

April 2020

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1981-2010.

Much of April was fine and settled, though with some shorter spells that brought rain. High pressure was located in the vicinity of the UK for much of the time, often to the north, and so easterly winds were a regular feature. Less settled spells came from the 1st to 6th, the 11th to 13th, and most notably a cyclonic spell from the 27th onwards. Plenty of sunshine generally allowed daytime temperatures to rise well above normal on numerous days, whereas minimum temperatures were barely above normal and in fact northern and eastern Scotland had several late frosts. Rainfall was well below normal quite widely, with only central southern counties of England having near-average rain totals.

The provisional UK mean temperature was 9.1 °C, which is 1.7 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average, making it the fifth warmest April in a series since 1884. Mean maximum temperatures were generally 2.5 to 4 °C above average over England and Wales away from eastern coastal locations, but just 1 to 2 °C above average for most of Scotland and Northern Ireland, while mean minimum temperatures were mostly between 0 and 1.5 °C above average, though lower over Scotland. It was a generally dry sunny month overall, with 40% of average rainfall and 151% of average sunshine, ranking as the sunniest April in a series from 1929 (beating the previous record set in 2015). Most of the rain fell in the last four days of the month. Rainfall was just above average in Wiltshire and Hampshire, but well below average for most areas, with less than a quarter of the average for much of northern England and southern and eastern Scotland. Sunshine was above 150% of normal in many areas, with south-west England and south Wales the biggest exception to this.

The UK monthly extremes were as follows: A maximum temperature of 26.0 °C was recorded at Treknaw (Cornwall) on the 10th. A minimum temperature of -6.9 °C was recorded at Aboyne (Aberdeenshire) on the 19th. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 GMT on the 18th, 38.4 mm of rain fell at Portsea (Hampshire). A wind gust of 64 knots (74 mph) was recorded at South Uist (Western Isles) on the 5th. A snow depth of 2 cm was recorded at Strathy East (Sutherland) on the 3rd.

Weather impacts

The generally settled weather during much of April means that there were few impacts of note. Lightning caused a roof fire in Lincolnshire on the 12th, together with brief power cuts and surface-water flooding. During the course of the second half of the month, wild-fires were reported in a few places, until the rain arrived at the end of the month.

England diary of highlights

April began dry but fairly cloudy, then from the 4th through to mid-month high pressure and southerly winds brought plenty of sunshine and high daytime temperatures, especially in the south. There were some brief interruptions to the settled weather around mid-month, before pressure rose again, and with highest pressure centred over northern Britain, northern areas had more sunshine than earlier in the month. Until the 27th the month was exceptionally dry, but the last three days saw some heavy falls of rain away from the north-east.

The mean temperature for April was provisionally 2.0 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average, but the Aprils of 2007 and 2011 were warmer. The mean maximum temperature was the 4th

highest in a series since 1884, behind 1893, 2007 and 2011, whereas average night-time minima were closer to average. Rainfall was 48% of average, and many north-eastern parts had less than 20% of average, but the wet end raised rainfall totals close to normal in Central Southern England. It was the sunniest April in a series from 1929 by quite a wide margin, with over 150% of average in many places.

1st to 6th

High pressure was centred to the south-west between the 1st and 3rd, bringing generally cloudy weather with some sunny intervals. There were some showers and longer outbreaks of rain mainly in the north, and the 2nd was breezy in places with a gust to 58 knots (67 mph) at Emley Moor (West Yorkshire). Cloudy weather continued in the north on the 4th, with some patchy light rain, but it became sunny and warm in the south. Most places were bright or sunny on the 5th, then a band of rain spread from the south-west, clearing the east coast early on the 6th, followed by sunshine and isolated showers.

7th to 15th

After a chilly night with slight frost in places and patchy fog briefly in the far north, the 7th was sunny and dry apart from some cloud and a little light rain moving into the south-west. The 8th was another dry, largely sunny day. The 9th and 10th continued very warm and sunny in the southern half of the country, and Treknaw (Cornwall) had a minimum of 13.6 °C and a maximum of 26.0 °C on the 10th, both the highest of the month. However, it was cloudier in the north, and the 9th was cool and grey in coastal parts of the north-east. Cloud and light rain cleared the north by lunchtime on the 11th, and otherwise it was another warm sunny day but with isolated thundery showers in the south-west. Showers broke out more widely on the 12th, turning thundery in the north Midlands, East Anglia and the south-east. A brief northerly incursion brought cooler weather on the 13th, especially to the east, with a high of only 6.0 °C at Fylingdales (North Yorkshire), and it was cloudy in the east but became sunny in the west. A cold frosty night followed on the 13th/14th with a minimum of -6.7 °C at Redesdale (Northumberland), followed by a sunny day on the 14th with lingering cloud clearing in the south-east. The 15th was sunny and generally warmer, though still with frost in places overnight.

16th to 25th

Most places had another warm sunny day on the 16th, following clearance of fog in coastal parts of Kent, but showers broke out in parts of the south. Showers and longer spells of rain spread from the south-west into most counties from the Midlands southwards on the 17th, with 38.4 mm at Portsea (Hampshire), and thunderstorms broke out in places; the north-west was dry and sunny, but near the north-east coast it stayed cool, cloudy and misty. The rain area moved further north on the 18th, clearing most places by early evening but persisting over East Anglia. From the 19th to 22nd inclusive, most areas were dry, sunny and warm, with predominantly easterly winds, and although it was cooler near the east coast the easterlies did not bring much cloud in off the North Sea. However, it was often cloudier in the far south-west, with light rain or showers mainly affecting the west of Cornwall. The easterly flow slackened on the 23rd and 24th, with further warm sunny weather for most, but the 23rd was cloudier in the north, and the 24th saw more cloud for the south-west, and low cloud also spread into some eastern coastal areas. Most places had another warm sunny day on the 25th, though less warm than recent days in the south-east.

26th to 30th

High pressure faded on the 26th and 27th, resulting in generally cloudier weather with some scattered showers, and cloud brought patchy light rain which moved slowly southwards across most parts on the 27th, though to the north of this it turned sunny again with 13.9 hours recorded at Morecambe (Lancashire). A slow-moving frontal system brought a dull cool wet day away from

the north-east on the 28th, the rain heavy for a time especially in the south-east, but the far north-east stayed dry. Two rain belts, with a drier brighter interlude in between, spread from the south-west across all parts on the 29th. The 30th was a day of sunshine and showers with some hail in places, and the showers banded together to give a longer spell of rain in central and southern areas, with thunder mainly in central southern and south-eastern parts.

Wales diary of highlights

April began and ended unsettled, and the last four days were generally wet, but otherwise it was a month of predominantly dry, sunny and warm weather with high pressure dominant.

The mean temperature for April was 2.3 °C above the long-term average, making it the equal third warmest April (alongside 1893) in a series from 1884, though not as warm as the Aprils of 2007 and 2011. Rainfall was 46% of average and sunshine was 140% of average, and it was the third sunniest April in a series from 1929, behind 2007 and 2015.

1st to 6th

High pressure was centred to the south-west on the first three days, and then to the east. It was mostly cloudy from the 1st to 3rd, with just a few sunny intervals, and scattered showers on the 1st and 2nd. It started off cool with a maximum of 6.6 °C at Libanus (Powys) on the 1st. The 4th started cloudy but it brightened up from the south. After a dry bright start to the 5th, cloud spread from the south-west with rain reaching western coastal counties by evening. The rain cleared away north-eastwards overnight 5th/6th leaving a windy day with sunshine and showers on the 6th, and there was a maximum gust of 51 knots (59 mph) at Capel Curig (Gwynedd).

7th to 16th

The weather was generally dry, settled and sunny with high pressure dominant. Most places were sunny and increasingly warm on the 7th and 8th, but with more cloud at times in the south, and the 9th was a sunny day almost everywhere. Showers developed in the north on the 10th, turning heavy in places, and there were also isolated showers in the north on the 11th, but for most parts the dry sunny weather continued, with a minimum of 13.5 °C at Mumbles (West Glamorgan) overnight 10th/11th, and a maximum of 25.0 °C at Cardiff Bute Park (South Glamorgan) on the 11th. The 12th was cloudier, and showers spread from the south in early afternoon, turning thundery in the north-east by evening. After a cloudy start with some very light rain over the south, a brief northerly incursion on the 13th brought colder brighter weather. This led to a frost in places overnight 13th/14th, with a minimum of -5.3 °C at St Harmon (Powys). The 14th, 15th and 16th remained dry and sunny and were progressively warmer, but it remained chilly overnight.

17th to 25th

There was an interruption to the dry sunny weather on the 17th and 18th, with rain spreading from the south on the 17th, heavy at times, and on the 18th another belt of rain spread from the east. The 19th became brighter, and the 20th to 22nd were again sunny, with 13.6 hours of sunshine at Aberporth (Dyfed) on the 20th, though there was quite a stiff easterly breeze. This easterly flow slackened from the 23rd to 25th, while it remained mainly dry and sunny but with more cloud especially during the afternoons, and the 25th had isolated showers. There was also some patchy fog in the south-west early on the 25th.

26th to 30th

The weather turned somewhat more unsettled. There was a little light rain early on the 26th, and fog near the west coast which cleared, but showers, locally heavy and thundery, developed widely. The 27th was a dry but mostly cloudy day. A large area of persistent rain crossed the country on the 28th, giving a dull, cool and wet day. Another belt of rain spread from the south-west on the

29th, giving 36.4 mm of rain at Capel Curig (Gwynedd), followed by brighter weather. The 30th was a day of sunshine and showers and isolated thunderstorms, windy in exposed parts, and the showers merged into a longer spell of rain in the far south in the morning.

Scotland diary of highlights

April began unsettled with mainly westerly winds, and although the second week was dominated by high pressure, cloud amounts were variable. High pressure was often centred further north from mid-month to the 25th which resulted in a spell of warm and very sunny weather. From the 26th onwards it turned cooler with a mix of sunshine and showers but parts of the north-west remained mostly dry and sunny.

The mean temperature for April was 0.9 °C above the long-term average. It was the third driest April in a series from 1862, and the sunniest April in a series from 1929, with 31% of average rainfall and 151% of average sunshine. It was especially sunny in parts of the north-west.

1st to 6th

Rain spread southwards on the 1st, heaviest in the west, followed by brighter weather into the north with showers, wintry on hills. A northerly outbreak brought sunshine and scattered blustery showers on the 2nd, most frequent and heavy in the north and north-west, where they were wintry at times. There was a widespread frost overnight 2nd/3rd, followed by rain spreading from the south-west, with a maximum of just 3.7 °C at Baltasound (Shetland) and 2 cm of lying snow at Strathy East (Sutherland). The 4th and 5th were generally cloudy, though with some brightness. Rain spread from the west late on the 5th and crossed the country overnight, resulting in a mild night with a minimum of 10.2 °C at Lossiemouth (Morayshire), followed by sunshine and blustery showers on the 6th, the showers heaviest and most frequent in the north and west.

7th to 16th

High pressure became established to the east, introducing warmer drier weather, though still with some slow-moving fronts at times. Most places were dry and sunny on the 7th but it clouded over in the west with rain into the Western Isles, and on the 8th and 9th a slow-moving frontal system brought generally cloudy weather with a little light rain in places. The 10th was brighter but still generally cloudy, with some light rain in the west and north, and more significant rain reached western coastal areas by dusk. After a cloudy start, the 11th turned brighter but more rain reached the north and west from mid-afternoon. A northerly outbreak arrived on the 12th, with light rain in the Borders clearing southwards and some showers following behind into the north. The 13th was cool and cloudy in the east, but sunny weather near the west coast became more widespread from late afternoon. After a frosty night for some places, the 14th was dry and bright, though cloudier in the north with some rain in the far north at times. The north and north-west stayed cloudy on the 15th, but elsewhere it was a dry and sunny day after another cold start. As the wind changed to an easterly direction, the 16th was cloudy in the east and brighter further west.

17th to 25th

High pressure was centred north of Britain during this spell which meant that Scotland saw somewhat more sunshine than earlier in the month. The 17th started with fog in the Firth of Forth and was generally cloudy in the east and sunny in the west. Low cloud near the east coast on the 18th cleared away, leaving a dry sunny day for all. The night of the 18th/19th was very cold in places with a minimum of -6.9 °C at Aboyne (Aberdeenshire), then the 19th was sunny again. Sunny dry weather persisted from the 20th to 22nd with some overnight frost but becoming increasingly warm by day. Loch of Hundland (Orkney) and Fair Isle (Shetland) recorded 14.3 hours of sunshine on the 20th, and Achnagart (Ross & Cromarty) reached 22.0 °C on the 22nd.

After a generally cloudier day on the 23rd, sunny weather resumed on the 24th and 25th, apart from low cloud along the east coast on the 25th.

26th to 30th

The 26th was generally dry and sunny again in the south, but not as warm as recent days, while it became cloudier with showers in the northern half of the country. It was somewhat cooler on the 27th with some sunshine, but showers in the north spread southwards, becoming locally heavy through central parts during the afternoon. The 28th was generally bright and showery but some coastal areas stayed mostly dry. Rain affected southern counties at times on the 29th, while the north was brighter with just scattered showers. The 30th was mostly cloudy with showers, but sunnier in the Western and Northern Isles and the Moray Firth.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

April was quite unsettled in the first half, but after the first few days it was generally warm, and there were some dry sunny days. It was generally dry and very sunny from the 13th to 25th, but turned more unsettled with sunshine and showers during the last few days.

The provisional mean temperature for April was 1.4 °C above the 1981-2010 average. Rainfall was 35% of average, making it the 8th driest April in a series from 1862. With 144% of average sunshine, this was the sunniest April in a series from 1929.

1st to 6th

It was generally unsettled with high pressure to the south and east. The 1st was rather cloudy with scattered light showers, and on the 2nd a frontal system moved southwards bringing further showery rain, though with some bright intervals in between, and it was windy in exposed parts. The fronts remained on the 3rd and brought cloud and showery rain, and it continued cloudy with a little light rain on the 4th. A rain belt spread from the west on the 5th, and it became windy with a maximum gust of 50 knots (57 mph) at Magilligan (County Londonderry). Sunshine and blustery showers followed on the 6th.

7th to 14th

High pressure became established to the east resulting in drier weather, but Northern Ireland remained under the influence of weather systems coming in off the North Atlantic. It was generally sunny and dry on the 7th, but cloud increased from the west by evening, and the 8th was cloudy for most, with some patchy light rain mainly for the north. The 9th and 10th were mostly dry and bright, though with a fair amount of cloud especially on the 10th, and a band of rain spread from the west late on the 10th. This was followed by a warm night overnight 10th/11th with a minimum temperature of 11.5 °C at Stormont (County Down). After a mostly sunny day on the 11th, further cloud and rain spread from the west, reaching western parts by evening, and persisted for part of the 12th but cleared south by mid-afternoon. A northerly outbreak gave a cool sunny day on the 13th with a maximum of just 7.0 °C at Killylane (County Antrim), and the night of the 13th/14th was frosty in places with a minimum of -5.8 °C at Katesbridge (County Down).

15th to 26th

The 15th and 16th continued sunny and increasingly warm, although the morning of the 16th was cloudier. The 17th was another generally sunny day but high cloud increased from the south; much of the 18th was cloudy with a little light rain in the south early in the morning, but most places were dry and quite bright. It turned sunny on the afternoon of the 19th, and then the 20th to 22nd were warm and sunny, though a stiff easterly breeze blew at times, with 13.6 hours of sunshine at Thomastown (County Fermanagh) on the 20th. The 23rd was generally cloudier, but

it was brighter again for most on the 24th and 25th with a maximum of 21.5 °C at Castleberg (County Tyrone) on the 24th. Low cloud persisted around the north coast on the 25th.

26th to 30th

The weather turned more unsettled and cooler. Cloudy skies and light rain cleared the south on the morning of the 26th, followed by brighter weather with a few showers near the north coast, and there was a mix of sunshine and showers on the 27th and 28th. A band of heavy persistent rain spread from the south-west on the 29th, giving 25.0 mm at Lough Fea (County Londonderry), followed by dry sunny weather. The 30th started off wet in the west and north, and was otherwise a day of sunshine and showers.