UK due to their frequency in data being recorded) followed by drifting in a gale force North Easterly!

1813-1814: Not many of the 1800s winters had I heard of before about 3-4 years ago, but this one I had, due to its severe cold. One of the 4/5 coldest winters in the CET series. Colder winters included: 1962-63 (see part 1739-40 (see part 3) and the coldest, 1683-84 (see part 2) 'Lorna Doone'. A memorable winter overall. January to March was very cold. January had a CET of -2.9 (third coldest since records began?) The next comparable year in terms of cold weather being 1962-63. The tidal stretch of the Thames froze for the last time, the old London Bridge was removed, and other factors helped increase the rivers flow, preventing ice forming again. If it was the same now as it was back then, we would still see it being frozen. A frost fair was held on the Thames, possibly the last 'great' one. The frost began in late December, approaching the new year. Thick fog came with the frost, as was common in London at the time. Probably one of the snowiest winters in the last 300 years, although 1947 was likely to have been snowier. Heavy snow fell for 2-3 days in early January, before a temporary thaw of 1 day. Then the frost just returned, possibly more severe than before due to the snow cover, and persisted until early February. A thaw followed later, and ice floating down the river damaged ships. Fog was also a hazard and took a long time to clear, lasting from late December to early January, an unusual occurrence. Visibility was down to 20 yards at times! Traffic hardly moved, and travelling became very dangerous. The fog cleared following a Northerly gale in early January, when heavy snow fell. A severe and very snowy winter.

1816: Known as the year without summer, snow fell very late on, and the summer never recovered. The winter proceeding it was severe. A volcanic eruption (Tambora: East Indies) disrupted wind patterns and temperatures greatly, affecting the track of depressions, which tracked further South than usual, and making the UK very cold and wet for the summer and beyond. Scotland was drier though, an obvious sign that the depressions changed track. In September the Thames had frozen! Snow drifts remained on hills until late July!

1819-20: Severe winter. -23c was recorded at Tunbridge Wells, although no details of exposure are evident.

1821: Late May saw snow in London, probably the latest snowfall there until 2nd June 1975.

1822-23: Severe winter, ice on the Thames by late December. February 8th saw a great snowstorm in Northern England. People had to tunnel through the snow.

1825: Snow fell in October in London. A very windy time, with gales doing damage.

1826: Ice on the Thames.

1829: A cold year. Continuous frost throughout January. The summer was wet, and quite cold. Over an inch of snow fell in early October, although where isn't certain, most likely to be London. 6 inches fell in London and the South in late November. Northerly and Easterly gales damaged ships, and lost some.

1829-30: Severe winter. Continuous frost from the 23rd to 31st December, 12th to 19th January, and 31st January to 6th February. Ice on the Thames from late December to late January. Some places completely blocked. 25th December 1830 was cold, with -12c recorded in Greenwich.

1834-38: Snowy winter in Scotland. Snow lasted well into March, with 8 or 9 feet of snow being reported in parts! This trend continued for a number of winters, with a lot of snow in Scotland. From early winter, December, to late winter, March, snow was a problem. There were considerable accumulations, becoming common throughout the winter. Snow fell widely, but mostly in the North of Scotland, where accumulations were very large, right through until April. 1836-37 was another snowy winter in the series, with heavy falls of snow in January. Blizzards began in late February, and lasted into March. Transport was severely disrupted, and harvest damaged by harsh frosts. This series of winters was severe, and notable, especially for Scotland, but very bad elsewhere also. The most notable of the snowstorms being:

October 1836, snow reached depths of 5-6 inches, very unusual.

25th December 1836, roads impassable, snow depths reached a staggering 5-15 feet in many places, and most astonishingly, drifts of 20-50 feet!!!!!!!

1837-38: Murphys winter. Patrick Murphy won fame and a small fortune from the sale of an almanac in which he predicted the severe frost of January 1838 (a 2 month frosty period set in with a light SE wind & fine day with hoar frost on the 7th (or 8th) January) (quoted from a web-page). 20th January saw temperatures as low as -16c in London, accepted as the coldest recorded here of the 19th century. -20 recorded at Blackheath, and -26c at Beckenham, Kent. The temperature at Greenwich was -11c at midday!!!! The Thames froze over. 1838: Snow showers on 13th October, possibly in London and the South.

1840-41: Severe winter.

1849: April, great snowstorm hit Southern England. Coaches buried in drifts. Notably late snowfall.

1851-53: The first of these winters saw heavy snowfall in Scotland. The North of Scotland saw the first of the heavy snow. The railway from Aberdeen to the South was badly affected, but was kept open. Blizzards caused deaths. The storms stopped near the end of January. 1852-53 was severe as well, particularly severe in February though. Low temperatures and heavy snowfall lasted well into March for most.

Thanks to the Bonacina snowfall catalogue, for its information! Excellent resource. Now to continue.

1875-76: Amazingly snowy winter for the UK, especially the South East early on, the first week of December dumped 1-2ft in some places, worst in the South East. March of this month had many snowstorms, and April recorded nearly 2ft of snow in the Midlands! Snowfall was recorded (on a notable scale), in November, December, January, February, March, April, and May! I would regard this winter as very snowy.

1878-79: Another snowy one! In the north, snow cover remained for 3 months! Snow recorded in November, December, January, February, March and April! Very snowy

1880-81: Now I didn't add this one for the huge volume of snow it recorded (it didn't, although it was still snowy!) I added this, because of the early snowfall! 6 inches of snow fell in October in London! In January, 3ft of level snow fell from East Devon to the Isle of Wight! There were 10ft drifts in Evesham, and Dartmoor recorded 4ft. Very Snowy

Interestingly, 1881-82 wasn't snowy at all!

1885-1886: Snow fell in October, November, December, January, February, March, April and May! London recorded 1ft of snow in 7 hours in early January. In the North a blizzard dumped 2ft of snow widely, and in May the North of England got a heavy fall. Very Snowy

1878-80: 2ft of Snow fell in Oxford in October! A ferocious blizzard raged in the North East in March. 10th June saw snow in Scotland, of 6 inches! 11th July reportedly saw snow in the South and East, Keswick saw

snow above 1000ft.

From 1895-99 the UK had 4 consecutive years of little/average snowfall, of which the only noteworthy fall was of 1ft in the Eastern spine of the country. 1899-00 saw general snow of 1ft, 2ft in places. The following year wasn't exceptional either, although 5-7ft of snow was recorded in North Wales and Northern England. Both years were snowy.

New century, some very famous winters in here.

From 1901-07, snowfalls were only little /average again, passing more than a resemblance to the 90s. Some heavy falls were recorded though.

1907-08: Norfolk and Suffolk recorded 1ft of snow in 23rd April, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, and Hertfordshire recorded 1-2ft, some 2 days later. 1908-09: Practically the same as the preceding year, both snowy, with 08-09 recording up to 2ft of snow in South East England in March, and beforehand, a great spell of snow in February, affecting practically everywhere!

As a whole, the mid 1800s were very snowy (the little ice age ending), but the nearer the end of the century came, the smaller the snowfalls grew, until the early 1900s, they were little or average, emulating the 90's. It looks as though the ends and beginnings of centuries record little snow, whereas the middle two quarters receive lots. The pattern continues. 1909-15 recorded little or average snowfalls, nothing really to write home about, other than a few falls of up to 2.5 ft, but no real consistency in the cold/snowy periods. London came away with practically no snowfall in 1912-13, whereas Northern Britain was quite snowy. This decade was far from good for snow lovers! I bet they started talking of no more snow for the UK again, as we are doing now. Shows how wrong they were...

The snow drought ended abruptly in 1916, with enormous falls of snow in the mountains, 10ft in the Pennines, Black Mountains, and the High Peak District. Several general falls of snow recorded. A very snowy year.

1916-17: Emulated some great snowy years. The Midlands and South West recorded large falls of up to 14 inches, and in Southern and Western Ireland Cheviot Blizzard took place. The Highlands also saw lots of snow this year. A very snowy year.

1917-18 was average, whereas 1918-20 saw deep snow in London twice, one fall being 9 inches. Scotland also recorded large falls, as did the Midlands and North of England. September saw snow in Dartmoor! A snowy period.

1920-23 were little or average. 1ft of snow fell in Plymouth and Southern England saw 6inches+ widespread. There was a blizzard in Scotland, North and West England, South Wales (yippee!) and South West England at the end of March.

1923-24: little snow in the South West, but Braemar in Scotland saw 2.5ft of snow in November! There was snow on my birthday (January 9th) in London, and late February in Scotland. A snowy year.

1925-26: Late November saw snow in London, East Anglia, and North East England, Norwich recording 7 inches. There was also notable snow in mid January, and also mid May in the Cotswolds! Snowy.

1927-28: Snow fell mid December in England and Wales, and on Christmas day through Boxing day, a blizzard raged in Southern England, from Kent to Cornwall. 1-2ft of snow fell, with 20ft drifts on Salisbury Plain! Christmas day must have been phenomenal! Snow fell mid March in the East. Very Snowy.

1928-29: A lot of snow fell in the West late December, again the West fared best in mid February, with Wales and the West Midlands getting it good! 6ft fell in 15hrs on Dartmoor (Holne Chase) mid February. Snowy.

1930-31: February opened well, with 2ft of Snow in Northern England and Scotland, and later on snow fell generally (early March) with 18 inches falling on Orkney. Snowy.

1931-32: Little snow. In fact probably Scotland's most snowless winter in memory! No real snow to note.

1932-33: Late October, snow fell in Scotland, an early start to the skiing season! Late February there was a Great Blizzard, for Ireland, Wales, South West England, Northern England, and the Midlands. Whipsnade recorded 2ft of snow, Harrogate and Huddersfield 30 inches, Buxton 28 inches! Very Snowy.

1936-37: Early December saw snow in Scotland, predominantly the North. Late February saw the next big snowfall, with a blizzard in many parts, 1ft recorded in Northern England and Scotland. Early March saw snow for Southern England. A blizzard swept through the whole northern portion of the UK in mid March. Snowy.

1937-42: These years were all snowy, with numerous falls of 1-2ft, and occasional falls (such as 194-41) in which snow depths of up to 16 foot (drifts) were recorded. Places worst affected by this mini outbreak of snowy winters were Scotland and Northern England, but the South was also quite badly affected, more

particularly the South West and Wales. 1939-40 saw the supposed 'blizzard of the decade' in Scotland and England when in late January snow fell widely, excluding only some areas. The snowy period ended in 1942-43, when little snow was recorded the next 2 winters.

1944-45: Mid December saw snow in Western Scotland, although the amount isn't clear. In the first half of January, snow reached a depth of 2ft in Bellingham. Late January saw South Wales, and South West England bear the brunt (yippee!) with 1-2ft falling in this area, Cardiff seeing an amazing 30inches! Northern England and Southern Scotland also saw some snow late January, although again, details are sketchy. Very snowy.

1946-47: The year you've most probably been waiting for! One of the snowiest winters to date, probably the worst since 1814 (see part 5). Snow fell on the 19th December in Southern England. Then there was a notable mild spell, extremely mild in parts, with 14c being reached by day. Then from the 22nd January, it began! There was continuous snow cover from this date, right up till 17th March! Late January saw 7 inches of snow in South West England and the Scilly Isles (unusual). Early February saw the turn of the Midlands (Southern) and East Anglia, while Northern England, North Wales and Eastern Scotland saw snow in late February. In early March there was a blizzard in England and Wales, with 1ft widely, and 5ft accumulated on the hills! 12th March saw snow for the Border Country. 1946-47 was strange, because it started up late, and lasted a long time. I think 2003-04 will mirror 1947 in lots of ways, mainly in terms of snowfall, but not so extreme and long lasting. Very snowy.

1947-50: Little or average snowfall, although some large falls of up to 12 inches.

1950-51: The year my mum was born (1951), and a big weather event also took place! This winter will be remembered as the snowiest winter of last century at high levels. There were 102 days of lying snow at Dalwhinnie (1000ft) (83 days reputedly in 1946-47) 15th December saw 15 inches of snow in Shanklin, IOW, in 3.5 hours! Bournemouth saw 10 inches, Scarborough and Lowestoft, 14 inches. Snowy.

1951-54: Average years in terms of snowfall, though one noteworthy fall of 1ft in Wales and the Southern Midlands (late November) with drifts of 30 feet!!!! Some other falls of 12 inches at the end of this period.

1954-56: 2 snowy winters, Aberdeen seeing 2ft of the white stuff in December 1954. Early January 1955 seeing general snow of about 4-12 inches. Mid January was snowy as well, with falls of 5ft in Blackpool, Lancashire, and Yorkshire (drifts). Northern Scotland and North East England also seeing large falls, of up to 2 feet. February was generally snowy, although especially in Northern Scotland. Mid May saw snow in the high Pennine regions. December 1955 saw frequent blizzards, affecting Scotland most. The East and North snowiest generally, with Scotland faring the best overall. Snowy.

1957-58: Shoeburyness seeing 23 inches this winter! Snowy. The build up to 1962-63 saw little or average snow though.

1961-62: The year proceeding the 'big' one. Snow in the Christmas week, widespread with London and the South East seeing 6 inches (very similar to last year). Early January in the Midlands saw 14 inches of snow. Snow in March also, especially Scotland, but 10 inches recorded in Jersey! Average.

1962-63: A famous winter. Very cold. Mid November saw snow in the South West. Late December (commencing Boxing Day: the start of the bitter cold) saw blizzards in Southern England. London had 12 inches of drifting snow. January and February had widespread falls, especially Devon and North East England with 2ft. Very Snowy. My mum, 12 at the time, and dad, 11, keep telling me stories of how long they were away from school for. The snow in Hampshire was supposedly as deep as the hedgerows were high! People managed to walk on the tops of the frozen shrubbery, rather than risk driving through the deep snow! An amazing winter.

1965-66: The second half of November saw snow in most areas. The next lot came a bit later, late January, in Eastern parts. February, the turn of the North East. April was surprising though, as heavy falls were recorded, exceptionally heavy in parts of Northern England, where up to 1 foot was found! Mid April saw more snow, with 5 inches in the South. Quite remarkable late falls, but other than that, not a spectacular winter as that of 62-63! Still regarded as snowy though I would say.

1968-70: The first of these 2 winters saw snow in late December, around the New Year, in Eastern Scotland and England. Eastern Yorkshire saw a massive 16 inches! Mid February saw more snow, this time more to the West, with England and Wales seeing the most. Mid March saw more in the Pennines, and a TV mast fell down. 69-70 saw snow for Northern England, North Wales, and Scotland in mid November. Mid December saw snow for the North again. Mid February, most parts, and early March, snow in Wales and England, with the Midlands getting 12 inches.

1970-76: Little snow for 6 winters! Ring any bells?! Very similar pattern to the 90s-early 00s, ending the snow drought with a hot summer (76 / 03!) when the snow returned for 1976...

1976-77: Heavy wet snow fell in early December, mid December, and mid January. Mid January also saw some good coverings though, up to 6 inches lying at times.

1977-78: Mid January, 6 foot drifts! A week later, and 4 inches fell. Mid February saw 4 inches also. Late January, heavy snow in Scotland, drifting, 28 inches falling in parts! Mid February (see above) was very snowy in the North East, East and South West. February 11th had 1 ft in Durham and Edinburgh. Feb. 15-16th South West England, blizzard with huge drifts, sounds like my cup of tea!

1978-79: The last really severe, snowy winter, for now anyway, and one my parents go on about! Late December falls of 6-7n inches in Southern Scotland and the North East started it off. It was very cold in parts. Mid February saw drifts of 6-7 feet on the East coast of England. Mid March had severe blizzards and drifting, in North Eastern England drifts reached a staggering 15 feet! Very snowy.

1981-82: Another one my parents go on about! Mid December, South West and Southern England seeing 12 inches. North East England getting 7 inches, with 6 foot drifts. 2 days later (20th December) Northern England got 7 inches, and 6 foot drifts. Mid January, there was general snow, with a cover of 1-2 feet in parts. Snowy, and very cold.

1984-85: Very cold and snowy, especially in Southern England. My parents also go on about this one, as they lived in Hampshire at the time, and my brother was born. It was a very cold winter. Early January, there was snow in Eastern England. Mid January, East Anglia and Kent getting the goods, with 6 inches falling here. Mid January, South West England and South Wales (yippee!). Late January seeing snow in Scotland, and the prone spots, such as Aviemore, getting 2ft of level snow, Northern Britain as a whole affected though. Mid February, Southern England, 6-12 inches, substantial drifting taking place. 29th March gave Scotland snow. A memorable year. Snowy.

I am going to summarise the past 20 years. The late 80s saw little snowfall, ranging from generally no snowfall : 1988-90 (a couple of terrible winters, like that of 1998-00, correlation there) to 12 inches (Scotland, late November 1985) the early 90s were different.

1990-91 saw 8 inches of snow in the Midlands in early December 1990, with 2 foot drifts in Derbyshire. In early January there was 1 foot of snowfall in Northern Scotland. In mid February there was general snowfall, with Bingley in Yorkshire seeing a whopping 20 inches!

1991-93 saw little or no snowfall though, a disappointment.

1993-96 weren't so bad though, with falls of up to 40cm in Leeds (January 25th 1995 I remember 1995 very well, it was a good year for snow, the coldest temperature since records began recorded in Braemar, Scotland) In 1993 there was a white Christmas in South Wales (yippee!) and Wessex. Before that, there was some snow for Scotland and Wales (6 inches 20th-24th December) and 4-8 inches of snow in late November for the Eastern spine of the UK. The IOW (Isle of Wight) to Lincolnshire saw 6 inches in early January. Mid February (1994) saw 4 inches in Northern England. Late February had 1ft of snow in Eastern Scotland. 1994-95 saw many falls of up to 40cm throughout the UK. I remember walking home from school in early March 1995 with a blizzard commencing, 15cm in total, we were off school for a week! As I said above, Leeds saw 40cm of snow in 3 hours in late January 1995! Late March also saw snow for the Northern half of England, 35cm widely here. 1995-96 saw snow on Christmas Eve/ Day in Scotland and the North East, with 35cm falling in the Shetlands. The end of January (South East) and early February (North West: Lancashire 13cm, 2 foot drifts) and also South West Scotland seeing some aswell. Mid February saw some more in the South, before some more to end the season in mid March (East).

1997-00, hardly any snow, 1999-00 virtually snowless, so not a very good end to the millenium, in terms of snowfall, anyway.

Into the current century, not much has passed yet of course, but what does the future hold?

2000-01:

Not a bad year in terms of snow, especially for the North. Late December saw a general fall of around 4 inches, Glasgow and Belfast seeing 8 inches though. Mid January saw the next snow, this time affecting Central and Eastern areas. A few days later, and the Chilterns saw some of the white stuff. Early February, more snow, Eastern Scotland and North East England getting 12-18 inches over 300m! Not bad! Aboyne getting a respectable 2ft! Late February the next fall, South East Scotland, N. Ireland and Northern England., getting it good, with Lanark recording a massive 2ft of snow! A pleasing year in terms of snowfall, certainly for the North anyway.

2001-02:

Little snow, a disappointing year for me.

2002-03:

A different winter, in that zonality wasn't persistantly there, in fact High Pressure easily dominated affairs after mid January. Some good snowfalls of up to 2 inches here in South Wales (200m asl) and the South East seeing quite a bit. London getting the most snow its seen for a good while. Easterly winds occasionally, brinign temperatures down a lot, with a very cold continent contributing. I recorded -15c windchill in early February! Scotland unlucky though, not seeing as much as 2000-01, Esterlies no the best wind direction for

the North. A very dry winter overall, after early flooding in January. Astonishingly different to the 90s in terms of sunshine and rain totals. A good winter, although no where near snowy enough here in South Wales.

2003-04:

Fairly good in terms of snowfall, in comparison to many recent Winters anyway. Snow fell as early as October in parts of Scotland, and there were a few flurries further South and some general sleet on October 22nd over high ground. Before Christmas, some snow fell 22nd, for parts of Scotland and Eastern England. Snow did fall elsewhere but it didn't really amount to much. On New Years Eve/Day wet snow fell for a time, particularly across Northern England and over high ground, where several cm's fell. In mid January snow fell fairly widely across mid Wales and the Midlands, with high ground in Powys recording upwards of 6 inches. Snow also fell across Northern England the next day, with over 6 inches in Northumberland. January 28th saw an almost countrywide blizzard, although very short, it left a few inches over parts of Southern England, particularly the East. Late February, and snow fell on 26th, 27th and 28th, mostly in the North and North East with showers giving 6 inches or more to sea level in NE Scotland and Eastern England, but on 27th Wales, Northern Ireland and SW England got over 6 inches in places, particularly over high ground and in Western Wales, where as much as 10 inches fell over high ground. 12th March saw as much as 10 inches of snow for parts of SW England and Wales, with some parts of South Wales seeing more, particularly over high ground. A fairly good Winter, not spectacular!

2004/05:

Generally below average snow across the country, despite the cold spell in late February/March, and frequent westerly winds. There was a frontal snow event on 18 November, bringing accumulations to the Midlands in particular, and also snow showers in NE Scotland on the 18th and 19th. December was a westerly month but there was a cold north-westerly incursion on Christmas Day, bringing snow showers to the north and west, and a white Christmas for some.

Westerlies continued during January with the only notable snow event being another NW'ly incursion on the 18th, with big but brief snowstorms over Northern Ireland and south-west Scotland.

February was another fairly mild month with frequent anticyclonic north-westerly regimes. There was a northerly blast around the 13th, but as the Arctic was unusually warm, there was little in the way of snow; however a rather more potent northerly occurred on the 19th/20th with snow showers in the northeast. The last third of February and early March had persistent easterly winds and snow showers, but generally limited accumulations on the ground. Inland parts of south-east Scotland, north-east England and Kent, however, often had significant accumulations. Overall this easterly spell disappointed many snow lovers.

2005/06:

This winter was widely close to average snow-wise. A significant snow event affected south-west England on the 25th November with snow showers and local thunder, and accumulations even in places like Plymouth and Exeter. Snow also affected Scotland and the northeast but this turned to rain later in the day. Further snow on 28 November, especially affecting the Midlands and north-west England.

December was mostly sunny and fairly cold with high pressure; there was a brief northerly on the 17th with snow showers for Norfolk, and a cold easterly on the 27th-29th brought many snow showers to eastern districts. Not much snow to speak of during January and February (the late February '06 easterly was even less potent than the Feb '05 one), but this changed into March. A northerly airstream during first week March brought snow showers for many, with 50cm in northeast Scotland and thundersnow widely reported around Aberdeen. More heavy snowfalls on the 12th March, which especially affected western Britain. Further snow in early April, with heavy snowstorm in north-east England on the 8th, and in south-east England late on the 9th.

2006/07:

A largely snowless winter, with persistent westerly winds, but with one northerly outbreak per month in January, February and March. Snow in south-west Scotland on 17/18 November, mainly high ground, from the winter's only polar maritime westerly snow event. Heavy temporary snow over Scotland on 18 January, and this cold air spread south with a frontal snow event, especially affecting southern Britain, on the 23rd/24th. Into February, there was a northerly blast on the 5th-7th with snow showers in the northeast, then the 8th and 9th had significant frontal snow over much of the country. Parts of central southern England had their first significant snow events since February 1996. There was then no more snow until 18-20 March, when a northerly blast brought sunshine and snow showers, with Scotland and the northeast quite heavily affected on the 20th.

2007/08:

Another mild, largely snowless winter, but followed by some noteworthy wintry spells in early to mid spring. There were localised snow events from short-lived Arctic incursions in November, one in the Midlands on the 18th and another minor snow event in north-eastern areas on the 23rd. After a snowless December (the second in a row), a brief easterly blast brought snow showers and local thunder to eastern Scotland, NE England and Northern Ireland on the 3rd January, but mild air returned on the 4th. The rest of January was mostly mild with south-westerly winds, but further localised snow events occurred during the first half, mainly on high ground in the north. February was remarkable for its sunshine over much of England and Wales, but

the only snow event of note occurred on the 1st/2nd, with high ground in northern England, plus parts of Scotland and Norfolk, briefly affected.

Spring 2008 contained somewhat more wintry weather, with a brief NW'ly on the 3rd which brought snow showers to western areas, and lying snow to western Scotland. Cold northerly winds persisted throughout the Easter weekend with frequent, albeit generally slight, snowfalls, with northeast Scotland and East Anglia most heavily hit. For many parts, though, the most significant snow event of the "winter" occurred on 6-7 April, with widespread heavy snowfalls and accumulations, and maxima of just 2 or 3C in some places.

That's the end of the little run through the years since 1600, in terms of snowfall! Well it was fun, lets hope this winter will be aswell! Thanks to the Bonacina snowfall catalogue for snowfall amounts and dates etc. I put my own little spins on what happened! Also big thanks to booty.demon.co.uk, for its very early recordings!