

May 2023

The last month of spring opened with a belt of settling high pressure out over Biscay with a gentle westerly flow across the islands. Early drizzle and fog cleared readily by dawn but it remained cloudy until late morning before brightening up for the afternoon. That high slid slowly northeastward to be centred over Dogger Bank late on the 2nd resulting in our winds veering in to the east. Much warmer air was pulled in from the nearby continent with 17.7°C recorded by day's end. This warmer air over a still cool sea led to extensive patches of sea fog around the islands which encroached inland at times. By the 3rd winds had freshened sufficiently to break up any residual sea fog but temperatures were pegged back by a couple of degrees as a result.

As that high slipped further north and east so we started to see Atlantic fronts nudge in from the southwest. The leading edge of these fronts extended a broad shield of high *Cirrus* cloud in to the Southwest Approaches, making our sunshine a tad hazy at times. By dawn on the 4th much of the UK was under the influence of low pressure as that high continued to decline northeast. Showers arrived locally by mid morning, becoming heavier around midday before easing away up Channel through the afternoon. A more southerly component to our winds meant air temperatures not falling into single figures overnight and managing the mid teens by day.

The 5th continued the trend of mild southerlies with a brief rash of showers around noon but a warm front arriving overnight brought rain, drizzle and fog by the small hours of the 6th. Mild and moist southerlies led to cloudy conditions with patchy hill fog through the afternoon which became more extensive overnight before gradually clearing by dawn on the 7th. Unfortunately it remained cloudy until later that afternoon as a thick layer of lower cloud only reluctantly cleared away to the north.

Advancing fronts from the Atlantic were already making inroads by late evening with cloud thickening and lowering overnight with the first drops of rain arriving around dawn on the 8th. That rain became persistent through the morning with drizzle, mist and hill fog before clearing by noon. It was only a brief respite however as the associated cold front had slowed its advance out to the west and as it neared our shores later that afternoon, so the rain and fog returned once more. The rain finally eased off by midnight but thick fog continued right through to around midday on the 9th.

Liberation Day itself then was rather gloomy with mist and fog slowly lifting by midday with some brightness for the afternoon but with a scattering of quite lively showers, particularly through the evening. Those showers eased off overnight but slow moving low pressure centred off the northwest coast of Scotland maintained a moderate to fresh westerly flow across the islands with fair to cloudy but dry conditions until late on the 11th.

As that low filled and started to lose its identity, so a belt of more settled high pressure began to push up from the Azores. This ridge stretched up to cover northern and western parts of the UK with a freshening north to northeasterly flow becoming established down the Channel for the 12th. A band of weather over the Low Countries started to track down the Channel to bring some dampness to our shores later that afternoon and overnight, although rainfall totals remained low. The 13th dawned dry but rather cloudy and hazy as an extensive layer of low cloud covered most of the Channel and Southern England. Clearer skies brought some welcome sunshine later that afternoon and in to the early evening but as the winds fell light overnight so shallow fog and mist encroached across the islands leading to a murky start on the 14th.

That early shallow fog thickened for a few hours shortly after dawn but burnt back to the coasts later that morning before returning for a few more hours through the afternoon. A weakening cold front drifted in to the Southwest Approaches overnight in to the 15th with outbreaks of rain and drizzle, together with hill fog patches which cleared only slowly through the morning. A much brighter afternoon followed that front's clearance eastward with clear skies and much improved visibility.

A building ridge from the southwest brought cooler, brighter and clearer conditions to our shores through to the 17th with light to moderate north to northwesterly winds. As that high extended its influence across the UK so our winds veered in to the northeast but it remained dry with daytime air temperatures nudging up to the mid to high teens. By the 19th that high had transferred east to be over Scandinavia, allowing a weak cold front to drop southeast across the country. Cloudier conditions together with one or two spots of rain in some parts of the island late on the 19th heralded the passage of this feature but with pressure building once again from the southwest, the 20th dawned bright and clear.

Low pressure over much of Central Europe and high pressure across the UK and Scandinavia encouraged a northeast airflow across the islands. This freshened at times over the next few days to just take the edge off daytime temperatures but we still managed a gradual improvement, along with plenty of sunshine.

This pattern continued right the way through to the end of the month with that fresh northeast breeze only moderating at times overnight. It remained dry too with mainly clear skies throughout, although still with the odd few hours of patchy cloud at times. Temperatures were a little disappointing at times due to the wind strength but maintained a fairly consistent daytime high of mid to high teens whilst dropping away overnight to low double figures.



The settled weather captured at Port Gratiot on 31st May. Photo credit Bridget Bonnefin

Very much a month of two halves; initially dull and damp, but with the advent of high pressure dominating from the 14th, the last two weeks were brighter and drier with no rainfall recorded at the airport after the 14th. The lack of rainfall in the second half of the month kept the total for May below the average, but at 32.9mm it was still two and a half times the total recorded in 2022. Sunshine levels were once again above the long term average, and a total of 278.3 hours made it the sunniest May since 2020. Although the monthly mean temperature was slightly above the average, the daily maximum temperatures were notably down on previous years. The warmest maximum recorded was 17.7°C on the 2nd making it the coolest maximum temperature recorded for May since 1984.

Spring itself was wetter, duller, and warmer than average. With March and April the wettest for 22 years and 9 years respectively, the dry end to May didn't stop it being the wettest Spring since 2014. It was also the dullest Spring for 5 years, with the May sunshine not enough to counteract the two dull months before it. Spring also reflected the temperature trend seen in May as despite the above average mean temperature, it was the first

time since 2009 that the maximum temperature didn't reach or exceed 20°C during the first five months of the year.

Spring	2023	30 Yr Avg	Anomaly/%
Rain (mm)	211.4	166.3	127.1
Sun (hrs)	557.9	574.9	97.0
Mean Max (°C)	12.8	12.6	0.2
Mean Min (°C)	8.0	7.4	0.6
Mean (°C)	10.4	10.0	0.4

DAY	DATE	BAROMETER	TEMPERATURE deg C					WIND				RAIN	SUN	WEATHER			
		hPa	AIR			GRASS	SOIL		DIR'N	SPEED(knots)							
			at 9a.m.	MAX	MIN	MEAN	MIN	30cm	100cm	9a.m.	9a.m.				MEAN	MAX	mm
Mon	1	1020.6	14.3	10.3	12.3	9.5	13.1	11.8	290	10	10.0	21	NIL	9.9	Cldy w ith fog & drizzle early, bec fine by late am		
Tue	2	1024.5	17.7	8.1	12.9	5.3	13.3	11.9	140	06	6.1	19	NIL	13.0	Fine am. Sea fog early pm. Xtnsv high cloud from mid pm		
Wed	3	1022.3	15.6	10.7	13.2	9.4	13.9	12.0	090	16	13.9	28	0.7	11.5	Xtensive high cloud from daw n		
Thu	4	1010.5	16.4	10.8	13.6	9.3	13.9	12.2	160	12	10.8	23	2.2	3.8	Fair/cldy w ith sct showers		
Fri	5	1015.3	15.9	10.8	13.4	9.3	14.0	12.4	180	10	8.0	16	9.4	8.4	Fair w ith isol shw rs early pm, rain by midnight		
Sat	6	1012.8	15.5	11.2	13.4	11.2	14.4	12.5	170	12	9.0	20	0.1	0.1	Cldy. Rain, drz & fog clrng to isol shw rs mid am. Fog retrn late pm		
Sun	7	1018.8	15.5	10.2	12.9	9.0	14.2	12.6	300	06	6.7	14	2.5	5.2	Cloudy w ith fog early am, clrng fine pm. Xtnsv high cloud eve		
Mon	8	1021.4	14.0	10.1	12.1	7.3	14.2	12.7	180	11	9.7	19	11.4	NIL	Cldy. Rain, drz & fog ptchs daw n to late am. Fog & rain eve		
Tue	9	1014.0	13.7	10.2	12.0	11.3	14.3	12.8	260	12	12.3	28	3.6	1.2	Cldy w ith fog & drizzle am, occn fair pm. Isol shw rs bec sct eve		
Wed	10	1017.0	14.3	10.3	12.3	8.6	13.8	12.9	280	15	13.1	26	TR	8.1	Fair to cloudy		
Thu	11	1018.0	14.1	9.8	12.0	8.5	14.1	12.9	280	10	8.6	18	NIL	8.8	Cldy w ith isol shw r @ daw n bec fair then fine pm		
Fri	12	1021.6	13.7	9.0	11.4	6.5	14.1	12.9	040	12	8.7	23	0.2	3.8	Fine bec cloudy am w ith light rain eve		
Sat	13	1025.6	13.6	9.2	11.4	10.9	13.9	13.0	050	09	8.4	21	TR(DEW)	4.9	Cldy w ith early light rain bec fair then fine late pm. Misty eve		
Sun	14	1022.7	14.9	9.2	12.1	5.7	14.0	13.0	290	14	6.8	16	2.8	3.8	Xtnsv fog burning back to coasts pm. Misty eve		
Mon	15	1020.9	13.7	9.7	11.7	10.7	14.2	13.1	360	15	10.3	26	NIL	10.3	Cldy w ith mist, fog, drz & rain clrng mid am to fair then fine pm		
Tue	16	1026.7	13.9	8.3	11.1	6.4	14.0	13.1	010	10	7.5	17	NIL	14.0	Fine. Xlnt viz		
Wed	17	1029.8	16.0	9.1	12.6	6.1	14.1	13.2	060	08	5.7	14	NIL	13.3	Fine, bec cloudy w ith xtnsv high cloud by late am		
Thu	18	1028.3	16.0	9.8	12.9	6.1	14.7	13.3	340	06	6.0	14	NIL	10.0	Cloudy am, bec fine pm		
Fri	19	1027.5	14.8	9.8	12.3	7.0	15.2	13.3	350	08	6.6	14	NIL	6.8	Fair to cloudy		
Sat	20	1024.4	15.7	9.5	12.6	7.3	14.8	13.6	020	12	8.0	20	NIL	14.0	Bec fine by daw n		
Sun	21	1021.1	16.7	10.4	13.6	6.7	15.0	13.6	040	09	8.1	24	NIL	14.1	Fine w ith high cloud eve		
Mon	22	1021.6	17.5	10.3	13.9	7.5	15.3	13.8	360	12	8.2	22	NIL	12.0	Mainly fine w ith some brief cloudier spells		
Tue	23	1026.0	15.5	10.5	13.0	9.3	15.4	13.8	050	10	8.1	20	NIL	10.6	Fine w ith xtnsv high cloud from late am		
Wed	24	1027.3	16.4	9.1	12.8	5.8	15.8	13.9	010	06	4.9	11	NIL	12.9	Xtnsv high cloud bec fair @ noon w ith dry air, fine late pm		
Thu	25	1027.9	16.3	10.9	13.6	7.2	15.7	14.0	050	10	9.9	26	NIL	14.3	Fine		
Fri	26	1029.6	14.4	10.6	12.5	9.0	15.7	14.2	050	10	12.8	27	NIL	7.7	Fine ovnt, bec cldy mid am, then fine early pm		
Sat	27	1024.3	16.5	11.0	13.8	9.6	15.6	14.3	060	13	11.2	27	NIL	13.7	Hzy early but otherw ise fine occn fair mid pm		
Sun	28	1021.2	17.5	10.3	13.9	6.3	15.7	14.3	050	13	11.0	26	NIL	14.0	Fine		
Mon	29	1023.8	14.8	11.4	13.1	10.3	16.6	14.4	050	16	17.3	33	NIL	10.7	Mostly fine w ith cloud for a time am		
Tue	30	1026.0	14.7	10.7	12.7	9.3	15.7	14.5	060	18	16.9	35	NIL	12.1	Patchy cloud bec sunny		
Wed	31	1024.2	15.7	11.1	13.4	9.9	15.7	14.5	050	15	15.1	31	NIL	5.3	Cloudy bec fine early pm		
MEAN	1022.4	15.3	10.1	12.7	8.3	14.7	13.2	NE	11.2	9.7	TOTAL	32.9	278.3	8th - King Charles III Coronation B/hol			
30 YEAR AVG	1016.9	15.1	9.4	12.3	7.2	13.4	12.2	NE	10.9	10.4	/////	49.0	238.9				
EXTREMES	NUMBER	RAIN	WET	SNOW/	HAIL	THNDR	LGHTNG	AIR	GROUND	FOG	FOG	GALE	NO	TOTALS FOR YEAR TO DATE			
ARE IN	OF DAYS	≥0.2mm	≥1.0mm	SLEET				FROST	FROST		9a.m.	SUN					
BOLD TYPE	WITH	8	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	2	0	1				
RECORDS FROM JANUARY 1947														RAINFALL	358.5 mm	SUNSHINE	724.1 hrs
WETTEST DAY	40.4mm	DRIEST MONTH		4.1mm	LOWEST MIN		0.1°C	WARMEST MNTH		13.9°C	SUNNIEST MNTH		336.4hrs	RAIN DAYS	73	SUNLESS	25
DAY/YEAR	24th/1950	YEAR		1989	DAY/YEAR		2nd/1979	YEAR		1989	YEAR		1989	WET DAYS	56		
WETTEST MNTH	128.7mm	HIGHEST MAX		25.9	LOWEST GRASS		-5.6°C	COLDEST MNTH		9.9°C	DULLEST MNTH		136.9hrs				
YEAR	1994	DAY/YEAR		30th/2003	DAY/YEAR		5th/1979	YEAR		1984	YEAR		1981				