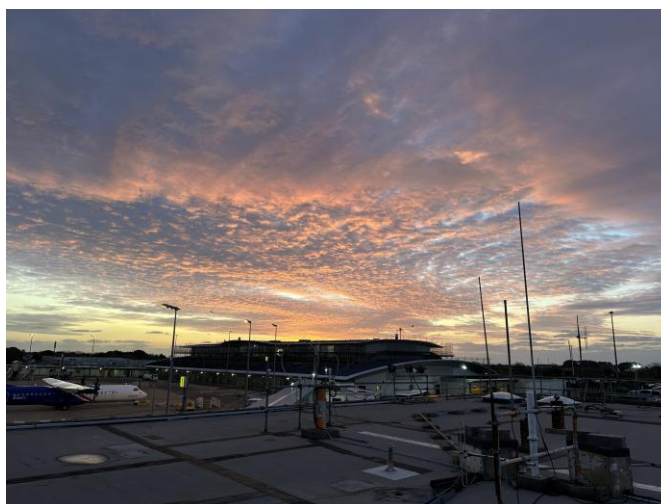


## December 2024

Slow moving low pressure off the northwest coast of Scotland and an extensive belt of high pressure over western Russia combined to drive a fresh to strong southerly flow up over the islands, with clearing fronts affecting us through the 1<sup>st</sup>. Rain, heavy at times and with mist and hill fog, cleared late morning to isolated showers that became more scattered as the day wore on, with the winds veering more southwesterly by evening. Those showers pepped up overnight and into the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> as that low off Scotland slipped eastward over Norway but they became more isolated later that afternoon, and with a cooler northerly flow setting in over the Channel, temperatures fell away overnight to just 6.8°C by dawn on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

With a temporary ridge building in across the UK, the 3<sup>rd</sup> dawned clear and bright with excellent visibility and light winds, but as this ridge collapsed southeast during the 4<sup>th</sup>, further fronts edged in from the west with rain arriving by mid evening. These fronts, in association with a low centred between Scotland and Iceland, swept up over the UK, pulling in milder Atlantic air so while the islands were now sitting under a blanket of low cloud with rain, drizzle, mist and fog patches, temperatures had picked up to around 14°C by dawn on the 5<sup>th</sup>. These fronts were slow to clear the islands however, only dropping away to the southeast later that evening. A building ridge overnight led to another bright start on the 6<sup>th</sup> but cloud quickly filled in from the west as the next frontal system raced in from the near Atlantic with the first few drops of rain arriving by mid afternoon.



The calm before the storm, sunrise on the 6<sup>th</sup> with *Alto cumulus* at 8000'. Photo credit Marc Griffith

This new low was quickly named storm '*Darragh*' as it deepened and tracked east across northern Britain bringing very strong winds and torrential rain to many parts. The main cold front cleared the islands around midnight, with the winds veering westerly and increasing to F7 with gusts of over 50mph. A rash of heavy showers rattled into the Channel, some mixed in with hail, as the winds veered more northwesterly and increased further to be blowing a full gale (>33 knots) at times through the 7<sup>th</sup>. The highest gust recorded was 57.3 knots (66mph) at 1309hrs as '*Darragh*' continued to make slow progress east out into the North Sea. A large anticyclone building in behind this storm only increased the wind strength down across the UK and Channel, but by dawn on the 8<sup>th</sup> we saw conditions abating slightly, although our winds were now almost due north, making conditions still untenable for flying at the islands' airports. Indeed both sea and air travel were severely disrupted locally that weekend before winds eased off sufficiently overnight into the 9<sup>th</sup> to allow travel once more.

Eventually '*Darragh*' filled and lost its identity as that Atlantic high continued to build in from the west. As this anticyclone toppled east over the UK, so a stiff northeasterly was established down the Channel with lines of heavy showers forming upwind of the Bailiwick, leading to persistent and heavy periods of rain, especially during the early hours of the 10<sup>th</sup>. Just short of an inch of rain was recorded that night, and those showers continued to feed in during the day as well. It wasn't until overnight into the 11<sup>th</sup> that we started to see an improvement as the high shifted position slightly over the UK, leading to those winds veering more easterly

which managed to nudge the showers away to the north of the islands. We also noted an easing of the winds but a thick blanket of low cloud was by now covering much of France, the Channel and southern England with 3 consecutive sunless days from the 10<sup>th</sup> although it did remain largely dry. Air temperatures were very reluctant to climb with all this gloom, topping out at a disappointing 5.7°C by close of play on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

With two areas of high pressure, one out to the west and the other to the east over Poland, and low pressure areas to the north and south of the British Isles, we were left in a rather slack gradient with little wind and even less sunshine. Grey skies with the odd smattering of light rain or drizzle due to weak fronts drifting slowly east across the UK prevailed over the next few days with little overall change locally. By the 15<sup>th</sup> however, the Azores High was starting to edge up into the Southwest Approaches as our winds settled into the southwest, drawing up milder air as temperatures hovered around the 10°C mark, but still with fairly overcast and dull conditions with the odd spot of rain or drizzle. As that Azores High continued to drift slowly eastward, so the door was opened for a more changeable spell of weather as a nearby Atlantic Low deepened and tracked in from the west later on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

The first few drops of rain arrived around late afternoon as our winds backed into the southeast and freshened through the day as that low deepened and tracked northeast over the top of Scotland. A complex series of fronts draped down over the UK brought rain, drizzle, mist and hill fog to the islands overnight and through the 18<sup>th</sup> before clearing later that evening. A shallower low with an active weather front, crossing southern England through the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup>, delivered some spells of heavy rain through the night before moving east over Belgium and the Netherlands.

With high pressure over the Azores, the next Atlantic lows were directed north of the UK leaving us with cool northwesterly winds and a scattering of gusty showers, occasionally with hail, through the daytime hours of the 19<sup>th</sup>. Ahead of the next approaching cold front, winds backed west and eased temporarily overnight. The odd light shower on the morning of Friday 20<sup>th</sup> turned to rain in the afternoon as the cloud base lowered.

A deep low was now developing south of Iceland with the possibility of the next named storm of the winter. Whilst the forecast track of this system took it over northern Scotland through Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> and Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Channel Islands were bracing for gale force winds and more disruption to travel and transport. Initially, a weak warm heralded a rather damp and dreary start to the weekend, with rain drizzle and mist through Saturday. The cold front cleared the Bailiwick that night leaving us in a showery polar air mass, with the northwesterly winds continuing to strengthen the drop in temperature was noticeable. Whilst this particular Atlantic low was never officially named, mean wind speeds over the weekend were sustained at Force 6-7 with gusts reaching 42 knots on Sunday.

In the lead up to Christmas, a ridge of high pressure to the SW hinted at a more settled period of weather. Whilst the 23<sup>rd</sup> was on the main uneventful, with some welcome sunshine through the morning, the arrival of a warm front later in the day brought with it moisture laden air and the inevitable rain, drizzle and the last thing on anyone's Christmas list – fog!

As the high pressure became established over the next few days, with light winds and weak sunshine at this time of year, there was little chance of any change in the weather. With all the talk at this time of year of a white Christmas, it looked likely for most of the UK it was unfortunately going to be a grey Christmas.

Locally, increasing gloom on the morning of 24<sup>th</sup> began a lengthy spell of extensive fog and drizzle that lasted through until the 27<sup>th</sup>. Brief improvements on Christmas Eve were a welcome sight as most travellers looking to make it home for Christmas were able to make it to their destinations. The fog did lift again on the 25<sup>th</sup> but only very briefly, with a more noticeable improvement arriving mid-afternoon on the 26<sup>th</sup> only for dense fog to return later that evening.

By the 27<sup>th</sup>, the ridge of high pressure had drifted east over Europe, with centres over Germany and the Pyrenees. Whilst winds remained light and variable, the cloud base lifted enough to take Guernsey and Alderney

out of fog conditions, however many airfields across the mainland were now experiencing the same dense fog we had seen earlier in the week.

A weak front over the Channel on 28<sup>th</sup> had little affect on the days' weather, with more overcast skies and a 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive day with no recorded sunshine; December would turn out to be the duller since 1966 and 3<sup>rd</sup> duller on record.

Much of the same going into Sunday 29<sup>th</sup>, however, beneath cloudy skies we were treated to excellent visibility not usually associated with this weather setup. Another weak front sank over the UK reaching the Islands' on the morning of the 30<sup>th</sup>, giving an afternoon of light drizzle and mist under overcast skies.

As December and 2024 came to a close, a developing low west of Ireland would finally bring a change to a week of settled, albeit grey and miserable conditions. With a freshening southwesterly wind, the last day of the year was a mild one, helping December to an above average mean temperature for the month as a whole.

DECEMBER 2024

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
Sun	1	1015.0	14.1	10.9	12.5	10.8	11.6	12.2	180	15	14.4	26	5.4	0.1	Cldy. Rain, drz, mist & hill fog, clrng mid am, to iso show ers pm/eve			
Mon	2	1017.3	12.9	7.8	10.4	7.7	11.6	12.3	290	13	14.6	27	TR	2.6	Fair to cldy w ith frqnt shw rs am bec isol pm			
Tue	3	1022.9	10.3	6.3	8.3	2.0	10.3	12.3	310	04	4.5	16	NIL	5.6	Fine occn fair w ith xlt viz			
Wed	4	1028.2	11.1	5.6	8.4	0.7	9.1	12.2	130	04	10.1	30	4.8	2.1	Fair w ith xln t viz soon bec cldy. Rain & occn drz from early eve			
Thu	5	1015.4	13.7	10.9	12.3	8.2	9.6	12.2	260	19	20.7	39	0.8	NIL	Cldy w ith occn rain,drz,mist & fog ptches clrng late eve			
Fri	6	1022.4	12.4	8.7	10.6	5.5	10.5	11.9	300	05	14.4	41	4.8	0.3	Bec cldy by daw n. Rain from mid pm. Drz, mist & fog eve			
Sat	7	1005.7	13.7	7.8	10.8	6.1	10.6	11.9	290	29	29.2	57	TR	0.1	Cldy. Frqnt hvy rain/hail shw rs am bec isol/sct pm/eve. Gales			
Sun	8	1021.3	9.7	7.3	8.5	6.3	9.7	11.9	350	21	23.4	44	1.0	0.1	Cldy w ith rain & shw rs from mid pm			
Mon	9	1028.6	9.4	7.3	8.4	6.2	9.5	11.8	020	18	16.0	34	22.4	1.6	Mainly cldy, w ith frqnt light shw rs			
Tue	10	1029.0	8.7	6.9	7.8	6.0	9.2	11.7	060	13	13.8	30	6.0	NIL	Cldy w ith prstnt shw rs turning to rain & drz eve			
Wed	11	1029.4	8.2	6.2	7.2	6.1	9.3	11.6	080	15	12.9	26	TR	NIL	Cldy w ith patchy rain or drz			
Thu	12	1030.2	6.4	5.1	5.8	5.0	8.9	11.4	100	12	9.7	21	NIL	NIL	Overcast w ith slt rain pre-daw n			
Fri	13	1025.4	6.0	4.0	5.0	4.5	8.6	11.3	110	08	5.2	13	3.1	NIL	Ovc/cldy w ith rain late pm			
Sat	14	1024.7	9.1	5.5	7.3	4.9	8.7	11.2	330	08	7.8	20	TR	2.5	Cldy am w ith sct shw rs occn fair pm w ith isol shw rs. Xln t viz			
Sun	15	1032.1	11.7	8.6	10.2	4.4	9.0	11.0	280	14	14.1	25	0.3	0.5	Cldy, w ith occn patchy light rain & drz			
Mon	16	1036.0	10.9	9.3	10.1	7.4	9.7	11.0	260	08	10.6	23	0.4	0.1	Cldy, w ith rain and drz am			
Tue	17	1026.4	10.5	8.1	9.3	8.4	9.8	11.0	160	15	14.5	29	0.1	NIL	Cldy, w ith patchy light rain and drizzle			
Wed	18	1014.6	13.5	10.5	12.0	8.1	10.3	11.0	230	18	17.8	33	16.1	0.2	Rain, drz, mist am, bec persistent and hvy eve w ith fog patches			
Thu	19	1011.7	13.2	5.0	9.1	5.3	10.4	11.1	310	20	16.8	38	3.3	3.4	Hvy rain bec fair, occ rain and hail shw rs pm clearing by eve			
Fri	20	1025.3	10.9	6.1	8.5	2.5	9.0	11.1	280	06	13.5	33	1.9	1.3	Mainly cloudy, occ show ers, bec fair late eve			
Sat	21	1020.4	12.3	9.5	10.9	6.0	9.4	11.0	260	17	19.4	40	2.8	NIL	Cloudy w ith patchy rain and drizzle, mist from midday			
Sun	22	1013.6	11.4	5.9	8.7	2.3	9.7	11.0	310	19	23.0	47	0.3	3.6	Cldy w ith hvy show ers, some hail, bec fine early pm			
Mon	23	1028.7	11.5	7.2	9.4	4.1	8.5	11.0	330	13	13.6	35	2.3	3.1	Fair bec cloudy w ith rain,drz,mist and fog patches pm			
Tue	24	1028.7	11.7	10.2	11.0	8.1	9.5	10.9	300	07	9.7	20	0.5	NIL	Overcast w ith xtnsv fog, drz & occn rain			
Wed	25	1034.7	10.7	8.9	9.8	9.5	10.0	10.8	240	05	4.3	12	0.8	NIL	Overcast w ith xtnsv fog & drz lif ting slightly mid pm			
Thu	26	1035.0	8.9	6.5	7.7	7.7	10.1	10.8	090	05	5.2	13	TR	NIL	Overcast. Xtnsv fog & occn drz am, clrng pm retrng late eve			
Fri	27	1032.9	8.1	4.2	6.2	6.8	9.9	10.9	080	05	4.2	12	NIL	NIL	Overcast. Fog clrng late am, remaining cldy			
Sat	28	1030.2	7.7	4.3	6.0	3.9	9.5	10.9	210	01	2.3	08	TR	NIL	Cloudy w ith light drz late eve			
Sun	29	1032.1	9.3	7.5	8.4	7.7	9.5	10.9	350	03	2.8	08	NIL	0.1	Cldy w ith rain & drz ovnt clrng by daw n. Good vis late pm			
Mon	30	1030.8	8.9	6.4	7.7	8.1	9.6	10.9	220	04	6.7	17	1.2	NIL	Cloudy w ith drz and mist from late am			
Tue	31	1025.9	11.3	7.7	9.5	5.4	9.5	10.9	220	16	16.5	33	TR	0.7	Cloudy, w ith some brief fair spells am			
MEAN		1025.0	10.6	7.3	8.9	6.0	9.7	11.4	NW	11.6	12.6	TOTAL	78.3	28.0	7th - Storm 'Darragh'			
30 YEAR AVG																		
1991-2020		1016.3	9.9	6.3	8.1	3.6	8.4	10.0	SW	13.3	13.6	////	119.3	58.3				
EXTREMES ARE IN BOLD TYPE	NUMBER OF DAYS	RAIN ≥0.2mm	WET ≥1.0mm	SNOW/ SLEET	HAIL	THNDR	LGHTNG	AIR FROST	GROUND FROST	FOG	FOG 9a.m.	GALE	NO SUN	TOTALS FOR YEAR TO DATE				
		19	13	0	3	0	0	0	0	9	4	1	13					
RECORDS FROM JANUARY 1947															RAINFALL	902.9 mm	SUNSHINE	1793.8 hrs
WETTEST DAY	42.9	DRIEST MONTH		27.5mm	LOWEST MIN		-3.8°C	WARMEST MNTH		11.6°C	SUNNIEST MNTH		108.9hrs	RAIN DAYS	182	SUNLESS I	64	
	DAY/YEAR	4th/2010	YEAR		2016	DAY/YEAR		24th/1963	YEAR		2015	YEAR		2001	WET DAYS	140		
WETTEST MNTH	249.6mm	HIGHEST MAX		15.6°C	LOWEST GRASS		-8.9°C	COLDEST MNTH		4.4°C	DULLEST MNTH		26.6hrs					
	YEAR	1999	DAY/YEAR		6th/1953	29th/1964,27th/1995			YEAR		2010	YEAR		1966				