

Meteotsunami in the United Kingdom: the hidden hazard

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1 **Meteotsunami in the United Kingdom: The hidden hazard.**

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11 **Abstract.**

12 This paper examined the occurrence and seasonality of meteotsunami in the United Kingdom (UK) to present a
13 revised and updated catalogue of events occurring since 1750. Previous case studies have alluded to a summer
14 prevalence and rarity of this hazard in the UK. We have verified and classified 95 events using a developed set of
15 identification criteria. The results have revealed a prominent seasonal pattern of winter events which are related
16 to mid latitude depressions with precipitating convective weather systems. A geographical pattern has also
17 emerged, highlighting three ‘hotspot’ areas at the highest risk from meteotsunami. The evidence reviewed, and
18 new data presented here shows that the hazard posed by meteotsunami has been underestimated in the UK.

19

20 Keywords: meteotsunami, UK, hazard, mid latitude depressions.

21

22 **1 Introduction.**

23 Meteotsunamis or meteorological tsunamis are globally occurring progressive shallow water waves with a period
24 between 2 to 120 minutes that results from air-sea interactions. They tend to be initiated by sudden pressure
25 changes (± 1 mb over a few tens of minutes) and wind stress from moving atmospheric systems with sources
26 ranging from convective clouds, cyclones, squalls, thunderstorms, atmospheric gravity waves and strong mid-
27 tropospheric winds (Vilibic and Sepic, 2017). The characteristics of the atmospheric disturbance transfers energy
28 into the ocean initiating and amplifying a water wave that travels at the same speed as the atmospheric wave in a
29 process known as Proudman resonance (Proudman, 1929). When the water wave reaches the coastline, it is further
30 amplified through coastal resonances such as shoaling and refraction which can vary substantially between
31 locations (Sepic et al, 2012). The resultant waves can elevate the coastal water level and can substantially increase



32 flow velocities with the potential for rip currents (Linares et al, 2019). Due to the rapid onset and unexpected
33 nature of meteotsunami waves, they have the potential to cause destruction, injuries and even fatalities (Sibley et
34 al, 2016). For an overview of meteotsunami dynamics or specific case study events see Vilibic, Rabinovitch and
35 Anderson, (2021), Williams et al (2019), Dusek et al (2019), Belche et al (2016) and Pattiaratchi and Wijeratne
36 (2015).

37

38 Meteotsunami research and monitoring is more advanced in the Mediterranean, the East Coast of the USA, and
39 the Great Lakes due to the high frequency of recorded events. However, events in the UK appear to be rare and
40 are believed to be less devastating, meaning that research has been limited to date.

41 The two principal factors contributing to this belief are:

- 42 1. The current (since 1993) 15 minute sampling interval that is used on UK tide gauges is incapable of
43 detecting waves with periods of between 2 – 120 minutes. This means that many events go unobserved,
44 wave heights are underestimated, or meteotsunamis are mischaracterized as seiches, tsunamis or surge.
- 45 2. Until recently research has suggested that UK meteotsunamis are generated by precipitating, convective
46 weather systems associated with hot weather. Such mesoscale convective systems may be associated
47 with synoptic “Spanish plume” events. These synoptic events are themselves more prevalent between
48 May - October (Haslett et al, 2009b; Tappin et al, 2013; Sibley, 2012 and 2016; Thompson, 2020),
49 leading to the belief that meteotsunami are summer-time phenomena. However, it is now emerging that
50 embedded convection within winter frontal systems may also be responsible for a sizeable proportion
51 of these waves (Williams et al 2021).

52 Several issues have results from the untested assumption that meteotsunami events are 1) low frequency and 2)
53 predominantly occur in summer, which has been combined with 3) the lack of high-resolution temporal data.
54 Firstly, there is no central database of UK events. Secondly, there is no standardised methodology of meteotsunami
55 identification. Thirdly, there is no Government or regional policy in place to cover future adaptation strategies in
56 the case of sea-level rise. There is an underappreciation and misconception of the risk posed by meteotsunami
57 especially for coastal areas that are already at risk from storm impacts associated with pluvial (extreme
58 precipitation) and fluvial hazards (high levels of river discharge). In the future this risk is likely to be greatly
59 exacerbated by rising sea levels and an intensification of storm frequency and severity (Vilibic et al 2018,
60 Masselink et al 2015).

61 As stated by Sepic et al, (2015) the assessment of meteotsunami should become the standard in coastal hazard
62 assessments, event cataloguing is a pre-requisite for any coastal hazard assessment especially in identifying the



63 geographical areas that have experienced meteotsunami and the frequency of exposure. We identify a need for an
64 updated UK meteotsunami catalogue to aid in the coastal management decision making process.

65 The aim of this paper is to continue Williams et al (2021) work on meteotsunami in Northwest Europe by
66 localising the hazard to UK waters. We introduce an updated and enhanced catalogue of UK meteotsunami events
67 allowing for the highlighting of seasonal occurrence, frequency, and spatial distribution of this hazard. This is
68 done by applying specific identification criteria to the re-assessment of historical accounts along with tide gauge
69 and atmospheric data. The outcome is to provide a new insight into the potential element of compound hazard
70 risk which may occur when meteotsunami waves arrive at the coast in short succession or concurrently with other
71 storm associated hazards.

72 We propose the following research questions:

- 73 1. What standardised criteria should be used to identify meteotsunami?
- 74 2. Have events occurred which were ignored or misidentified?
- 75 3. In which regions of the UK and in what months do meteotsunami occur most frequently?
- 76 4. Are the same set of atmospheric variables identified as factors of a meteotsunami?

77

78 **2 Methodology.**

79 This section outlines the data sources and identification criteria used to fulfil the objective of cataloguing and
80 characterising UK meteotsunami. We have tried to extrapolate as much quantitative data as possible, verify the
81 event with the standardised criteria and then to arrange the results into tabular form to allow ease of use (Table
82 1).

83

84 **2.1 Meteotsunami identification criteria.**

85 As there is currently no fixed criteria for what qualifies as a meteotsunami, in this paper we bring together various
86 aspects used by other researchers in the field, into one standardised system. Figure 1 (a – d) displays a visual
87 representation of the commonly used criteria, which we explain in more detail in sections 2.1.1 – 2.1.2. The
88 methodologies that have been previously used by researchers and studies have varies, with some using qualitative
89 that base events on eyewitness accounts (Haslett et al, 2009a/b) and others using quantitative sea level and
90 atmospheric observations (Tappin et al, 2013; Sibley, 2016). In this paper we classify meteotsunami as
91 atmospherically induced sea level oscillations meeting at least one sea level and one atmospheric characteristic
92 from the following subcategories which allow for the distinguishing of meteotsunami from other types of
93 waveform and is applicable to either qualitative accounts or quantitative data.



94

95 **2.1.1 Sea level criteria (Category 1).**

- 96 a. Periods of sea level disturbance ranging from between 2 and 120 minutes (Figure 1a).
- 97 b. Wave heights exceeding 0.20 m. The threshold used here matches 0.2 m as used by Dusek et al (2019)
- 98 on the East Coast of North America and encompasses 0.3 m as used by Belche et al (2016) at the Great
- 99 Lakes and as used by Monserrat, Vilibic and Rabinovich (2006). The average wave height is 0.3 m as
- 100 taken from 38 global events represented in Pattiaratchi and Wijeratne (2015), Vilibic and Sepic (2017)
- 101 and Heidarzadeh et al (2019). A 0.3 m water elevation may not appear to be dangerous, but a
- 102 meteotsunami in 2003 in New Zealand caused a fully laden oil tanker to be grounded through strong
- 103 currents (Goring, 2009). Lynett et al (2014) also states that any wave over 0.3 m will start to float vehicles
- 104 regardless of flow velocity. (Figure 1a illustrates the meteotsunami wave height criteria in the data as
- 105 recorded on 27 June 2011).
- 106 c. A wave disturbance registering at two or more locations or tide gauge stations (Williams et al 2021; Kim
- 107 et al 2021).

108 **2.1.2 Atmospheric criteria (Category 2).**

- 109 a. The presence of a convective weather system at the time of the wave event displaying high radar
- 110 reflectivity with precipitation rates exceeding 2 mm/h^{-1} initiated over the sea. (Figure 2b represents the
- 111 radar reflectivity of various convective weather systems present during four different meteotsunami
- 112 events).
- 113 b. An atmospheric pressure of 1005 mb or less with a rapid change of ± 1 mb in 30 minutes or a 3 mb fall
- 114 over three hours or less (Monserrat, Vilibic and Rabinovich, 2006). (Figure 1c illustrates this distinct air
- 115 pressure change as recorded during the 28 October 2013 event).
- 116 c. Convective Available Potential Energy (CAPE) showing the unstable vertical profile of the atmosphere
- 117 that leads to convective activity (Williams et al. 2019). (Figure 1d displays a radiosonde ascent showing
- 118 sufficient CAPE to produce the event that occurred on 1 July 2015). Even though CAPE is a bulk
- 119 atmospheric measurement and meteotsunami are localised, if this element is present in conjunction with
- 120 the other indicators it supports the presence of convective activity which aids in the generation of
- 121 meteotsunami.



122 d. A change in wind speed exceeding 5 m/s^{-1} (anything under this is too weak for a meteotsunami to
123 generate) or/and a drop in air temperature of 1.5°C in 30 minutes (Figure 1c demonstrates this increase
124 in wind speed as recorded during the 28 October 2013 event).

125 **2.1.3 Geological criteria (Category 3).**

126 a. The absence of any other explanation or data to imply another source trigger to act as a cross reference.
127 For example, the presence of seismic triggers within the continental shelf area which would produce a
128 geological tsunami wave. However, there is one exception to this rule which for the purpose of this paper
129 we include as a meteotsunami event, and this was recently demonstrated on 15 January 2022 when the
130 Tonga Ha'apai volcano erupted in the Pacific Ocean. The force of the explosion sent a shockwave
131 through the atmosphere that circled the globe three times. The resultant pressure wave travelled at close
132 to the speed of sound and as a result coupled with ocean waves to create a meteotsunami which was
133 detected as far away as Portugal and the UK (Burt. S, 2022).

134 To ease the interpretation of results, the UK coastline has been partitioned into six coastal regions based on the
135 National Tidal and Sea Level facility (NTSLF) tide gauge network (Supplementary Table S1). The data are also
136 separated into two six month seasons that divide up the calendar year at the spring and autumn equinoxes (Haigh
137 et al, 2016). April to September is referred to throughout this paper as 'summer' and October to March is referred
138 to as 'winter'. Finally, due to the nature of the accounts two time series of meteotsunami are being referred to
139 throughout this paper, one based primarily on historical eyewitness accounts (the years 1750 to 2009 AD), and
140 one based primarily on instrumental data (the years 2010 to 2022 AD).

141

142 **2.2 Historical record (1750 to 2009).**

143 To gain a complete understanding of these events we follow Long (2015) and Haslett and Bryant (2008) who
144 dated their historic tsunami catalogues back to approximately 1000 AD. We noted any events preceding 1750 AD
145 were vaguely recorded, making validation problematic so we dated our catalogue back to this date. Meteotsunami
146 in historical accounts tend to be focussed on descriptions of the water at the coast so even though records of
147 climate date back to 1850 AD and tide gauge records back to 1895 AD, tracing back the atmospheric source is
148 not as straightforward. It is only until the last few decades that meteorological data with sufficient resolution have
149 been readily available. With tide gauge data, prior to 1993 the resolution was hourly, and it was not until 1996
150 that all the current tide gauge sites became fully operational. Therefore, we have used 2009 as the upper limit of
151 the historical record where the accounts are examined with a more qualitative approach due to the lack of



152 instrumental data. These reports tend to be derived from newspaper articles, parish records, harbourmaster records
153 and eyewitness accounts. Although there is reason to be sceptical of these accounts as they afford a level of biased
154 review and sensationalism, they do still hold value in terms of a societal viewpoint and may help to fill in any
155 gaps (Haslett and Bryant, 2009a/b).

156 There are certain characteristics that flag up in an historical account to verify whether it is a meteotsunami event
157 or not. To illustrate this, we can highlight the historical account for the event of 23 May 1847 where we can look
158 at a letter from Robert Blight of Penzance dated 24 May and published in the Cornwall Royal Gazette on 28 May.
159 The full extract can be found in supplementary extract S1 of this paper and in Long (2015, p26).

160 “... The changes in the atmosphere during the day were very remarkable. In the morning, about six o’clock, we
161 had a breeze from the southeast; by eight, it was a perfect calm; between ten o’clock and two, the mercury sunk
162 several degrees; about three in the afternoon a breeze sprung up suddenly from the west, and the sky, as suddenly,
163 became overcast..... It is very probable that all these changes, and even the agitation of the sea, were produced
164 by electricity...”

165 In this particularly detailed account (supplementary extract S1) we can identify six of the nine criteria, including
166 a drawback and sudden in rush of water, a rumbling noise and the water being higher than expected at eight feet
167 (criteria 1A and 1D), indicating a tsunami (which could be of any origin). The key to identification as a
168 meteotsunami is then in the atmospheric portion of the account, what started out as calm morning led to a change
169 in wind speed and direction, veering from south easterly in the morning to westerly in the afternoon (criteria 2D).
170 This variable wind was accompanied by a drop in temperature (criteria 2D) and finally, there was mention of the
171 presence of a storm in terms of overcast sky, threatening rain and lightning (criteria 2A). As such, we identify this
172 wave as a meteotsunami by applying both of our oceanographic and atmospheric criteria to the historic account.

173

174 **2.3 Wave data analysis for the 2010 to 2022 record.**

175 To identify meteotsunami from 1st January 2010 to 1 October 2022 we use data records that are available at higher
176 frequencies meaning meteotsunami are more distinctly observable. The information for this portion of the
177 catalogue is sourced from the British Oceanographic data centre (BODC) website (<https://www.bodc.ac.uk/>) and
178 the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC) website (<https://ioc-sealevelmonitoring.org/>) where data are
179 displayed from the ‘Class A’ network of tide gauges owned and funded by the Environment Agency (EA). We
180 also use the postprocessed data of Williams et al (2021) where the raw sea level tide gauge data has been high
181 pass filtered to isolate high frequency disturbances. This removes periods of over 120 minutes and separates out
182 the tidal components. In this way any signals in the tsunami frequency band (2 to 120 minutes) are isolated from



183 the sea level elevations. Any remaining signals larger than the background noise are then identified and checked
184 against our threshold criteria to verify events as potential meteotsunami.

185

186 **2.4 Atmospheric data analysis for the 2010 to 2022 record.**

187 The time of the potential meteotsunami events are noted from the tide gauge data and they are then linked to
188 specific precipitating convective atmospheric systems by using the meteorological C-band radar network, which
189 is pre-processed by the UK Meteorological Office before download (Met Office 2003). The convective systems
190 highlighted by the radar are classified into four distinct types (as shown in Figure 1b). These are: (1) open cells
191 which are situated behind the cold front of cyclonic weather, usually where cold dry air passes over the warm sea
192 creating shallow convection; (2) Quasi linear systems which tend to be multi-cellular and linearly organised with
193 high CAPE, heavy precipitation, and strong winds (this type of weather feature are sometimes called squall lines
194 and can occur within synoptic Spanish Plume events); (3) Isolated small short duration (<1h) thunderstorm cells
195 and (4) Nonlinear clusters which are large circular, long lived clusters of precipitation and thunderstorm cells.

196 The atmospheric ascent soundings were obtained from the University of Wyoming website
197 (<http://weather.uwyo.edu/upperair/sounding.html>). Soundings are available for 0000 UTC and 1200 UTC on each
198 day and if a CAPE value of greater than 0 occurs then this shows a marginally unstable atmosphere leading to
199 convective activity. Finally, the synoptic charts allow for verification of the storm system including the location
200 of the pressure centres and fronts at the time of the meteotsunami wave event.

201

202 **3 Results.**

203 In this section we highlight the seasonal occurrence and distribution of UK meteotsunami events in both the
204 historical record and the more recent instrumental data record. This is augmented by the identification of trigger
205 systems associated with the events where available. It is prudent to note here that the catalogue cannot be
206 considered as complete, and this is signified by dashed lines (i.e., -) in the columns where data or information are
207 either unavailable or have not been located.

208

209 **3.1 Historical record (1750 to 2009).**

210 We identify 95 events as being meteotsunami occurring in UK waters between January 1750 and October 2022
211 (Table 1), with 48 of these occurring within the historical record (1750 to 2009). The historical record shows that
212 67% of documented meteotsunamis occur in summer (April – September), with 44% of documented
213 meteotsunamis in July and August. Most events were documented in 1802 AD, numbering three, with the 1840s



214 being the decade with the most notable events, six in total. The presence of a storm and/or characteristics of
215 convective activity (thunder, and lightning) at the time of the wave event was noted for 42 events (91%) of the
216 historical record). There was a southwest prevalence of meteotsunami in historical documents, with Devon,
217 Cornwall and Somerset recording a combined total of 29 events.

218 There were discrepancies found in the identification of meteotsunami in the historical record in this study and
219 other studies. An event occurring on 13 February 1979 was highlighted as a meteotsunami by Haslett et al (2009a)
220 which was contested by Thompson et al (2020) as being a surge caused by a winter Atlantic storm due to its
221 seasonal placement. This study has matched descriptions in historical accounts with the criteria laid out and we
222 have identified it as a meteotsunami. In addition to the 1979 event, there were further events previously labelled
223 as meteotsunami and our criteria have found them to be of alternative origin (tsunami) or to have insufficient
224 detail or collaborative evidence to solidify a conclusion. These include the events dated 14 October 1862, 15
225 August 1895, 11 May 1912, and 17 May 1964. Finally, we have relabelled two events as meteotsunami that had
226 previously been discounted in favour of tsunami (31 March 1761) and storm surge (17 October 1883).

227

228 **3.2 Seasonal and locational frequency of UK meteotsunami events (2010 to 2022).**

229 Meteotsunamis have been thought to be a rare phenomenon in the UK and that when they do occur, it has been
230 thought that they tend to be in the summer months due to the more abundant convective activity (Haslett et al,
231 2009b; Tappin et al, 2013; Sibley, 2016; Thompson, 2020). However, of the 95 identified meteotsunami events,
232 47 have been interpreted as occurring since 2010, with 30 (64%) of those occurring during the winter months. We
233 find that not only are UK meteotsunami more common in occurrence than historical accounts indicate, but that
234 they are a year-round phenomenon as exhibited in Table 1 and Figures 2 and 3.

235

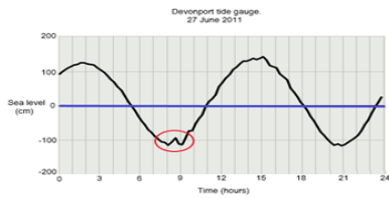


Figure 1a: Devonport (50°36N 4°18W) tide gauge for 27 June 2011 showing a distinct sea level disturbance at 0830 UTC as highlighted with a red circle. This is a representation of criteria 1b. The timing of this 0.25 m rise and fall in the sea level corresponds with the arrival of the meteosunami event at that specific location.

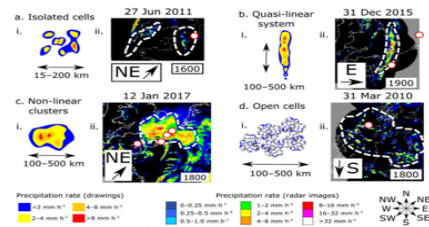


Figure 1b: The four different types of convective activity as shown on radar reflectivity identifying meteosunami events (Williams et al 2021). A representation of criteria 2a. Orange and red in the images shows high precipitation rates ($>4 \text{ mm/h}^{-1}$). With idealised images shown on the left of each convective type and actual examples taken from UK events on the right. All showing date, time, and direction of the storm as well as the location of the tide gauges that detected the meteosunami (white dots). Image by David Williams, Journal of Physical Oceanography (<https://doi.org/10.1175/JPO-D-20-0175.1>), licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) — CC BY 4.0

236

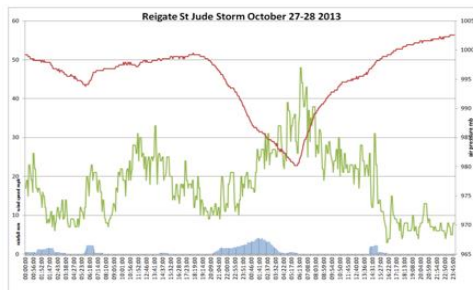


Figure 1c: The atmospheric pressure, wind speed and precipitation at Reigate (51°14N 0°11W) during the 27 to 28th October 2013 storm associated with the meteosunami. A representation of criteria 2b and 2d. The graph shows atmospheric pressure (red line) of less than 1005 mb and falling as the atmospheric disturbance moves over the area, with a corresponding rising wind speed of 20 mph (green line) and precipitation (blue bars). Reproduced with the kind permission of Simon Collins. <https://rgsweather.com/2013/10/29/st-jude-causes-and-impacts-of-the-october-storm-27-28-2013/amp/>

237

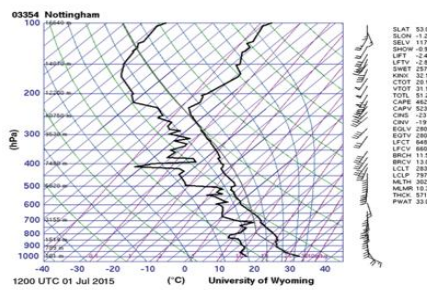


Figure 1d: The Nottingham radiosonde ascent at 1200 UTC on 1 July 2015 during a meteosunami event in the North Sea. A representation of criteria 2c which indicates sufficient CAPE (462.1 J Kg) to produce high base convective activity, with the cloud base at an approximate height of 3000 m and cloud top at 11000m. <http://weather.uwyo.edu/upperair/sounding.html>



238 With an average of four events per year we can see that 2013 and 2021 experienced above average numbers with
239 eight and seven events consecutively. Figure 3 displays the seasonal distribution of events, with 34% of
240 meteotsunami recorded in December and January, and no events being recorded in March or April. Following
241 statistical analysis, a mean wave height of 0.33 m for winter and 0.35 m for summer (a t-test score of 0.30 and a
242 P-value of 0.07) this indicates a similarity between the two sample sets where the difference between seasonal
243 wave heights is considered to be not statistically significant.

244 Summarising the results from the catalogue in its entirety, we suggest that there are three ‘hotspot’ regions where
245 meteotsunami events appear to be most frequent, these are 1) northwest Scotland, 2) northwest UK into Wales
246 and 3) the southwest UK. Up until 2009, Penzance in southwest UK experienced the most meteotsunami with
247 eight in total. Then from 2010, Kinlochbervie in northwest Scotland has been exposed 14 times experiencing the
248 highest maxima of wave height at 0.51 m. Harbour style geomorphology appears to be more susceptible to
249 meteotsunami resonance recording 71% of the events than beach environments with 29%. The historical section
250 of the catalogue shows an estimated return period of 5.4 years. This return period considerably decreases for the
251 instrumental data section where the UK return period reduces to an estimated 0.25 years.

252

253 **3.3 Relationship between meteotsunami and winter storms.**

254 In this section, we highlight two specific meteotsunami events that occurred in two of the most frequent winter
255 storm seasons for further analysis of the synoptic settings. The winter of 2013/14 saw 20 sequential storms in the
256 UK (Masselink et al, 2015) and nine likely / numerically verifiable meteotsunami events with further
257 meteotsunami recorded in the Netherlands and Sweden (Met Office, 2014). The winter of 2021/22 saw seven
258 sequential storms with five verifiable meteotsunami events.

259

260 **3.3.1 Event 1: 5 December 2013.**

261 A low pressure system over the North Atlantic, swept into the east of Scotland on 5 December with its centre over
262 the North Sea. The storm subsequently coincided with a high spring tide which led to extreme flooding and the
263 highest storm surge on the east coast since 1953 recorded at 2 m (Met Office, 2013).

264 This synoptic situation was complicated by a series of cold fronts followed by low pressure troughs. A quasi linear
265 precipitation system with its associated convective cells developed in the vicinity (criteria 2a/c). The arrival of the
266 storm feature was detected in surface observations with a sharp 1.7 mb/h air pressure drop which coincided with
267 a series of unpredictable meteotsunami waves (criteria 2b). The waves tracked southwards alongside of the
268 movement of the cold fronts, precipitation cells and convective activity where it was recorded at 19 tide gauge



269 sites (criteria 1c). The first series of wave anomalies started at 0900 UTC in northwest Scotland moving southward
270 through the tide gauges reaching North Wales at 1245 UTC. The second series were recorded slowly moving
271 south from South Wales at 0915 UTC through to the southeast coast by 1800 UTC. Finally, the third series were
272 initiated at 1200 UTC in northwest Scotland and reached north Wales by 1745 UTC, with the maximum wave
273 height of 0.35 m (criteria 1b) being recorded at Kinlochbervie at 1600 UTC (58°45N, 5°05W).

274 The meteotsunami waves appeared to occur at the tide gauge sites 6 to 7 hours ahead of the storm surge
275 (Supplementary Table S2). Apart from at 1200 UTC when the two wave types occur simultaneously along the
276 northwest and north Wales coast. By 1800 UTC as the storm reached its peak the meteotsunami waves had
277 dissipated.

278 **3.3.2 Event 2: 20 October 2021.**

279 Two low pressure systems developed in the Atlantic Ocean and propagated eastwards towards the southwest UK.
280 The first system which was detected as a mature echo signature on radar contained a sharp cold front (squall)
281 which moved into Cornwall at approximately 0400 UTC with a simultaneous leading air pressure rise of 1.6 mb
282 over 4 minutes followed by a sharp 2°C air temperature drop (criteria 2a/b). A flattish ridge between this first
283 system and the second system named Aurore by MeteoFrance led to a yellow rainfall warning being issued in the
284 UK. At 1600 UTC the second system with a low pressure centre of 992 mb moved into the Isles of Scilly and
285 propagated across Cornwall and Devon, it contained a heavily precipitating non-linear system with convective
286 activity and strong winds (+70 mph) rapidly veering from west to south. This system initiated a sharp air pressure
287 rise of 0.5 mb over 2 minutes which coincided with a high tide (criteria 2a – d). Both low pressure systems initiated
288 a series of meteotsunami waves that tracked eastwards along the coast of Cornwall, Devon, and Dorset. Wave
289 anomalies were recorded in Plymouth at 1645 UTC with a maximum wave height of 0.36 m, Totnes at 1700 UTC
290 and Port Isaac, Weymouth, and the Isle of Wight at 1800 UTC before dissipating (criteria 1b/c).

291

292 **4 Discussion.**

293 The aim of this paper was to introduce a revised and enhanced UK catalogue of meteotsunami events followed by
294 a highlight of the seasonal occurrence, frequency, and spatial distribution of this hazard. This aim was set as there
295 is no standardised identification criteria or up to date catalogue of UK meteotsunami and as a result this has led
296 to the mis conception that these events are non-hazardous, rare, and tend to occur more frequently in the summer
297 months. This knowledge is particularly prevalent in the face of sea level rise and the uncertainty over how future
298 storms and waves will change.

299



300 **4.1 The UK meteotsunami.**

301 With the identification criteria we laid out in this paper we have verified 95 events in UK waters since 1750,
302 demonstrating that meteotsunami are more common than initially thought and that they are a higher frequency,
303 lower impact category of hazard. The average maximum wave height of 0.3 m may not seem ‘dangerous’ but this
304 hazard is not purely about this single factor. The key that makes meteotsunami a hazard is the rapid onset of a
305 wave (sometimes referred to as a “wall of water”) with associated strong currents. This has been demonstrated
306 with other global events where it has been reported that a 0.3 m wave is enough to sweep people off of their feet
307 and to move vehicles (Lynett et al, 2014).

308 The historical record (1750 to 2009) has highlighted a summer prevalence of events (48%) peaking in July and
309 August. This is principally due to a reliance on eyewitness reports and the volume of persons present at the
310 shoreline during these months. However, the present-day record (2010 to 2022) highlights an even stronger winter
311 prevalence (64%) peaking in December and January. The results also show a geographical pattern, with more
312 events occurring along the western coasts of the UK in the winter, aligning with the dominant weather direction
313 of west to east in the winter, and southern coasts in the summer, aligning with Spanish Plumes bringing warm air
314 poleward from the equator with southerly winds. The geographic pattern also reflects the influence of local
315 bathymetry, with harbours (e.g., Penzance, Plymouth, Stornoway, and Port Talbot), bays (e.g., Kinlochbervie and
316 Port Stoth) and river mouths (e.g., Yealm and Totnes) containing conditions more favourable to meteotsunami
317 initiation and amplification via resonance and seiching.

318

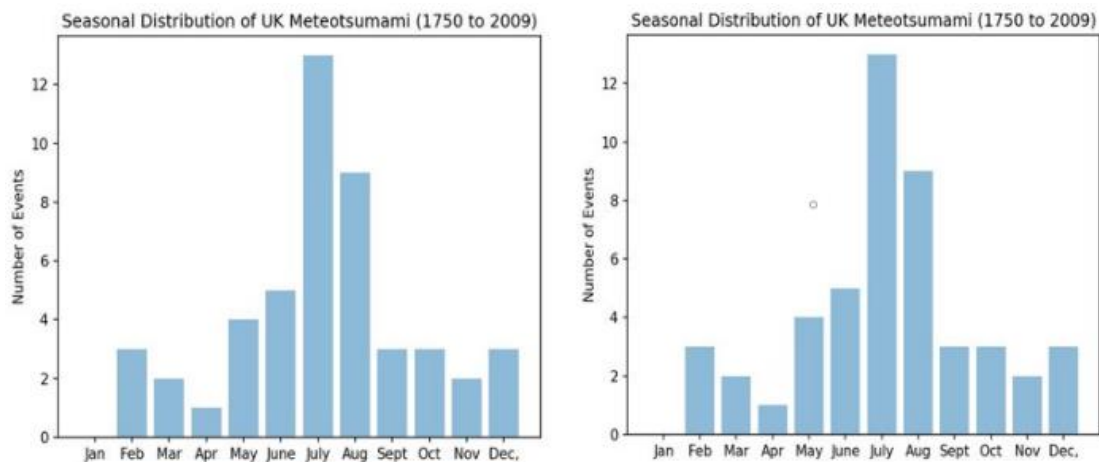


Figure 2: Seasonal distribution of Uk meteotsunami events, historical record (1750 to 2009) and current record (2010 to 2022).

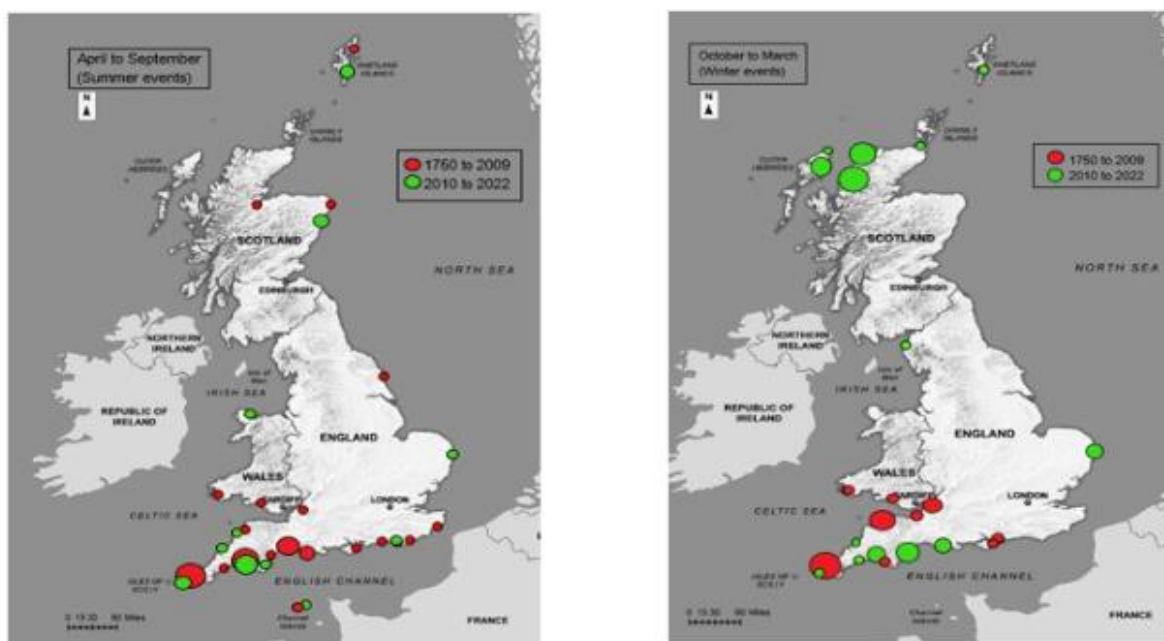


Figure 3: Seasonal and locational distribution of maximum wave heights from 1750 to 2022. Dot size represents number of events at that specific location ranging from 1 to 5+. Base map © Crown copyright and database rights 2022 Ordnance Survey (100025252).

320 **Table 1:** Descriptions and references for events that can be identified as UK meteotsunami events from 1750 to 2022. 1750 to 2009
 321 are principally derived from historical sources and 2010 to 2022 are principally derived from instrumental data. The threshold criteria
 322 outlined in the methodology section was used to verify the events (Wm represents maximum wave height in metres).
 323

Date	Location	Wm (m)	Time (UTC)	Notes	ID criteria used	Reference
1 Nov 1755	Ilfracombe	0.3	14:00	4 waves in 2 h, calm, NE wind, low tide	1A, 1B, 2A,	Dawson et al 2000
27 Feb 1756	Ilfracombe	1.8	18:00	4 mins wave period, 30 mins duration, rumbling sea	1A, 1B, 2A, 3A	Dawson et al 2000
31 May 1759	Lyme Regis	-	-	3 waves in 1 h, ebb and flow	1A, 2A, 3A	Dawson et al 2000
31 March 1761	Mounts Bay	1.2	12:30	Ebb and flow 5 times in 1 h, NNE wind, cloudy	1A, 1C, 1C, 2A	Long 2015
18 Sept 1763	Weymouth	3	-	3 waves, ebb, and flow	1A, 1B, 3A	www.phenomena.org.uk
11 Feb 1764	Bristol	High Tide	-	2 waves, ebb in 30 mins	1A, 2A, 3A	www.phenomena.org.uk
23 Dec 1791	Cornwall	-	04:00	Rain, hail, extreme lightning, boats moved	2A, 3A	Borlase 1758
17 July 1793	Plymouth	0.6	07:00	3 waves in 1 h, boats damaged	1A, 1B, 2A, 3A	-
18 Aug 1797	Lyme Regis	3	-	3 waves in 1 h, lightning	1A, 2A, 3A	Dawson et al 2000
9 Aug 1802	Devon	0.35	06:00	3 waves in 1 h, ebb and flow twice in 20 min	1A, 1C	Long 2015
10 Aug 1802	Teignmouth	0.6	08:00	10 min interval waves	1A, 1B	Long 2015
30 Aug 1802	Jersey	1.2	-	3 ebb and flows in 8 mins	1A, 1B, 2A	Long 2015
31 May 1811	Plymouth	2.4 to 3.3	03:00	4 h duration, rain, low pressure, ebb and flow, SW wind	1A, 1B, 2A, 2B	Dawson et al 2000
4 March 1818	Portsmouth	1.5	08:00	Rain, W to SW wind, high water for 3 h	1C, 2A, 2D	www.surgewatch.org
13 Sept 1821	Plymouth	1	14:00	Ebb and flow, boats moved	1A, 1B, 1C, 3A	Long 2015
13 July 1824	Plymouth	0.6	22:00	Ebb and flow, 4 m/s currents, ESE light wind, boats moved	1A, 1C, 2D, 3A	Archer, 2016
23 Nov 1824	Plymouth	2	01:00	3 waves in 10 min intervals, storm surge, 180 metres inland	1B, 1B, 2A, 3A	Hastlett and Bryant 2009
5 July 1843	Plymouth	1	11:00	4 waves in 20 min, storm moved north	1A, 1B, 1C, 2A	Thompson et al 2020
3 July 1845	Weymouth	0.6	10:30	Ebb and flow 5 times in 30 mins	1A, 2A, 3A	Long 2015
5 July 1846	Cornwall	0.5	-	Thunder	1C, 2A, 3A	Dawson et al 2000
1 Aug 1846	Penzance	0.3 to 0.6	04:00	30 min duration	1C, 2A, 3A	Dawson et al 2000
23 May 1847	Penzance	0.9 to 1.5	05:00	20 mins, squally wind, sudden rush of water	1A, 1B, 2A, 2D	Long 2015
7 July 1848	Bristol	1.5	-	Thunder	1C, 2A, 3A	Edmonds 1862

324





325

Date	Location	Wm (m)	Time (UTC)	Notes	ID criteria used	Reference
6 June 1855	Penzance	0.9	-	Ebb & flow 2 to 3 times, rumbling sea	1C, 2A, 3A	Dawson et al 2000
5 June 1858	English Channel	0.9	08.00	Ebb & flow in 5 mins, ENE to WNW wind, hail, rain, setche	1A, 1C, 2A, 2D	Long 2015
25 June 1859	Cornwall	-	-	Abnormal sea oscillations, squall line	1A, 2A, 3A	Dawson et al 2000
4 Oct 1859	Cornwall	4.4	-	3 waves, warm air temperatures	1C, 2A, 3A	Dawson et al 2000
Oct 1865	Port Talbot	-	-	2 tides in 1 h	1A, 2A, 3A	www.surewatch.org
23 April 1868	Lyme Regis	6	-	Swell, roar from the sea, no wind, low air pressure	1C, 2A, 3A	Haslett and Bryant 2009
29 Sept 1869	Cornwall	0.9	06.00	20 min wave period	1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 3A	Dawson et al 2000
13 June 1881	Shetland	-	-	3 waves in 20 min, storm, boat damage	1A, 2A	Long 2015
28 Aug 1883	Plymouth	0.25	09.00	Gravity pressure wave from Krakatoa volcanic eruption	1B, 2B,	Garrett, 1970
17 Oct 1883	Severn Estuary	1 to 3	08.00	1 dead, SW strong wind, high tide, precipitation, 1 mile inland	1A, 1C, 2A, 2D, 3A	Haslett and Bryant 2009
13 June 1886	Wick	0.45	16.30	Falling air pressure	1C, 2B, 3A	Long 2015
18 Aug 1892	Yealm	4	-	Quick ebb and flow, squall line, 3 waves, boat damage	1B, 1C, 2A, 2B	Haslett and Bryant 2009
16 Dec 1910	Iffracombe	4	06.15	Swell, bore, low air pressure, 100 metre inland, bedrock erosion	1B, 2B	Haslett and Bryant 2009
26 Dec 1912	Isle of Wight	0.9	12.00	975 mb pressure low, SW wind, rain, cold front	1A, 2A, 2B, 2D, 3A	www.surewatch.org
20 July 1929	Folkstone	6	19.30	8 waves, 180 metres inland, 5 mins wave period, low tide, 3 dead	1B, 1C, 2A, 2D, 3A	Haslett and Bryant 2009
2 Aug 1932	Aberavon	9.3	-	4 dead, wave train, cloudy, rumbling sea, strong currents	1B, 2A, 3A	Haslett et al 2009
5 Aug 1938	Bridlington	4	08.00	Sea receded 4.5 m, boats moved, fish left on dry land	1A, 1B, 2A	Haslett et al 2009
4 July 1939	Milford Haven	6	00.30	3 dead, rumbling sea, boats moved, mid tide	1B, 2A, 3A	Haslett and Bryant 2009
3 July 1946	Cornwall	-	PM	Ebb and flow, squall line, rumbling sea, moorings broke	1A, 2A, 2B, 3A	Haslett and Bryant 2009
13 July 1949	Mevagissey	-	04.00	Easterly winds, boats smashed on rocks	1A, 1C, 2A, 2D	Long 2015
6 July 1957	Bembidge	4	19.30	Wave train, 2 waves in 1 h, sultry and overcast, large rocks moved	1A, 1C, 1C, 2A, 3A	Haslett and Bryant 2009
31 July 1966	Westward Ho	3	PM	Receding water, frontal trough, squall line	1A, 1B, 2A	Haslett and Bryant 2009
1 July 1968	English Channel	-	-	5 mb air pressure drop in 30 mins,	1A, 2B, 3A	Stevenson 1969
13 Feb 1979	Bristol	2	07.00	Spring tide, long unbroken waves, storm surge	1C, 2B	Haslett and Bryant 2009
28 May 2008	Peterhead	3	00.30	Ebb and flow in 10 mins, 4 to 6 waves	1 A-C, 2 A-C, 3A	Sibley et al 2006
29 Jan 2010	Lowestoft	0.29	16.00	Open cell, S moving storm, 11 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al, 2021
29 Aug 2010	Lowestoft	0.27	19.00	Open cell, S moving storm, 4 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al, 2021



Date	Location	Wm (m)	Time (UTC)	Notes	Id criteria	Reference
3 Feb 2011	Ullapool	0.3	22.00	Open cell, E moving, 7 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al, 2021
27 June 2011	Devonport	0.3	08.30	Non-linear, N moving, 8 tide gauges plus European tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Tappin et al, 2013
22 Aug 2011	Newhaven	0.3	01.00	Quasi linear, N moving, 3 tide gauges, mid latitude depression	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
24 Nov 2011	Ullapool	0.26	04.30	Open cell, E moving, 8 tide gauges, mid latitude depression	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
3 Jan 2012	Lowesoft	0.33	17.15	Quasi linear, SE moving, 17 tide gauges, Low pressure	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
4 Feb 2013	Stomoway	0.32	07.00	Open cell, SE moving, 13 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
3 Aug 2013	Aberdeen	0.25	07.30	Non-linear cluster, NE moving, 9 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
28 Oct 2013	Devonport	0.27	03.15	Non-linear cluster, NE moving, 4 tide gauges, 1 mb/1 h drop, high tide	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
5 Dec 2013	Kinlochbervie	0.35	16.00	Quasi linear, 19 tide gauges, 1.7 mb/1 h drop, storm surge, spring tide	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
15 Dec 2013	Ullapool	0.25	18.00	Quasi linear, E moving, 6 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
18 Dec 2013	Milford Haven	0.33	19.00	Quasi linear, E moving, 24 tide gauges, 2.6 mb/1 h drop,	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
20 Dec 2013	Kinlochbervie	0.25	19.45	Quasi linear, NE moving, 5 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
21 Dec 2013	Ullapool	0.28	10.00	Individual cell, NE moving, 4 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
3 Jan 2014	Newlyn	0.33	12.30	Quasi linear, 8 tide gauges, 1.2 mb/1 h drop, high winds, high tide	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
8 Feb 2014	Weymouth	0.25	20.00	Open cell, E moving, 14 tide gauges, 1.3 mb/1 h drop	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
12 Feb 2014	Weymouth	0.26	21.45	Quasi linear, E moving, 15 tide gauges, high winds	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
21 May 2014	Newhaven	0.26	23.00	Non-linear, N moving, 4 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
22 May 2014	Lerwick	0.33	06.45	Quasi linear, N moving, 3 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
1 Jan 2015	Ullapool	0.26	01.30	Open cell, E moving, 9 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
8 Jan 2015	Ullapool	0.27	01.00	Quasi linear, E moving, 10 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
1 July 2015	Jersey	0.25	09.00	Individual cell, NE moving,	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Sibley et al 2016
2 July /2015	Lerwick	0.31	23.00	Non-linear, NE moving,	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al, 2021
10 Dec 2015	Ullapool	0.25	08.30	Open cell, E moving, 4 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al, 2021
27 Jan 2016	Workington	0.3	14.00	Non-linear, NE moving,	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al, 2021
1 Feb 2016	Stomoway	0.27	16.30	Open cell, E moving, 11 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al, 2021
23 June 2016	English Channel	0.7	04.40	Non-linear, NE moving, 6 tide gauges	1A-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al, 2021



Date	Location	Wm (m)	Time (UTC)	Notes	ID criteria	Reference
26 Aug 2016	Devonport	0.3	22.45	Individual cell, NE moving, 7 tide gauges	IA-C, 2A, 3A	-
16 Nov 2016	Kinlochbervie	0.51	14.15	Open cell, E moving, 7 tide gauges	IA-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al, 2021
26 Dec 2016	Stornoway	0.34	08.30	Open cell, SE moving, 8 tide gauges	IA-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
11 Jan 2017	Kinlochbervie	0.25	08.00	Open cell, SE moving	IA-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
16 Oct 2017	Lerwick	0.35	16.00	Quasi linear, NE moving, 20 tide gauges	IA-C, 2A, 3A	Williams et al 2021
29 June 2019	Aberdeen	0.3	17.00	Non-linear, supercell moving from North Sea to Norway	IA-C, 2A-C, 3A	-
8 Feb 2020	Port Stoith	0.4	12.00	Line convection, ebb & flow, before storm Clara, Low pressure	IA-C, 2A, 2C	-
21 Aug 2020	Perramporth	0.3	21.00	Spring tide, cold front, air pressure rise of 0.5 mb/2 min, bore	IC, 2B, 2C, 3A	-
5 July 2021	Westward Ho	0.6	12.40	S wind, Individual cell, mid tide, air pressure rise of 0.5 mb/1h, LP	IC, 2A-C, 3A	-
9 Aug 2021	Tonnes	0.25	11.30	S wind, Non-linear, mid tide, air pressure rise 0.5 mb/30 mins	IA, IC, 2A-C, 3A	-
27 Sept 2021	Plymouth	0.32	03.00	S/SW wind, Quasi-linear, CAPE, low tide, air pressure rise 1.1 mb/20 mins	IA, IC, 2A-D, 3A	-
2 Oct 2021	Tonnes	0.29	12.00	SSE wind, Non-linear, mid tide, air pressure fall 1.4 mb/1 h, ebb & flow	IA, IC, 2A, 2B, 3A	-
20 Oct 2021	Plymouth	0.36	05.00	SSW, Non-linear, CAPE, high tide, air pressure rise 1.5 mb/10 mins, CF	IA, IC, 2A-C, 3A	-
27 Nov 2021	Tonnes	0.46	04.00	S/W, CAPE, mid tide, air pressure fall 1 mb/30 mins, storm surge, ebb & flow	IA, IC, 2A-D, 3A	-
30 Dec 2021	Tonnes	0.6	00.00	S/W, non-linear, high tide, air pressure fall 0.5 mb/20 mins, Low pressure	IA, IC, 2A-D, 3A	-
16 Jan 2022	Port Isaac	0.3	01.00	Mid tide, air pressure fall of 1.5 mb, pressure wave from volcanic eruption	IA-C, 2B	-
8 Feb 2022	Dunnet	0.3	13.15	Currents of 4 m/s, CAPE, high tide, approaching cold front from north	IA, IC, 2C, 3A	-
18 June 2022	Newlyn	0.7	14.30	Spanish plume, 7+ locations, air pressure fall of 4 mb/10 mins	IA-C, 2B, 3A	-
19 July 2022	Anglesey	0.3	08.00	spring tide, air pressure fall 1 mb/35 mins, 5x ebb & flow, 9 m inland	IA-C, 2A-C, 3A	-



327 In this paper we have described two winter meteotsunami events to highlight the meteotsunamigenic synoptic conditions. It
328 has been indicated that the combination of a mid-latitude depression, with frontal and convective weather moving across the
329 UK may be important in the generation of this hazard. Results have shown that during these winter storms convective elements
330 are likely to be embedded in the area of heavy rainfall and strong winds associated with the cold front leading to the potential
331 for meteotsunami waves. This synoptic situation is a product of the combination of the cold maritime Arctic air being
332 introduced to the rear side of the cold front passing over relatively warm water.

333

334 **4.2 Risk element.**

335 We provide a new insight into the potential of meteotsunami to act as a hidden constituent of a compound hazard situation
336 which can occur from the passage of a storm. The consequences can be disproportionately large when multiple hazards occur
337 in succession or concurrently as seen in the 2013/14 winter season, exacerbating the risk of flooding due to surface water from
338 precipitation as the front crosses a landmass (Masselink et al, 2015). This poses an increased risk in UK waters, especially as
339 these tsunami like events are not considered when estimating the impact of future winter storms.

340 Summer meteotsunami events in the catalogue also carry their own element of risk. These events tend to be associated with
341 heat waves and so called “Spanish plumes” where warm air moves northwards from the European continent and Iberia, during
342 which mesoscale convective weather tends to occur. In the summer, CAPE is at its highest and overland due to warm 2 m air
343 temperatures over land (Holley et al, 2014). These types of weather events consist of single cell or clusters of small, short
344 duration (< 1 hr) thunderstorms and squall lines with more than one convective cell (Sibley 2012 and Tappin et al 2013).

345 The element of risk during the summer occurs when the meteotsunami wave can become fully disconnected from its source
346 disturbance. This effect can be particularly apparent if the meteotsunami interacts with the continental slope where the wave
347 can arrive hours after the original storm has dissipated or moved on. This delayed arrival of wave disturbances can surprise
348 people who are subsequently back out on or near the water’s edge, believing the storm has passed. This effect has been noted
349 for meteotsunamis in the Great lakes and on the East coast of the USA, where meteotsunamis generated by storms moving
350 eastwards reflect back off the continental shelf brake. In the UK this effect was witnessed in both the 27 June 2011 and the 18
351 June 2022 events.

352

353 **4.3 Constraints and Limitations.**

354 Identifying meteotsunami events in winter tends to be more difficult as the waves tend to be hidden and overshadowed by the
355 wave characteristics of the trigger storms and may be missed unless looking specifically at the data. So, unless you are looking
356 at the data you would not even know they had happened. We strongly consider that this overshadowing means many of these
357 winter meteotsunami do not get reported and this may have been the issue in previous research where certain winter events
358 were identified as either storm waves or surges but may well have contained meteotsunamis. In future work, we might be able
359 to test this hypothesis by analysing tide gauge data sampled in the 1 minute frequency and then applying the methodology
360 outlined in this paper.



361 We also noted as did Haslett and Bryant (2009a), that historical accounts are not optimum for identifying and analysing
362 meteotsunami due to their anecdotal nature and as such the number of events represented here may be dramatically
363 underestimated. As data before 2008 is not readily available and records are spatially sparse this leads to incomplete data
364 coverage which does not allow for a robust statistical analysis.

365 The placement of tide gauges used to provide the data also affects results. The siting of UK tide gauges tend to be biased
366 towards populated areas with harbours and river mouths, which is ideal for the capture of the resonant component of the
367 meteotsunami wave, but events in less populated areas may have been missed due to this placement.

368 Within the catalogue we have identified two events (28 August 1883 and 16 January 2021) which are the product of air pressure
369 waves from volcanic eruptions, Krakatoa (20 May to 21 October 1883 and Tonga Ha'apai (20 December 2020 to 15 January
370 2021) these type of events are rare. It may be argued that they are not to be classed as meteotsunami waves. However, for the
371 purpose of this catalogue, we are classifying them as meteotsunami as they are sourced from air pressure disturbances which
372 couple with water waves with the period of 2 to 120 minutes.

373

374 **4.4 What does this mean for the future?**

375 Currently in the UK, there is no recognition of meteotsunami as a potential hazard, nor is there any provision in coastal
376 management policy for its inclusion. Unfortunately, ignoring such a hazard may lead to a severe underestimation of the
377 potential future risk especially from a multi hazard situation. The next few decades are likely to see sea level rise push mean
378 and extreme water levels upward and will subsequently increase the level of risk by bringing the height of the storm tide closer
379 to the flood stage (Masselink et al, 2015). At many UK locations, flood defences are at the design threshold of current storm
380 surge levels, they are not designed or built for a sudden, prolonged water flow as seen in meteotsunami (Lazarus et al, 2021).
381 We have derived from this paper some recommendations for the future of meteotsunami research in the UK:

- 382 1. As we have seen there is a short observational record available for meteotsunami and there is evidence for severe
383 under recording of such events. The 2010 to 2022 record has shown significant improvements in recording
384 completeness, but the current 15 minute sampling interval is still too course. We recommend a reduction of sampling
385 interval to 1 to 5 minutes to yield more data to be able to draw a complete conclusion for this hazard.
- 386 2. Coastal defences need to be brought into line with future hazard scenarios. We need to consider the upgrade of
387 defences both man made and natural to incorporate all hazard data including meteotsunami (not just storm surge). A
388 caveat to this, however, is that reducing the entrance to a harbour with wave protection measures will increase the
389 harbours significant resonant properties (Q factor) which will in turn increase the harbours wave oscillations.
- 390 3. The atmospheric constituents also need to be considered where the principal question arose in this paper as to whether
391 winter seasons like 2013/14 are outliers or whether this clustering of storms will be a commonplace scenario in the
392 future. If so, will this increase the frequency of associated meteotsunami events? Currently, we can detect and forecast
393 mid latitude depressions nine to ten days in advance (Penn State, 2019), knowing this we can incorporate a warning
394 of potential meteotsunami activity into the forecast. However, due to the localised nature of meteotsunami each areas



395 risk assessment needs to be considered on its own merits. The risks connected with a single meteotsunami event in
396 two different bays can be quite different. One bay may suffer from inundation and flooding where another bay may
397 be impacted by strong currents.

398 This paper provides a valuable insight into the existence, frequency, and spatial distribution of what was a hidden hazard in
399 the UK. Meteotsunami may well have some role to play in coastal storm impacts, however, the relative contribution of
400 meteotsunami to storm surge in the aftermath of a storm and the full extent of the risk remains unknown and is beyond the
401 scope of this work. It is also difficult to determine if the frequency and intensity of either low-pressure winter storms or winter
402 meteotsunamis are on the increase. We invite a closer and more robust scrutiny of this hazard with a year-round perspective
403 bearing in mind that no solid conclusions can be drawn without high frequency, long term, and continuous monitoring of this
404 of hazard.

405

406 **5 Conclusions.**

407 Until recently it was thought that meteotsunami in the UK were rare and only occurred at certain times of the year, this
408 misconception has led to a lack of provision in coastal management strategies. Motivated by coastal safety, this paper tests the
409 hypothesis by reanalysing past events and presenting new ones in an up to date catalogue focussing on seasonal and geographic
410 characteristics.

411 Since 1750 AD meteotsunami in the UK currently number 95 events and are associated with convective storm structures and
412 cyclonic type storms. The modern record (2010 to 2022) has far more winter meteotsunamis, whereas the relatively long
413 historical record (1750 to 2009) means that the most meteotsunamis in our total have occurred in the summer. During the
414 summer months (April to September inclusive), meteotsunami events are triggered by summer convective weather systems,
415 which can occur within synoptic Spanish Plume settings. During the winter months (October to March inclusive) meteotsunami
416 tend to be triggered by the passage of mid latitude depressions where they are embedded in the associated cold fronts and low
417 pressure troughs. Subsequently meteotsunami impacts can occasionally superimpose on top of those resulting from elevated
418 surge levels, high winds, and high tides. These are further exacerbated by the localised nature of resonance characteristics
419 which can create a highly dangerous situation. The immutable nature and rapid onset of this hazard means that even a sole
420 meteotsunami event can create changes in water level and flow velocity that has the potential to cause injury, loss of life and
421 damage to assets.

422 Increased knowledge of this hazard can be made more easily accessible through a central catalogue such as the one presented
423 in this paper and the provision of higher frequency monitoring to detect future trends. What was found to be a 'hidden' and
424 rare event in historical records may soon become a more common hazard in the future.

425

426



427 **Author contributions.** C. Lewis designed and executed the study and prepared the original draft. D. Williams pre-processed
428 and provided data from 2010 to 2017, reviewed and edited the text. T. Smyth, J. Neumann, and H. Cloke supervised the project,
429 provided advice, editing and feedback on the manuscript.

430 **Competing interests.** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

431 **Data availability.** The datasets used in this study were derived from resources available in the public domain.

432

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