Meteorology and the Internet – Climatological information

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As someone who has had a home page on the World Wide Web (WWW) pointing to a variety of data sources for some time, I am frequently asked about WWW sites that provide climatological information. Such enquiries may be prompted by forthcoming holiday trips, or (quite often) by school projects. In this, the fifth of a series of infrequent articles describing sources of meteorological information available on the Internet, I shall give a few pointers to such data. I shall be pleased to learn of other sources, which I shall add to my home page (A in Table 1).

British Isles

Data for the British Isles are available from a variety of sites. The Meteorological Office (B) provides a small amount of information (mainly textual and graphical) on sunshine, rainfall, wind, temperature, snow and visibility based upon their *Climatological Memorandum* series. My own page on UK (and Irish) climate (C) points to a variety of sources, including tabulated averages for the period 1961–90 provided by Met Eireann, on a page belonging to *The Irish Times* (D), for 15 locations.

Dave Wheeler (a climatological observer living in Fair Isle) has a page of data devoted to Scotland (E) which includes information on days with lying snow. Extreme weather events are detailed in a page provided by the Tornado and Storm Research Organisation (F) – this site includes month-by-month listings of extreme temperatures recorded in Britain.

Time-series

Mike Hulme, of the Climate Research Unit, University of East Anglia, provides pages of information covering Central England Temperature (CET, G), Lamb daily weather types (H), and England and Wales precipitation (I), in conjunction with the Meteorological Office. The CET data can also be seen via the Hadley Centre site (J).

World-wide information

The most widely quoted source of climatological information is to be found at the site of Buttle and Tuttle Limited (K); this site pro-

Table 1 Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) for sites mentioned in this article

	URL of site
A	http://www.met.rdg.ac.uk/~brugge
B	http://www.met-office.gov.uk/sec3/climate.html
C	http://www.met.rdg.ac.uk/~brugge/ukclimate.html
D	http://www.ireland.com/weather/climate.htm
E	http://www.zetnet.co.uk/sigs/weather/scotclim/scotclim.html
F	http://www.torro.org.uk/extremes.htm
G	http://www.cru.uea.ac.uk/~mikeh/datasets/uk/cet.htm
H	http://www.cru.uea.ac.uk/~mikeh/datasets/uk/lamb.htm
I	http://www.cru.uea.ac.uk/~mikeh/datasets/uk/engwales.htm
J	http://www.met-office.gov.uk/sec5/CR_div/UK_Climate/index.html
K	http://www.worldclimate.com/
L	http://www.wtgonline.com/navigate/world.asp
M	http://washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/weather/historical/historical/htm
N	http://itu.rdg.ac.uk/rms/servers.html
O	http://www.ugems.psu.edu/~owens/climo.html
P	ftp://ftp.ncdc.noaa.gov/pub/data/mcdw
Q	http://www-imk.physik.uni-karlsruhe.de/~muehr/Climate/all.html
R	http://www.netlink.co.uk/users/bws/stats.html
S	http://www.met.rdg.ac.uk/~brugge/hurley.html
T	http://www.zetnet.co.uk/sigs/weather
U	http://www.meteo.physik.uni-muenchen.de/~paul/tygwr.html
V	http://www.coyney.demon.co.uk/page4.html

vides a searchable index – simply enter the name of the place you want to know about and (in many cases) averages for a variety of elements and for several different periods are provided. Columbus Group plc has a world travel guide (L) which provides climatological graphs. Many of the on-line American newspapers provide searchable listings of climatological averages – one of the best is the *Washington Post* (M).

Many national meteorological services provide a limited amount of climatological data and information, and a good starting point in the hunt for these services is the Royal Meteorological Society's page (N). Some climatological data for the USA may also be available via the State and Regional Climate Centres (O) there. The National Climate Data Center produces a monthly tabulation of the weather (P) at hundreds of places world-wide. By combining the actual monthly averages, rainfall and sunshine totals with the anomalies (both are provided by the publication) it is possible to deduce the long-term averages for most of these places. Finally, a comprehensive set of easy-to-access climatological diagrams is provided by Bernhard Mühr at the University of Karlsruhe (Q).

UK individual weather station climatologies

Increasingly, individual WWW sites are springing up that provide comprehensive climatological data for single locations. Those for Bablake (near Coventry) (R), Maidenhead and Hurley (S) and Fair Isle (T) are good examples. Also available is information from Ty'n y Graean (in north-east Wales) (U), Stoke-on-Trent (V), and many others.

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Pen portraits of Presidents – David Wilson Barker, RNR, FRSE

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David Wilson Barker (or Wilson-Barker in some sources) was born on 1 October 1858, son of another D. Wilson Barker, of Welsh Mill House, Frome, Somerset. He was educated at Lord Weymouth's Grammar School, Warminster, until 1871, when he became a cadet at the nautical training college, HMS *Worcester*, founded ten years earlier to provide future officers for the merchant service. After two years in the *Worcester*, Barker went to sea in 1874 at the age of 15. He served in sailing ships of the Blackwall Line, owned by the firm of R. & H. Green (two brothers who had played an important role in the charitable foundation which established the *Worcester*). Blackwall Line frigates were then making regular trips to Australia, as passenger traffic expanded following the discovery of gold (Lubbock 1924). The sailing ship route to Australia involved navigation in high southern latitudes, and Barker's later scientific enthusiasms owed much to his early seafaring experiences. Not surprisingly, these led to a lifelong interest in maritime meteorology, and a wish to contribute by observation to improved scientific understanding both of weather and the sea. Barker's obituary in *Nature* (Anon. 1941) speaks of him as "a born seaman and natural scientist".

Barker's first published scientific communications appeared in the *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society* during the early 1880s and contained observations on meteors and the great comet of 1882. However, during these years, making long passages under sail, there was time to develop his interest in many aspects of science and natural history. He became a keen ornithologist and photographer, as well as a regular meteorological observer. His first listed meteorological contribution was a paper on the storms of high southern latitudes given to the Royal Society of Victoria in 1882. He had joined the Royal Meteorological