

West Cornwall - Exceptional Weather – 25th November until 3rd December 2010

It all started with a persistent 'Pembroke dangler' (a convergence line from Pembroke to west Cornwall) which set in during the afternoon of 24th. By 09:00 on 25th, 19.1mm had fallen. There was then a heavy snow shower (not settling) around 09:00. The rest of 25th saw frequent rain/sleet showers, but this was only the start of it.

Around 23:00 on 26th, there was a thunderstorm with large hail & snow. Paul church was struck by lightning. This was followed by further heavy sleet/snow & hail showers. Looking out of the window at around 02:30 on 27th there was a complete cover of snow with no grass sticking through, at least 3cm of lying snow. A thaw later in the night meant a cover of 1-2cm of icy snow by 09:00. My previous earliest snow cover at 09:00 was on 15/12/97. The snow which fell on 25th equals my earliest snowfall date.

26th/27th Overnight rainfall equivalent ••••• 14.5mm
Total rainfall for the 72 hours to 09:00 on 27th 46.6mm

The Helston, Camborne, Perranporth, Truro area saw a good deal of snow, generally around 5cm, with a good cover down to the beaches from Portreath to Newquay

The night of 27th/28th saw the temperature dropped to -4.3C. My previous November record being -1.5! It was even colder at Culdrose (-6C). I had only EVER in 20 years recorded 5 colder nights - all in January. Until this event, the lowest temperature recorded in Penzance in November was -2.2 on 25/11/1923. On the following night the temperature again beat the old record, down to -3.8

Just before dawn on 29th heavy hail/snow moved up from the channel, across the west of Cornwall. Again the Helston / Camborne area was worst affected with heavy snow, hail & thunder. Many areas had 5-10cm of fresh snow and there was at least 1 funnel cloud. There were also gusts of wind to 40mph in the thunderstorms.

In Penzance accumulations of snow were small, as it occasionally turned to rain or sleet. However above around 100m it was a very different picture. The line from wet slushy snow, to very snowy & icy conditions was around 100m – roughly through the centre of Madron.

The last day of November, and the 1st day of December, saw dry mainly sunny weather, but with a bitterly cold F4 ENE wind.



Perranporth Beach 27th November



The Men an Tol on 29th November

Overnight 1st/2nd December, the wind backed NNE, and snow showers which had been running south westwards just off the north coast of Cornwall were brought inland across west Penwith, as well as the Isles of Scilly. Frequent and sometimes heavy snow showers continued in Penzance from 02:00 to early afternoon. There was around 6cm of fresh snow lying at my station at 09:00. Just a couple of miles to the SE at Marazion, there virtually no fresh snow, as the South east edge of the snow remained virtually stationary for around 8 hours. 15cm of snow fell just behind Penzance, with some parts of the highest ground towards St Just and Sennen seeing even more. There was even a covering of snow on Scilly.



The snowy site of my weather station in Penzance
10:00 on 2nd December



There was yet more snow, and a hard frost, overnight on 2nd/3rd December. About 1cm fell in Penzance, giving treacherous road conditions. By mid morning the wind had backed to the southwest, and with spells of sunshine a steady thaw set in as the temperature rose to around 5C by noon. Later in the afternoon rain arrived, signalling an end to this spell of exceptionally early, cold & snowy weather.

From 1992-2009 inclusive there was a snow cover at my site in Penzance at 0900 on a total of 6 days. In 2010 the total to 3rd December was already 9. Of these, 5 occurred in January & 4 in this spell.

Graham
Penzance