

April 2009

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1971-2000.

UK overview

Mean temperatures were above the 1971-2000 normal across the whole UK, ranging from about 1.4 °C above in south-west England and south Wales to about 2.3 °C above in East Anglia, south-east England and northern Scotland. It was the third warmest April over Scotland and equal third over England, in series from 1914, but not as warm as April 2007 (ranked first). Rainfall ranged from above normal in Northern Ireland and the western fringes of Scotland, Wales and south-west England to well below normal in much of eastern Scotland and England, with less than 40% of average across East Anglia. It was the wettest April over Northern Ireland since 1996. In contrast, generally over England and Wales it was the third consecutive month to be markedly drier than average. Sunshine ranged from close to normal over Northern Ireland, Wales, south-west England and southern and eastern Scotland to over 130% of average over parts of East Anglia, northern England and north-west Scotland.

A maximum temperature of 22.1 °C was recorded at East Malling (Kent) on 15th. Kinbrace (Highland) recorded a minimum temperature of -5.8 °C on 19th. 56.2 mm of rainfall was recorded at Towednack (Cornwall) on 24th. A wind gust of 64 mph was recorded at Capel Curig (Gwynedd) on 8th.

England diary of highlights

Plenty of fine settled weather with warm days, especially in the first and third weeks. Some rain too, mainly showery and across the south-west. Cool and misty at times along the east coast. Overall, the month was warmer, drier and sunnier than average, particularly over East Anglia and parts of south-east England. It was the equal third-warmest April in a series from 1914, but was not as warm as April 2007 (ranked first).

1st to 5th: A fine settled start to the month with high pressure close by, although a front moving east did give a little rain during the early hours of the 4th. Warm days, with maximum temperatures 17 to 19 °C over parts of the south and south-east, were followed by chilly nights with a touch of frost. Topcliffe (North Yorkshire) recorded -3.3 °C on the 5th.

6th to 17th: During this period fronts from the Atlantic moved into the UK and often became slow-moving, occasionally returning westwards. Spells of rain or showers affected all parts but much of the rain was light with some drier interludes. However, heavy showers occurred over East Anglia on the 11th and thundery showers affected the south-east later on the 14th, with heavy rain in Cornwall and parts of Devon. The 15th was quite wet with heavy rain and thunderstorms over some central and western areas. Plymouth (Devon) recorded 34 mm from midnight to midnight. During the 16th and 17th pressure gradually rose from the north with drier conditions slowly extending southwards, although on both days outbreaks of heavy rain affected central and southern areas.

18th to 24th: A return to settled conditions as high pressure over the north continued to extend southwards. As with the settled spell at the beginning of the month, warm days were followed by chilly nights with local ground frost. Temperatures approached 21 °C in London on three consecutive days from the 21st to 23rd. In sharp contrast the east coast was much cooler with north-east winds from the North Sea. On the 19th and 20th these restricted temperatures to 8 or 9 °C along the Norfolk coast, where it remained misty.

25th to 30th: An unsettled end to the month. A small but quite intense area of low pressure developed close to south-west England on the 25th giving gale-force winds and heavy rain over parts of Cornwall, with localised flooding; 44.5 mm was recorded at Perranporth (Cornwall) on the 24th. Heavy showers also affected other western areas, with thunderstorms developing over northern parts. Further rain affected the south-west on the 26th with heavy rain and showers affecting all parts for the remainder of the month. Although eastern areas continued to be quite warm during the day, it became generally colder, with a widespread ground frost and local air frost over southern parts early on 28th when Yeovilton (Somerset) recorded $-1.0\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$.

Wales diary of highlights

A mainly changeable month, with periods of rain or showers and drier, brighter interludes, although there was a settled spell in the third week. Temperatures were above average, rainfall was below average and sunshine was close to normal.

1st to 14th: A fine and dry start to the month with some coastal fog at times as well as some overnight fog in valleys. A band of rain moved eastwards overnight into the 4th followed by dry weather and some sunshine. Further rain or showers occurred on the 6th and 7th, while the 8th stayed dry with some sunshine. There were outbreaks of rain on the 9th and a wet start to the 10th. However, the rest of the Easter weekend stayed dry with some overnight fog and a widespread rural frost on 11th, with Sennybridge (Powys) recording $-1.6\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$. A local air frost also occurred on the morning of the 12th. Cloud and rain moved eastwards later on the 13th and it remained mostly cloudy on 14th.

15th to 23rd: Warm on the 15th with scattered heavy showers and thunderstorms developing, especially during the evening. Another day of heavy showers and thunderstorms followed on the 16th with a report of a weak tornado at Newport (Gwent), causing damage to two houses. The theme of heavy showers continued into the 17th with some sunshine and isolated thunderstorms. By the 18th the weather had settled down, with dry weather and some sunshine. The weekend stayed dry and mostly sunny with $16.9\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ at Capel Curig (Conwy) on the 19th. The dry weather continued until 23rd with sunshine and daytime temperatures reaching $19\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$, but with some overnight fog in valleys.

24th to 30th: After a fine start to the 24th, outbreaks of heavy rain moved into western parts by the evening. Further outbreaks of rain on the 25th with sunshine and the odd shower on the 26th. The month ended on a fairly wet note with some heavy rain on 27th giving 10 mm of rain across much of the country. This was followed by heavy showers and a few thunderstorms on 28th and then another period of heavy rain on the 29th, giving 30 mm in total for the 28th and 29th at Aberdaron (Gwynedd). Patchy rain on the 30th cleared slowly away eastwards although it remained quite cloudy.

Scotland diary of highlights

A dry fine start then changeable but with mainly small amounts of rain, until the last week. Generally it was much warmer than average and the third warmest April in a series from 1914, although April 2007 was warmer (ranked first). Rainfall was close to normal but it was dry in the east. Sunshine was close to normal, but above normal in the north-west.

1st to 9th: The 1st was dry and rather cloudy but warm, followed by a dry, warm, sunny day on the 2nd, with Edinburgh reaching $19.0\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$. Similar on the 3rd with Loch Glascarnoch (Highland) recording $-2.1\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ and Kinlochewe (Highland) achieving $19.8\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$, but haar plagued North Sea coasts and rain developed across the west later. Haar affected the east coast at first on the 4th but this cleared as a band of rain spread from the west. Dry and bright in the east on the 5th but cloudier with rain in the north-west. The 6th was mostly cloudy, and rain developed during the afternoon. The 7th was mainly dry and bright in the east, while the west had showers, followed by a wet evening. The 8th was cloudy with outbreaks of rain during the morning but drier and brighter in the afternoon with showers in the west. The 9th was mostly cloudy with occasional rain, especially in the south and west.

10th to 25th: Mostly cloudy with occasional rain on the 10th, but sunny spells in the Moray Firth, and Kinlochewe reaching 16.1 °C. Mainly bright or sunny on the 11th, but showers in the west, wintry on hills. Bright or sunny spells on the 12th with a few showers of rain or hail. On the 13th early frost, with -4.7 °C recorded at Kinbrace (Highland) and Altnaharra (Highland), was followed by a warm sunny day although haar affected some east coasts. The 14th and 15th were mostly cool and cloudy with patchy drizzle in the east and a little rain in the south-west. The 16th dawned dull and misty in the east but otherwise it was a bright and breezy day, winds nearing gale force around the Firth of Clyde. The 17th and 18th were mostly cloudy and cool in the east, sunny in the west. A frosty start on the 19th was followed by a sunny day though Shetland was cloudier. Mainly dry and bright on the 20th with 18.6 °C at Edinburgh. A band of rain spread from the west on the 21st with drier and brighter conditions following. The 22nd was dry with sunny spells and warm in many places, Lossiemouth (Moray) reaching 18.6 °C. Patchy rain in the south on 23rd while it stayed mainly dry and bright in the north. The west was cloudy and wet on the 24th but the east stayed drier and brighter. The 25th brought sunshine and showers, and in the south and west some of the showers were thundery leading to local downpours.

26th to 30th: The west was mostly cloudy on the 26th with patchy rain, while the east was brighter with scattered thundery showers. The 27th was mostly cloudy with rain in the south, while it was drier and brighter in the north. Cloudy with patchy rain in the east on the 28th, this being heavy over the Borders. Dry and bright over the north-west. Showery rain spread north on the 29th followed by brighter weather in the north and east, Kinloss (Moray) reaching 17.0 °C. A band of rain edged slowly east on the 30th, giving 12.8 mm at Machrihanish (Argyll and Bute), though it was bright and quite warm ahead of the rain, with Edinburgh reaching 17.7 °C.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

A dry start then changeable with frequent rain until mid-month. A mainly dry and fine third week was followed by a return to unsettled conditions with rain or showers. Overall, it was warmer and wetter than average and sunshine was average. It was the wettest April over Northern Ireland since 1996.

1st to 4th: Dry but rather cloudy on the 1st. The cloud broke overnight, with -2.5 °C recorded at Katesbridge (Co Down), to leave a largely dry, warm and sunny day on the 2nd, Ballykelly (Co Londonderry) reaching 16.9 °C. The 3rd started bright before rain spread from the west. Cloudy with rain at first on the 4th before becoming drier and brighter.

5th to 15th: Dry and bright at first on the 5th but it clouded over with rain in the west later. The 6th was cool, cloudy and breezy with patchy rain, with only 6.4 °C at Lough Fea (Co Tyrone). The 7th was rather cloudy with the odd shower, and then the evening became wet and windy. The 8th was rather cloudy during the morning with showers and strong westerly winds before improving to drier conditions and lighter winds in the afternoon. The 9th was mostly cloudy with patchy light rain and strong south-east winds. Rain cleared early on the 10th to scattered showers. The 11th and 12th saw sunny spells and occasional showers. The 13th started bright in the east before cloud and rain spread from the west. A wet start on the 14th then it brightened up later. The 15th was cloudy with occasional rain during the morning then drier and brighter in the afternoon.

16th to 22nd: Bright and breezy on the 16th with a few light showers later. The 17th to 20th was mainly dry and bright with sunny spells. Ballykelly reached 18.3 °C on the 20th. Light rain early on the 21st gave way to dry, bright weather. The 22nd was dry for much of the day but mostly cloudy. Patchy light rain reached the west during late evening.

23rd to 30th: A little rain at first on 23rd then dry and brighter for a time. More persistent rain returned later in the day and continued into the 24th. The 25th started dry but thundery showers developed, especially in the east. The 26th was mostly cloudy with patchy rain, becoming heavier in the evening. Sunshine and scattered showers on the 27th, some heavy and thundery. Mainly dry and bright on the 28th. The 29th was cloudy with rain most persistent in the west. A wet start on the 30th gave way to sunnier weather from the west.

