

Storm Goretta 8 to 9 January 2026

Storm Goretta, named by Météo France, brought damaging winds to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly on 8 to 9 January 2026. A gust of 86Kt (99mph) was recorded at St Mary's Airport, the highest wind speed recorded on the Isles of Scilly for 47 years, and this was one of the most impactful storms to affect the far south-west in recent decades. Goretta was a multi-hazard storm, also bringing widespread lying snow on the northern flank to much of Wales, parts of the West Midlands and the South Pennines.

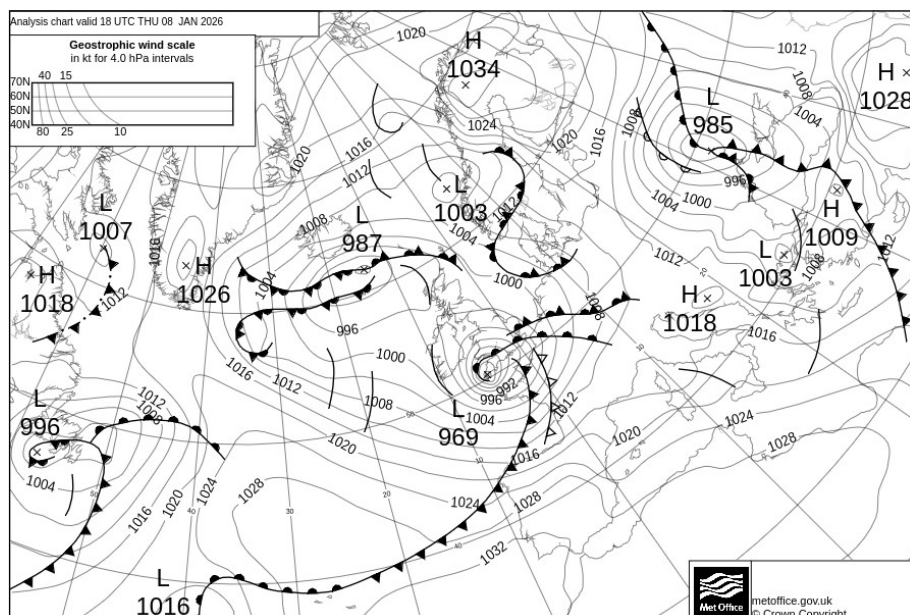
Impacts

Storm Goretta brought widespread wind impacts across Devon, Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly and the Channel Islands, with fallen trees, property damage and transport disruption. Tragically one man died in Helston when a tree fell on a caravan. Debris blocked roads and all train services in Cornwall were suspended. Tens of thousands of properties lost power and around 15,000 properties were reported without water supplies in Helston and the Lizard. Schools in the red warning area were closed. Yachts were blown over at a shipyard near Falmouth and the roofs of the grandstand at the Cornish Pirates ground in Penzance, and Truro Cathedral were damaged. Residents in Grampound, Cornwall were evacuated due to a suspected gas leak caused by fallen trees. Almost 100 trees at St Michael's Mount near Penzance were felled, and a quarter of the large mature trees at Trewithen house and gardens were also reported as felled. A number of graves were disturbed after trees were uprooted at a cemetery near Mousehole. Several containers were reported to have fallen from cargo ships off the Isle of Wight.

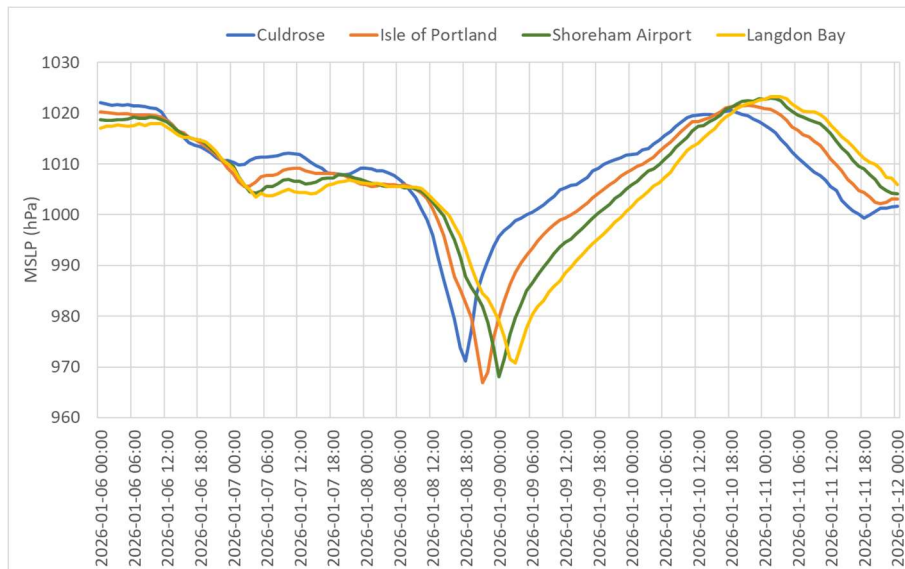
The widespread snow also caused significant impacts and disruption. Birmingham Airport suspended runway operations, some rail services were cancelled and some roads were closed, with motorists advised to avoid high routes. Dozens of schools were also closed.

Weather data

The analysis chart at 1800 UTC 8 January 2026 shows storm Goretta tracking east along the south coast with the low pressure centre over Cornwall. The strongest winds were in the area of tightest isobars in a narrow swathe immediately south-west of the low pressure centre.



The chart below shows hourly mean sea level pressure at four stations along the south coast – Culdrose (Cornwall), Isle of Portland (Dorset), Shoreham Airport (West Sussex) and Langdon Bay (Kent) – indicating the passage of storm Gorette. The strongest winds typically coincide with the rapid increase in pressure immediately following the passage of the storm centre.



The image below shows the Met Office shipping forecast for the area of Plymouth issued on the morning of 8 January 2026. This area extends across the English Channel from Devon and Cornwall to the Brittany coast. Only the most powerful Atlantic storms would result in Hurricane Force 12 winds being forecast, with the sea state high or very high, resulting in large waves and extremely dangerous conditions around exposed coastlines.

Plymouth

GALE WARNING
 Issued: 09:48 (UTC) on Thu 8 Jan 2026

Southwesterly gale force 8 increasing violent storm force 11 imminent, veering westerly and increasing hurricane force 12 soon

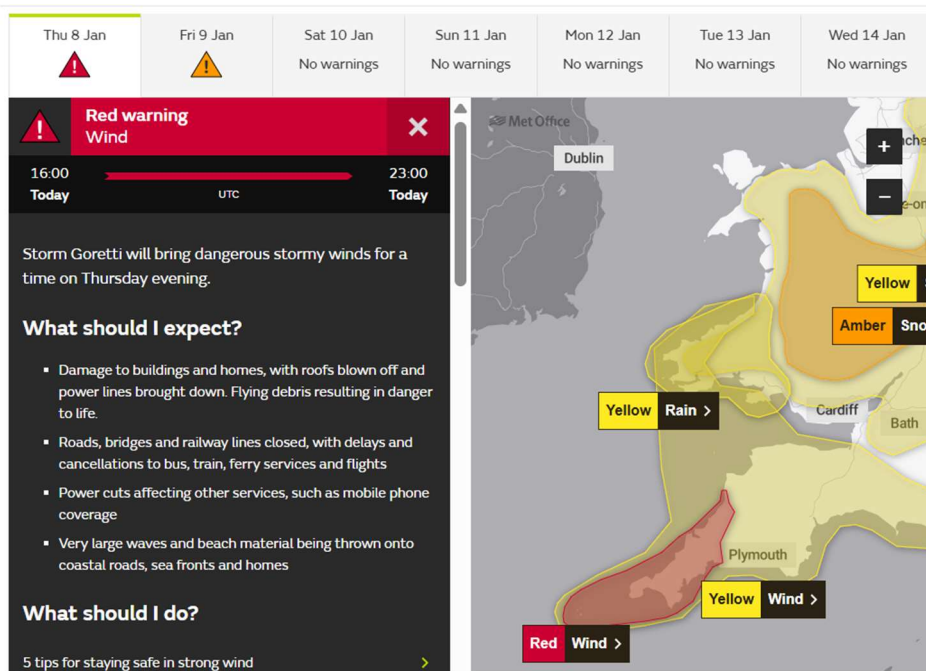
WIND
 Cyclonic becoming northwest 6 to gale 8, increasing storm 10 to hurricane force 12 for a time.

SEA STATE
 Rough or very rough, becoming high or very high for a time.

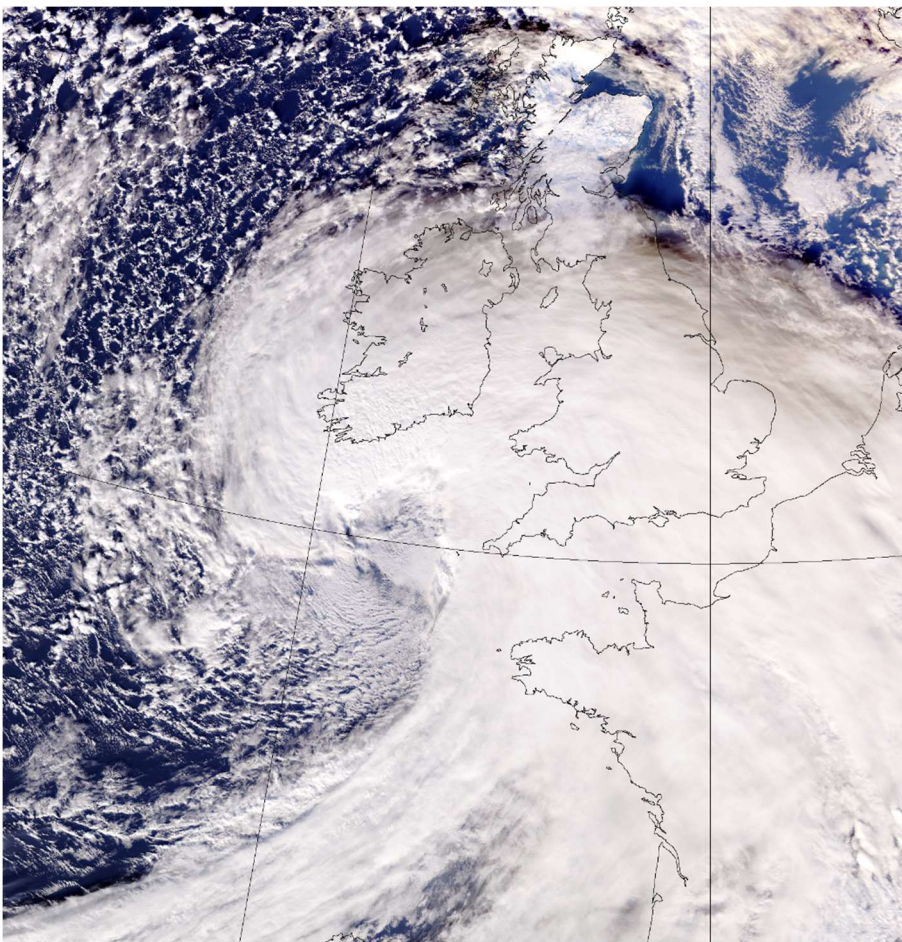
WEATHER
 Rain.

VISIBILITY
 Moderate or poor.

The image below shows the Met Office red warning for wind issued for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly for the evening of 8 January 2026. A red warning means danger to life with a need to take action. Such warnings are only issued infrequently; in recent years there has typically been only around one such warning per year issued in the UK (although every year is different). The last such warning for wind covering the north coast of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly was storm Eunice on 18 February 2022 – although the Jersey Met Service issued a red wind warning for storm Ciarán on 1 to 2 November 2023. More widely, the most recent red wind warning issued in the UK was for storm Éowyn on 24 January 2025 - across southern Scotland and Northern Ireland. An amber warning was also issued for snow from Gorette covering much of Wales, the West Midlands and extending into the Peak District.

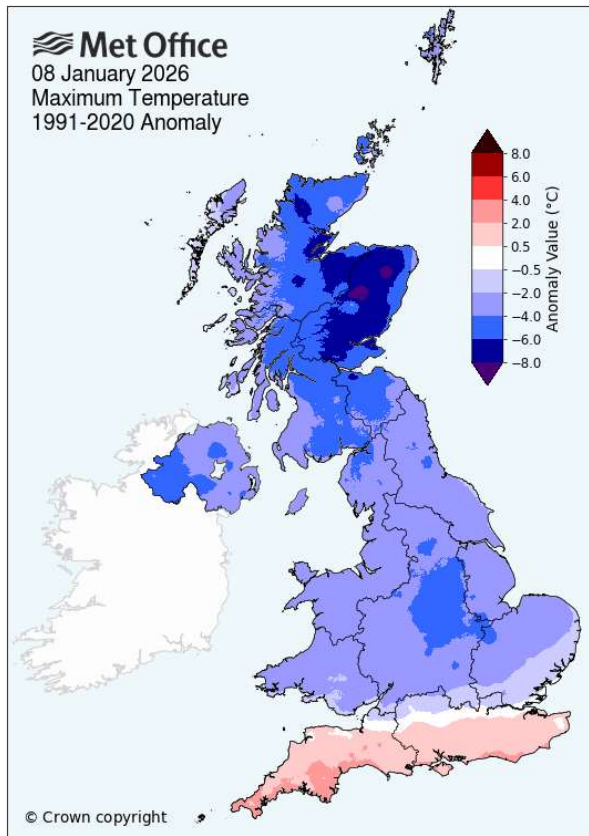


The visible satellite image on 8 January 2026 shows storm Goretta, with the low pressure centre on this stage to the south of Ireland, and much of the UK concealed by the warm front ahead of the storm. In contrast, there are clear skies and lying snow across northern Scotland. Image copyright Met Office / NOAA / NASA.

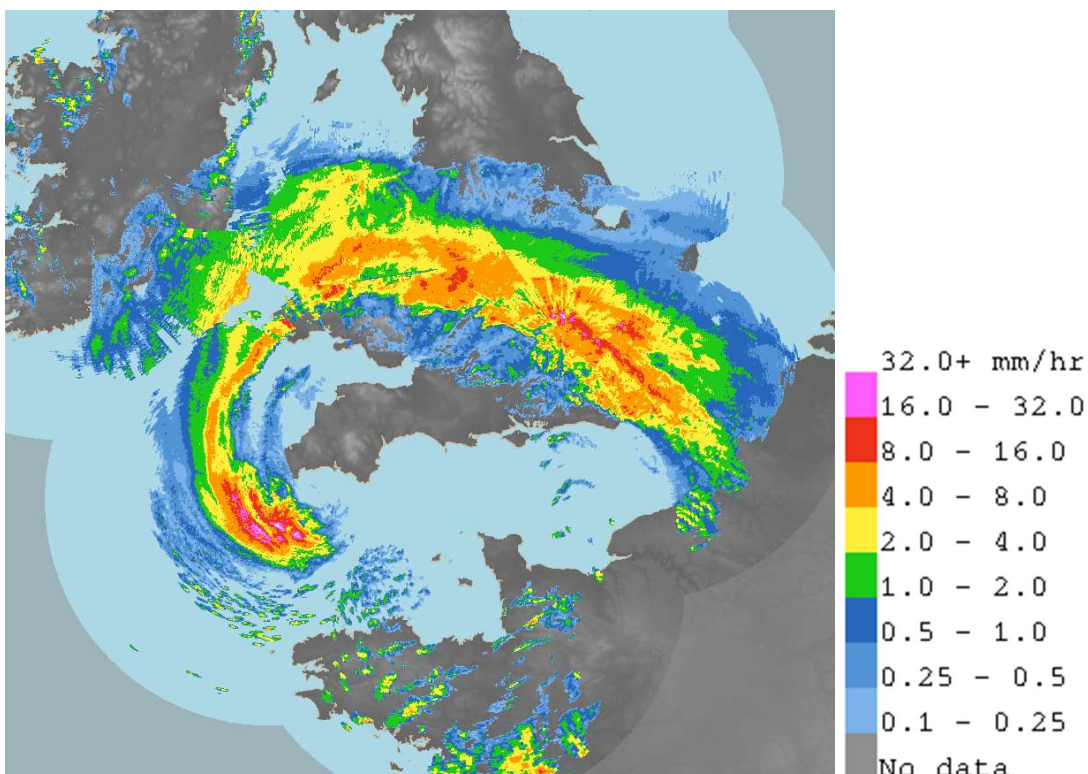


The map of daily maximum temperatures on 8 January 2026 relative to the 1991-2020 January long-term average shows the abrupt temperature contrast between the south of England and the rest of the UK, associated with the passage of storm Goretta. At Yeovilton (Somerset), the daily

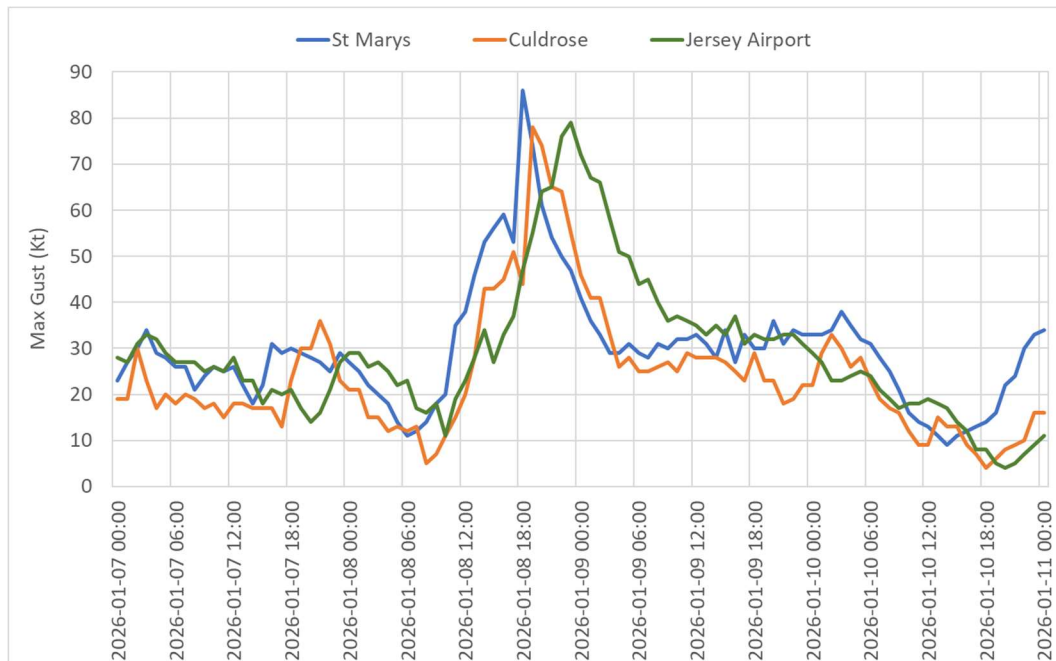
maximum reached 10.8°C, compared to only 4.5°C at Westonbirt (Gloucestershire) – a contrast of over 6°C in a distance of less than 80km.



The rain-radar image at 1830UTC 8 January 2026 shows heavy rain within the warm front stretching from Kent to central Wales, marking the boundary between cold air to the north and warmer air to the south, and the low pressure centre to the south of Cornwall. While parts of south-east England experienced persistent heavy rain, this fell as snow across central and North Wales, the Birmingham area and the southern Peak District.

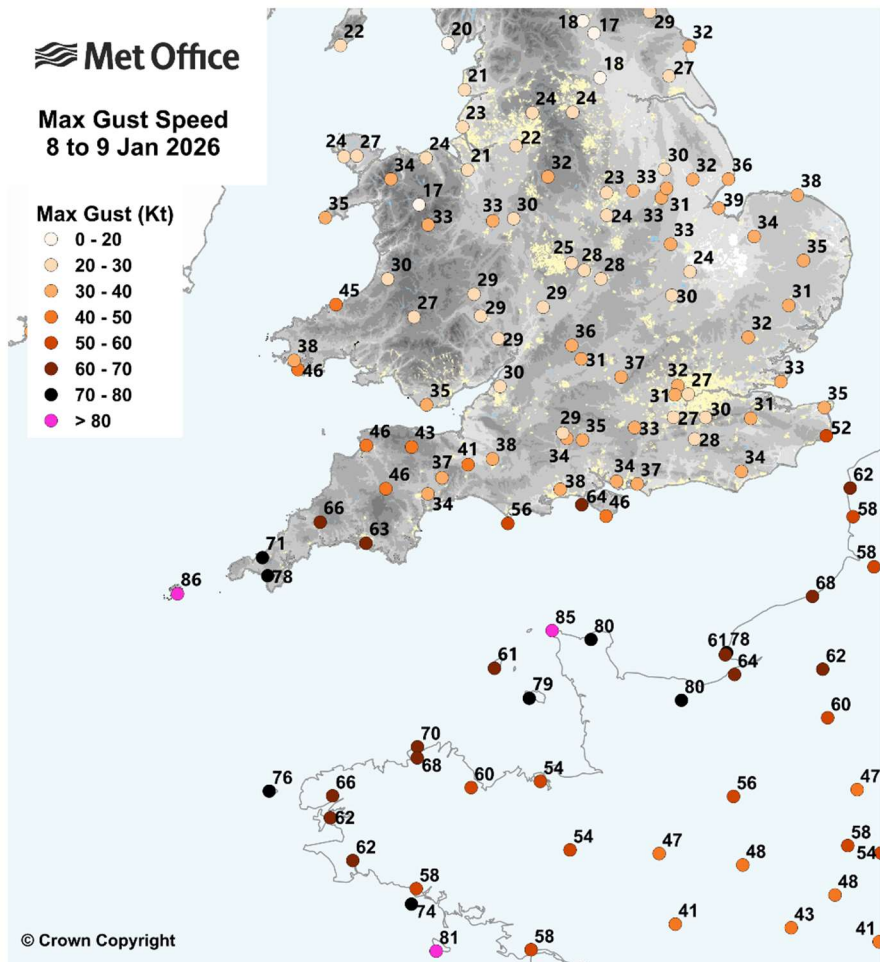


The chart shows hourly maximum gust speeds at St Mary's Airport (Isles of Scilly), Culdrose (Cornwall) and Jersey Airport (Channel Islands) during storm Gorette. The highest gusts at these stations were 86Kt (99mph) at St Mary's Airport, 78Kt (90mph) at Culdrose and 79Kt (91mph) at Jersey Airport.



The map below shows maximum gust speeds from 8 to 9 January 2026 recorded across the southern half of the UK and in northern France and the Channel Islands during storm Gorette.

The 86Kt gust at St Mary's Airport was the highest gust recorded on the Isles of Scilly since 15 December 1979, when a gust of 99Kt (114mph) was recorded. A gust of 80Kt (92mph) or more has only been recorded on the Isles of Scilly on four occasions in observational records from 1973: 99Kt (114mph) on 15 December 1979, 86Kt (99mph) on 8 January 2026, 82Kt (94mph) on 16 January 1974 and 80Kt (92mph) on 4 February 2014 – so storm Gorette saw the highest recorded gust here for 47 years. At Culdrose, this was the highest gust since 82Kt (94mph) on 4 January 1998, but the highest gust on record at this station is 89Kt (102mph) during the Burn's Day storm of 25 January 1990. Overall, Gorette was one of the most impactful storms to affect Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly in several decades.



For comparison, the further maps below show maximum gust speeds for two of the most powerful wind storms to hit the south-west in observational records: 15 December 1979 and 25 January 1990. 15 December 1979 saw much higher gusts across Scilly and west Cornwall, including a gust of 103Kt (119mph) at Gwennap Head – an exposed headline near Land’s End: this held the previous England gust speed record until it was exceeded by 106Kt (122mph) at Needles Old Battery (Isle of Wight) during storm Eunice on 18 February 2022. The Burn’s Day storm of 25 January 1990 was among the most severe wind-storms to hit the UK in observational records, with widespread gusts of over 70Kt (81mph) across inland parts of southern England and numerous coastal stations exceeding 80Kt (92mph): this storm resulted in almost 50 fatalities in the UK.

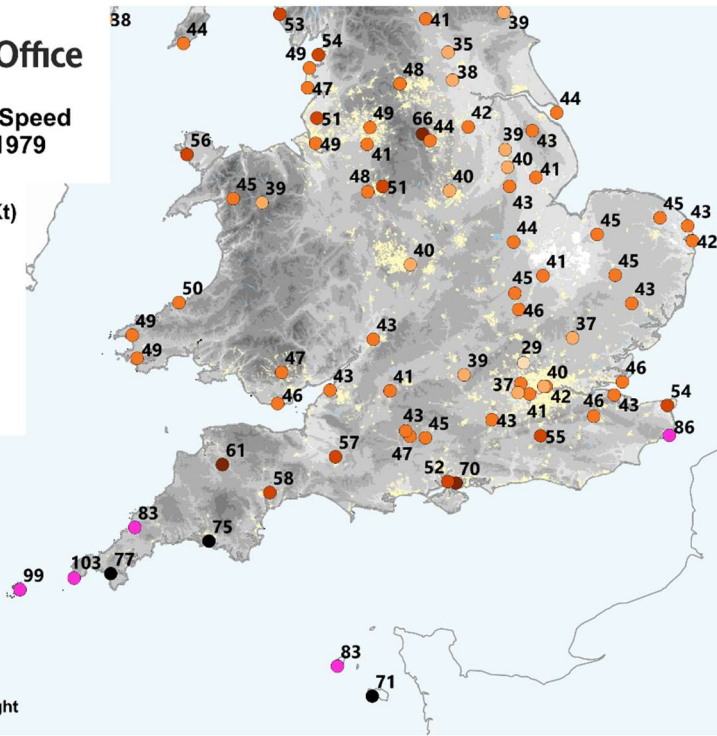
Overall, Goretta was less severe than either of these storms, with the strongest winds affecting a smaller area. A more recent comparison is storm Ciarán on 1 to 2 November 2023; the analysis charts below showing a striking similarity between these events.



Max Gust Speed 15 Dec 1979

Max Gust (Kt)

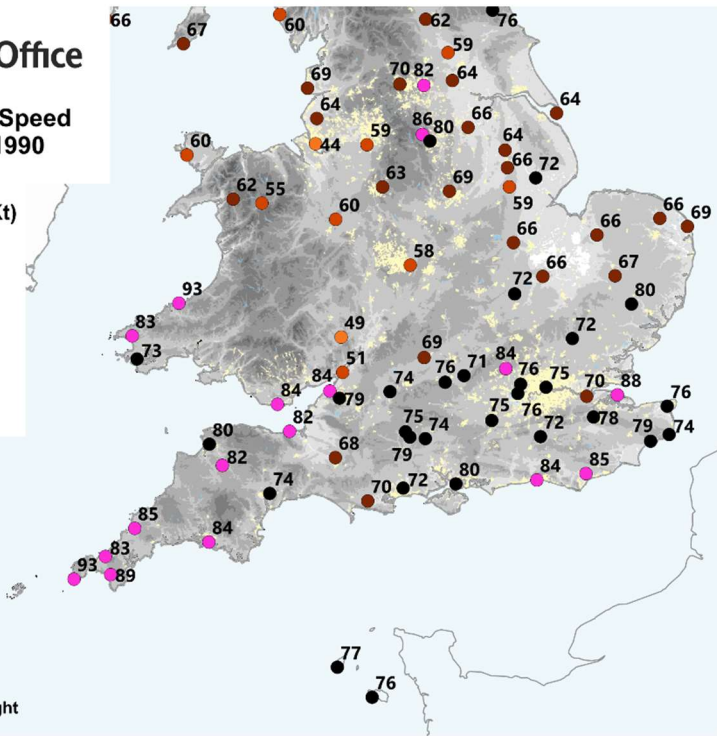
- 0 - 20
- 20 - 30
- 30 - 40
- 40 - 50
- 50 - 60
- 60 - 70
- 70 - 80
- > 80



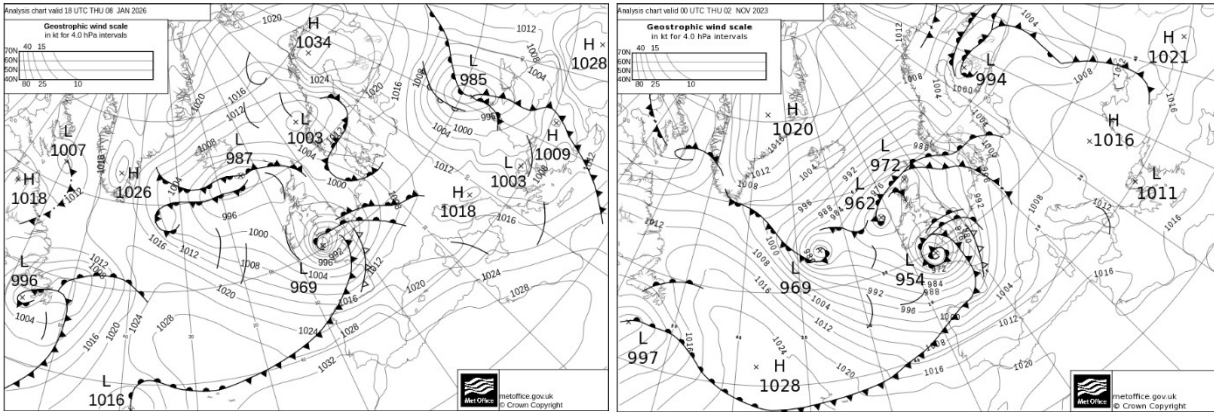
Max Gust Speed 25 Jan 1990

Max Gust (Kt)

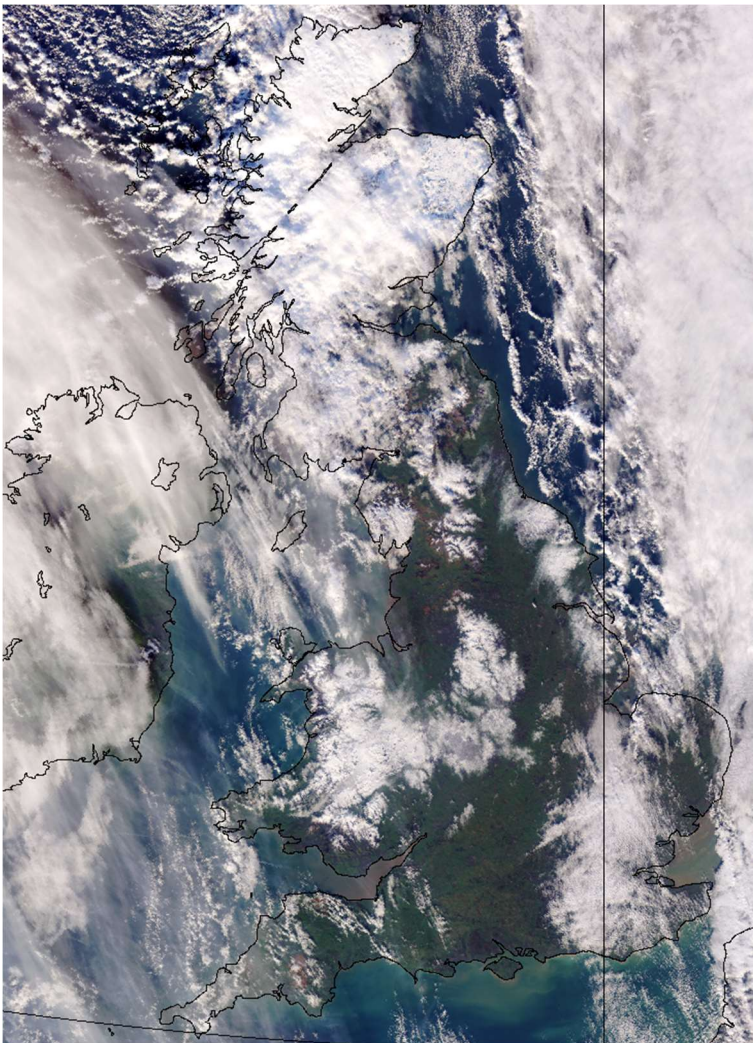
- 0 - 20
- 20 - 30
- 30 - 40
- 40 - 50
- 50 - 60
- 60 - 70
- 70 - 80
- > 80



Below: analysis charts comparing storm Goretta at 1800UTC 8 January 2026 (left) and storm Ciarán at 0000UTC 2 November 2023 (right)

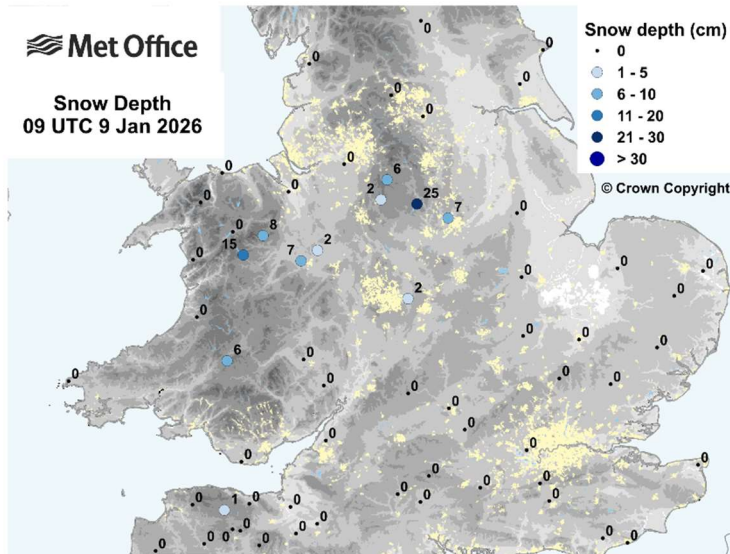


Storm Goretta brought lying snow on the northern flank in a swathe across much of Wales, Birmingham and the West Midlands extending into the Peak District. The map below on 10 January 2026 shows the spatial extent of this lying snow. The Birmingham urban area is clearly visible in pale grey. Northern Scotland is also covered in lying snow from the cold, wintry spell at the start of the New Year, with lying snow also visible in the Lake District, north Pennines and Southern Uplands. Some of the snow from Goretta on 8th would have melted by this stage, but a visible satellite image showing lying snow cover is not available for 9th as most of the UK was concealed below cloud on this date. Image copyright Met Office / NOAA / NASA.



The map below shows snow depths at 0900 UTC 9 January 2026. Snow depths were generally fairly modest, but totals were greater across high ground. For example there was 15cm at Lake

Vyrnwy (Powys), at 360 masl) and 25cm at Middleton (Derbyshire, at 295 masl). (The map is based on data available at time of publication).



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Last updated 16/01/2026

