

SUMMARY OF HEAVY SNOWFALLS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM 2006

The year 2006 was an average year with a total of 9 heavy snowfall days. Most of the heavy snowfalls occurred in the month of March.

Tuesday 28 February 2006 – Saturday 4 March 2006

Heavy snow showers affected many districts of the UK over this 4-day period. The areas that sustained the worst of the snow were N Scotland, E Scotland, NE England, N Ireland, Wales and East Anglia. Heavy snow showers also affected CS England, NW England, the Midlands and SW England.

On the 28th February, in N Ireland, the heaviest snow affected Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey and Ballyclare in County Antrim. In Glengormley, County Antrim, the Glebe Road was forced to close for a time and the snow also caused several minor accidents on the Upper Springfield Road in west Belfast.

In Scotland, 11 vehicles were involved in two separate road traffic accidents on the A90 Stonehaven to Aberdeen road in Grampian. Three articulated lorries and 3 cars collided at approximately 11:00, just south of the Bridge of Muchalls, blocking the northbound carriageway. Approximately 40 minutes later, 5 cars were involved in an accident on the same stretch of road near to Stonehaven. Also in Grampian, the A93 Braemar to Blairgowrie road was closed at Cairnwell due to white-out conditions and high winds; while the B974 Banchory to Fettercairn road was blocked with snow at Cairn o' Mount. The snow also forced many airports to close for a time in Scotland. These included Aberdeen, Kirkwall, Sumburgh, Inverness and Stornoway. The snow forced all the schools on the Shetland Islands to close, 148 in Aberdeenshire and 70 schools in Highland were also closed or partially closed. Up to 15cm of snow fell across parts of the Cairngorms, while a similar amount fell at Loch Flemington, Highland.

In East Anglia, snow caused several road traffic accidents in Norfolk, including one on the North Walsham Road near the White Horse Public House at Crostwick. In North Yorkshire, sporadic heavy snowfalls in the Scarborough and Whitby areas brought dangerous conditions to some routes. The A64 Scarborough to York road and the A171 coastal road between Scarborough and Whitby were the worst affected. The A170 Scarborough to Thirsk road was forced to close at Sutton Bank following several accidents, one involving a gritter lorry.

On the 1 March 2006, in northern and western districts of Northern Ireland, 13cm of snow fell across parts of County Tyrone, including Strabane and Donemana, while a similar snowfall occurred in Craigavon, County Armagh and Ballymoney and Ballymena, County Antrim.

Heavy snow also affected many parts of Wales, namely Denbighshire, Flintshire, Powys, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion, Gwynedd, West Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire. The snow forced more than 400 schools to close. On the roads, the snow resulted in the A5 closure for a few hours due to an accident between Bethesda and Bangor, Gwynedd where a lorry jack-knifed. The snow also closed sections of the A55 across North Wales. In Scotland, further snow showers continued closing more schools across northern and eastern districts. A monk convicted of sex charges had his sentence deferred because his solicitor was stuck in a snowdrift. Father Mark Paterson, 46, appeared at Aberdeen Sheriff Court, Grampian however, defence counsel David Moggach was stuck in snow near Stonehaven, Grampian. Further roads across Grampian were closed including the A957 Stonehaven to Crathes, the A92 Stonehaven to Inverbervie and the B974 Banchory to Fettercairn at Cairn o' Mount as a result of drifting snow. The snow also resulted in a train being stuck in snowdrifts near Laurencekirk, Grampian. Glenlivet, Highland reported snow lying on the ground to a depth of 18cm.

On the 2nd, further heavy snow showers continued across northern and eastern Scotland, Northern Ireland, NW England and Wales. In North Wales, the A55 at Rhualt Hill in Denbighshire was closed for a short time during the early morning due to heavy snow. Up to 13cm of snow fell across parts of Ceredigion. In Merseyside, one person was killed and several more injured in a car crash thought to have been caused by the wintry weather conditions on the M57. All three lanes of the southbound carriageway towards Liverpool were closed as a result of the accident, which involved several vehicles. The snowfall during the early morning also disrupted some rail routes and some Mersey ferry services were cancelled.

On the 3rd, further heavy snow showers continued to affect northern Scotland, keeping hundreds of schools across the region closed for the fourth consecutive day. The snow forced Inverness, Campbeltown, Islay, Kirkwall, Stornoway and Tiree Airports to close, while flights in and out of Aberdeen and Edinburgh Airport were disrupted. In Aberdeen, Grampian, Dianne Eveleigh was hit by a bolt of lightning as she walked to work during a snowstorm. The 27-year-old was saved from serious injury by a combination of her umbrella and rubber boots.

Snow showers also affected parts of central and southern Scotland, particularly Tayside, Fife, Perthshire and Dumfries and Galloway. In Glasgow and Edinburgh, the snow forced school closures and caused traffic chaos. In a 20-minute snowstorm, 8cm of snow fell across Edinburgh, Mid Lothian. By the morning of the 3rd, Aberdeen, Grampian had sustained 25cm of snow since the 28th February. In northern England and North Wales, heavy snow showers affected many districts. The M6 south of Lancaster, Lancashire was badly affected by snow and the A588 near Fleetwood, Lancashire, became impassable. In North Yorkshire, heavy snow showers forced drivers to abandon their cars at the roadside on the A171 between Whitby and Scarborough when the route became treacherous and impassable. Heavy snow also forced the closure of the A59 road between Blubberhouses and Skipton. In West Yorkshire, snow caused the rugby league match between Leeds Rhinos and Castleford Tigers to be postponed due to a snow covered pitch.

During the 4th, heavy snow showers continued to affect northern and eastern Scotland and North Wales. In the Highlands, between 10-15cm of snow fell. The Lecht ski centre in Grampian received more than 2000 visitors, making it the best weekend for skiers in nearly 20 years. Aberdeen Airport, Grampian recorded 26cm of snow lying on the ground by midday - surpassing the previous March record of 25cm set in 1958, the year meteorological records began at the airport.

Saturday 11 March 2006 – Sunday 12 March 2006

Heavy snow fell across northern England, North Wales and southern Scotland. Several roads including the A590, A595, and the A74 were among the routes affected by snow across Cumbria. Buses were cancelled in Barrow and Kendal, Cumbria after the operator Stagecoach confirmed three vehicles became stranded in heavy snowfalls around the lakes. The M74 was also forced to close at Beattock, Lanarkshire for a time, while the Erskine Bridge, which crosses the River Clyde linking Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire, was forced to close for several hours.

In Glasgow, Strathclyde, a nightclub, a bus station and a hotel were opened to provide accommodation for 3,000 people stranded in the city centre after nearly 25cm of snow impacted on travel services. In Dumfries and Galloway, Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, the heavy snow left 5,000 homes without electricity and forced many schools not to open on the 13th March. In East Ayrshire, an RAF helicopter was called out to airlift a pregnant teenager to hospital after an ambulance struggled to cope with snow-covered roads. The teenager, Shirley Anne Hodge later gave birth to a daughter named Skye, at Ayrshire Central Hospital in Irvine. Both were reported to be doing well. Also in Ayrshire, a Royal Navy rescue helicopter picked up three walkers who became stranded at Loch Doon, south of Prestwick, while in central Scotland, two climbers on Ben Nevis were taken to hospital after spending the night stranded on the mountain. The snow also forced the postponement of the Scottish League First Division encounter between Hamilton and Stranraer in Lanarkshire. This particular snowstorm was regarded as the worst snowfall in western Scotland in March for 50 years. Glasgow and Edinburgh Airport was forced to close for a time due to the snow, while Liverpool's John Lennon Airport in Merseyside saw some flight delays.

A woman in Wallend, Cumbria, who suffered a suspected spinal injury in a sledging accident, was also rescued by RAF helicopter. In Cheshire, police confirmed the M53 was "passable with care" after snow caused problems near to Ellesmere Port and on the Merseyside border. In North Wales, the snow was very heavy in Llandudno and Penmaenmawr, Gwynedd and Wrexham, Denbighshire, with snowdrifts reported to be as high as 33cm. Snow depths noted over Great Britain, included 39cm at Ardtalnaig, Perthshire, 28cm at Cambo, Northumberland, 25cm at Corsock, Dumfries and Galloway and 22cm at Cowdenbeath, Fife.

Wednesday 22 March 2006

Heavy snow fell in parts of Scotland, particularly across northern districts. Strathpeffer, Highland, sustained 23cm of snow.

Monday 10 April 2006

More than 13cm of snow fell in parts of Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex, Hampshire and southern London. In Kent, the M20 was covered with a thin layer of snow that made driving hazardous, while parts of the A21 near Tunbridge Wells, the A22 at East Grinstead and the A26 at Eridge Green were all forced to close. The snow also caused the abandonment of vehicles in Detling Hill, near Maidstone, Kent. The snow also brought down trees and branches onto the railway lines between Tonbridge and Paddock Wood, Kent and Hastings, East Sussex and Tonbridge, Kent forcing thousands of rail passengers on to replacement buses. The snow also brought down overhead cables, severing power to over 8,000 homes across some districts of East Sussex and Kent.