

APRIL DATA

April was ushered in with anticyclonic conditions influencing the weather of the U.K. and much of northwestern Europe whilst the Mediterranean suffered from low-pressure systems and periods of very stormy and unseasonable weather. After a spell of light rain on the 1st the weather settled down, becoming sunny and very warm for the time of the year. With winds initially in the west, moist air spread across the country but this changed as the winds took on an easterly component bringing in exceptionally dry, but much cooler air from the 2nd onwards. The week was very sunny with a total of 55.6 hours recorded, the highest daily value being 12.1 hours on the 6th. No day was sunless during the week.

Rainfall was sparse with just 2.8mm/0.11in recorded over 2 days, the remainder of the week being completely dry. The bare soil gradually dried out to become dusty by the end of the week. Radiation levels rose gradually peaking at 742 watts per square metre on the 2nd with a daily radiation total of 280.4 kilowatts per square metre being recorded on the 7th. The maximum air temperature of 19.2°C/66.6°F was noted on both the 3rd and 4th with an air minimum of 1.7°C/35.1°F on the 7th. Ground frost occurred on the 7th with a grass minimum of -0.4°C/31.3°F.

The dry spell continued into the second week, though temperatures fell back as winds became more north-easterly in direction and pressure remained high to the north east of the country. Night minimum air-temperatures fell to a low of -2.3°C/27.9°F on the 8th with grass minimum temperatures as low as -4.1°C/24.6°F on the same night. It continued sunny though totals gradually fell back as more cloud encroached from the North Sea from the 11th onwards. An air maximum temperature of 13.4°C/56.1°F was recorded on the 8th, radiation levels being as high as 766 watts per square metre on the 11th. Under clear skies ground frost was recorded on the three consecutive nights April 11th to 13th, the temperature falling as low as -2.9°C/26.8°F on the 13th.

By now the dry spell had lasted 11 days and plants were beginning to feel the strain, though a slight measure of relief occurred during the night of the 14th/15th when 1.1mm/0.04in of rain fell. By the 14th signs of a break in the weather was beginning to show as a frontal system moved south-eastwards across the country and pressure began to fall to the west.

The third week began with a return to the dry conditions with predominantly high pressure prevailing around the UK, both the 15th and 16th providing well over 11 hours sunshine each. The week as a whole was dominated by a westerly airflow though the 17th did produce a slight frost in the air of just -0.1°C/31.8°F, the frost on the ground on the 16th reaching -1.7°C/28.9°F. Daytime temperatures began to rise appreciably and by the 21st these were peaking at 19.1°C/66.4°F. The temperature range over the week was 19.2°C/34.6°F, quite exceptional for April and so early in the year. The week's sunshine total reached 47.9 hours with sunshine every day. However, we did have some rain, the weekly total amounting to 3.5mm/0.14in, unlike many areas of the country that were by now experiencing drought conditions. Radiation temperatures were now reaching the 50°C/122°F mark, peaking at 52°C/125.6°F on the 19th accompanied by high radiation values, these peaking at 941 watts per square metre on the 20th.

The beginning of the fourth week saw little in the way of a change in the prevailing weather conditions, pressure remaining high with a good ridge from the Azores high influencing the country. The dry spell continued with good sunshine totals also being experienced, the 23rd producing 11.4 hours of bright sunshine and a maximum air temperature of 21.7°C/71.1°F. Winds remained westerly and light, no gust so far in the month exceeding the 29knots/35mph set on the 6th. The dry spell began to break on the 25th as rain spread in from the west, a total of 1.1mm/0.04in falling on this day. From then to the end of the month rain fell every day, some being quite heavy on the 28th and 29th with falls of 10.3mm/0.41in and 10.7mm/0.42in respectively. This was by far the wettest part of the month. However, it remained sunny, no day of the month being totally sunless.

By the 26th radiation levels topped 1 kwatt/sq metre for the first time reaching 1.008 kwatt/sq metre. A line squall occurred on the 28th with winds gusting from 10knots/12mph to 39 knots/46.8mph in a few seconds accompanied by heavy hail, sufficient falling to enable "balls" to be made. The radiation temperature of 54.7C/130.5F on the 24th set a new record for April on this site, beating the 54.4C/129.9F previously set in 1964.