

WEATHER 2006 PARKHEAD CLIMATOLOGICAL STATION

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That was the record year that was. The BBC weather-men emphasised before half time that it could break records, it did not disappoint. They had no hesitation in declaring it the warmest year for Scotland since their record began, and they have 60 year normals compared with our Parkhead records only stretching back 30 years.

There is a problem though. When the BBC says average temperature, they are averaging temperature recordings made on a continuous (hourly) basis at multiple sites, but the Parkhead normals are in the form of average maxima and average minima. In addition, in 2006 the Parkhead station which can now make hourly temperature measurements, did this for only 10 months, and no reliable rain data were collected. For the missing months (February and December), and all the rain data we are indebted to Mr. Niel Bielby, of Dunblane for substitute measurements.

The nearest one can get to an average temperature from these records, is to average the minima and maxima assuming they vary in a linear manner. I've tried it, and as you might guess, the relationship is not linear.

January and February taken together were relatively mild and dry. Day time maxima were average, but cloudy nights were almost a whole degree warmer and had a smaller number than average of air-frosts. January is usually our wettest month, and February our 6th, but only 56 % fell last year. That's interesting against what would overall be a +25 % wetter than average year. Our subjective recollections however can be different – the days with some rain ie “>0.2 mm rain” were very close to average at one day in 2.

March was significantly colder and wetter (169 % ave. rain) than average. Predictions of the “warmest year yet” looked bold. Never the less, a remarkable number of daffodils were in bloom for St David's day – a trick we once believed only the Welsh could pull off.

The beginning of the month was actually cold and dry and very sunny, in a northerly veering easterly airflow. Temperatures elsewhere were more extreme: -16°C in Altnaharra on the 2nd, -10°C at Stranraer on the 4th and -7.2°C in Dunblane also on the 2nd, making it the coldest night of the year locally.

On the 11th, Atlantic fronts moved in against this cold air and most areas had a good covering of snow before it turned to rain. Glasgow measured 22 cm and locally 27 cm was recorded.

A foot note to March might be to suggest we have a micro-climate, for Scotland as a whole did not have an especially wet March (106 % ave. rain)

April continued with low temperatures by day and near average rain fall. But look again at the number of days with some rain blowing in the air (>0.2 mm days). More than half were cloudy and wet.

In **May** the day/night temperatures at least came close to normal but the dreach weather continued with 60% more rain, and 50% more wet days than average. With all the cloud it is not unsurprising that air frost in both April and May were less than 50% normal.

The summer. Locally, June and September were not the warmest months of the year, that title goes to July and August as one would expect, but they stand out as being nearly 2 degrees warmer than their averages and that has an obvious bearing on our memory of a long warmer summer. September did unfortunately – except for plants – herald the beginning of our rainy season.

July and August were in most ways unexceptional at Parkhead as the data shows. Interestingly, July was the month that the BBC picked as the month that was 3 degrees warmer than average, but see the earlier remarks a data recording.

Out of our area some really high temperatures were recorded. For example Aberdeen recorded 30°C on 17th July, Wisley, Surrey 36.5°C (a new UK record) on 19th July, Aboyne 28°C on 14th Aug, the Moray coast 24°C in mid-September, but would you believe that Altnahara recorded an air frost on the 26th June, and Tulloch bridge on the 14th July!

In October and November the mild but very wet trend continued. The nightly minima remained consistently high, and we recorded our first and only November frost since the 10th April on 3rd November. Even after that temperatures rose again with the rain to end the month with nightly lows of only of 5-10 deg.

December continued a run of 4 really very wet months, (rain fall 190 % average). Those last 4 months produced 55 % vs 40 % normal of the rain in what was already a year with 125 % average rainfall.

Unfortunately this did little for the December day time temperatures which fell well below average for the first time since March. Another footnote of caution though is indicated because apparently we had, Scotland wide, a mild December (a full 1 degree C warmer than average).

So how should we remember 2006 in the Stirling area? Well, perhaps no individual day or month broke any record at Parkhead, but we had a winter/spring of grey days with few nightly frosts, benefiting early flowerings and perhaps survival of more pests, a summer which started earlier and went on longer with more warm evenings. Finally we had an autumn which was exceptionally mild, even if only our heating bills really benefited.

Table 1 Temperature readings Parkhead Climatological Station
February to December 2005

	mean - maxima		mean - minima		Number of Air Frosts	
January	6.7	(6.5)*	1.4	(0.5)	9	(13)
February	6.8	(6.9)	1.6	(0.8)	3**	(11)
March	7.0	(9.1)	1.3	(1.9)	9	(7)
April	11.6	(11.8)	3.1	(3.4)	2	(4)
May	15.3	(15.3)	6.0	(5.8)	0	(1)
June	19.4	(17.7)	10.0	(8.4)	0	(<1)
July	19.7**	(19.8)	10.9**	(10.6)	0	(0)
August	19.6	(19.4)	10.8	(10.2)	0	(0)
September	18.7	(16.3)	9.5	(8.3)	0	(<1)
October	14.6	(12.9)	8.0	(5.4)	0	(2)
November	9.9	(9.2)	4.5	(2.6)	1	(8)
December	5.7**	(7.2)	1.2**	(1.1)	10	(11)
Year January-December 2006	13.6	(13.2)	6.2	(5.3)	34	(44)

Table 2 Rainfall and Wind Feb.-Dec. 2005 Parkhead Climatological Station

	Total rain (mm)	Greatest fall (mm)	Number of days >0.2 mm	Number of days >1.0 mm	Number of days >5 mm	mean Wind strength (m/s)	Gust max. at time, date (m/s)
January	58.4 (110.7)	11.9 (40.0)	16 (19)	9 (16)	4 (8)	0.4 .	12.5N 11.00, 11/01
February	45.3 (73.2)	10.0 (31.8)	15 (16)	8 (12)	3 (5)	0.4 .	8.0SW 13.00, 07/02
March	138 (81.4)	26.0 (44.0)	19 (17)	16 (14)	8 (5)	0.8 .	10.7 E 21.00, 24/03
April	39.6 (47.5)	6.0 (35.3)	17 (13)	11 (10)	2 (3)	0.7 .	12.1 W SW 13.00, 22/04
May	92.3 (56.9)	10.9 (28.3)	20 (14)	17 (11)	7 (4)	0.9 .	12.1 WSW 13.00, 22/05
June	61.4 (57.1)	20.3 (35.8)	10 (13)	9 (10)	4 (4)	0.9 .	10.7 WSW 09.00, 21/06
July	44.0** (62.9)	12.3 (65.5)	11 (13)	6 (10)	4 (5)	0.4 .	9.4 WSW 17.00, 12/07
August	56.8 (68.1)	14.9 (30.0)	15 (14)	9 (11)	4 (5)	0.6 .	8.9 WSW 21.00, 18/08
September	145.8 (87.7)	36.5** (44.2)	22 (15)	19 (12)	8 (6)	0.5 .	8.9 WSW 11.00, 18/09
October	126.5 (97.9)	21.7 (66.2)	22 (17)	17 (14)	10 (6)	0.3 .	13 WSW** 10.00, 31/10
November	198** (98.9)	21.1 (68.3)	22 (17)	19 (14)	16 (7)	0.5 .	12.5 SW 19.00, 23/11
December	193 (101.0)	26.8 (43.8)	19 (18)	19 (15)	10 (7)		n/a
Year Jan.-Dec. 2006	1199 (943.3)	36.5** (68.3)	186 (186)	159 (149)	80 (65)	0.6 .	13.0 WSW**

* Climatological normals 30yrs 1971-2000 are shown in ()s

**high/low of the year



On 14 December 2006 direct links between Stirling and both Bridge of Allan and Causewayhead were blocked by floodwater. The photographs are of the railway bridge on the Causewayhead road and of Cornton road by the playing fields and allotments (below). Courtesy of Allan Water News.