

March 2021

High pressure centred out over the North Sea opened the new month with dry, settled conditions, light easterly winds and temperatures up around 11°C; a fine way to start the meteorological Spring. As that high eased away to the southeast across Europe, our winds veered in to the southeast, introducing a more continental feed with hazy visibility at times.

Gradually though that high slipped further away in to Eastern Europe, allowing a showery trough to nudge up from the southwest bringing cloudier conditions to our shores overnight in to the 3rd, with a scattering of mostly light rain showers through the day. This trough was a fairly isolated feature albeit with a fair amount of cloud as it edged slowly away to the east through the 4th. Of more interest was another high pressure cell just off the west coast of Iceland starting to introduce a much cooler flow across northern parts of the UK. This colder air made steady progress southward to arrive in the Channel by dawn on the 5th. A noticeable drop in temperatures and a scattering of rain showers marked this change as our winds backed once more in to the east, with just 5°C the outside air temperature that evening.

That high edged slowly southeast to be centred over the UK that weekend with a return to dry, settled but cool conditions right the way through to the end of the 9th. Variable amounts of cloud kept night time ground temperatures mostly above freezing but clear skies overnight in to the 9th saw quite a sharp ground frost in places across the island with -3.4°C recorded at the airport by dawn that day.

A glance at the Atlantic charts though, showed a series of very active weather systems queuing up out to the west, rolling in across the UK by dawn on the 10th as that high retreated away over Scandinavia. Cloudy conditions with outbreaks of rain and drizzle prevailed through the 10th, before a cold front cleared through overnight in to the 11th. The passage of this front saw our winds increase for a time up to a full gale just before dawn, with gusts in excess of 50 knots.

Deep low pressure was now very much the controlling influence for our weather, centered just off the north coast of Scotland at 958mb edging slowly northward, with gale force westerly winds affecting much of the UK. A rash of squally showers with hail and thunder affected all parts of the British Isles from the 11th through to the 14th, before we started to see pressure building in from the southwest.

That ridge out to the southwest slowed to a near halt by the 15th, with a series of weak frontal systems toppling down across the UK. Milder, damper air by dawn on the 16th saw a blanket of thick fog enshroud the islands, with patchy rain, before clearing and brightening up for the afternoon.



Fog clearing in the distance with high *Cirrus* cloud @ 23,000 ft making for a fine afternoon for walking the island's cliff paths. Looking northeast over Marble Bay.

Photo credit: B. Bonnefin.

Slowly though, that high edged northward to be centred just off the northwest coast of Ireland by the 17th, with a cooler northerly flow becoming established over the UK. Shallow low pressure just off the coast of Norway threw a blanket of cloud into the North Sea which made its way down the Channel and into our area shortly after dawn on the 18th, with just the odd spot of rain through the day. Mostly cloudy conditions persisted overnight, again with a few splashes of rain, but by noon on the 19th the weak cold front had cleared to the west, allowing our skies to clear that afternoon and winds easing down by the evening.

Clear skies and light winds overnight lead to a ground frost by the morning of the 20th but thickening cloud shortly after dawn brought a few spots of drizzle later in the day, as high pressure continued to be the main influence on our weather, centred out to the west of Ireland. Gradually though, the high edged south and east to be atop the Channel around midday on the 22nd with our winds falling light and variable. Shallow fog formed later that evening and thickened overnight, before clearing around dawn to leave a fine day in the islands with plenty of sunshine.

Atlantic fronts out to the west were now starting to appear on the charts again as our settling band of high pressure continued to slip away into Eastern Europe. Cloud thickened and lowered through the morning of the 24th with outbreaks of rain & drizzle by mid afternoon. Rainfall amounts were negligible though, but now after some days under the influence of high pressure, milder Atlantic air now prevailed across the UK and Channel. Southwest winds with a scattering of light rain showers brought cloudier conditions locally through to around noon on the 26th before a colder air mass dug behind a clearing cold front lying down across the UK. Mid morning temperatures of around 11°C fell sharply through that afternoon to be just 5°C by evening, as that cooler air announced its arrival. A rash of showers, occasionally with hail, added to our meagre rainfall total for the month, but by late morning on the 27th these showers had all but died away as high pressure once again began to build from the south.

This new high intensified through the weekend, steering a series of frontal systems up over northern parts of the UK whilst starting to introduce a warmer, drier southeasterly flow up from the nearby continent. Temperatures climbed to 16.5°C on the 29th with wall to wall sunshine making it the warmest & sunniest day of the year to date.

However, the 30th saw temperatures rise even further, particularly that afternoon, reaching 19.6°C, the highest temperature recorded in March at the airport. Our Sark weather station just pipped us, reaching 19.7°C whilst Kew Gardens in London recorded 24.5°C, their highest March temperature for 53 years. Jersey managed

21.1°C at their Maison St Louis Observatory in St Helier. High cloud encroached locally through the afternoon of the 30th to take the edge of our sunshine, but it remained warm with the mercury still showing 15.0°C that midnight.

The last day of the month saw that cloud shield persisting over much of the area, with only the briefest glimpses of any sun that afternoon. Temperatures held up nicely though, with a very respectable high of 17.7°C to close out the month.

With high pressure more dominant than usual, March ended up drier, warmer and with more sunshine than average this year, with a record high temperature of 19.6°C reached on the 30th with a warm continental feed towards the end of the month. Otherwise overnight temperatures turned out to be lower than average as a result of largely clear skies, with the highest number of March ground frosts noted for 5 years. Rather conversely the night minimum of the 29th/30th was the highest recorded at the airport since 1947 and it was also the driest March, with the lowest number of rain days, for 9 years. Rainfall was just over 40% of the average expected.

March 2021

DAY	DATE	TEMPERATURE deg C											RAIN mm	SUN hrs	WEATHER		
		BAROMETER		AIR			GRASS	SOIL		DIR'N	WIND SPEED(knots)						
		mb	at 9a.m.	MAX	MIN	MEAN	MIN	30cm	100cm	9a.m.	9a.m.	MEAN				MAX	
Mon	1	1028.1	11.0	4.6	7.8	0.8	7.8	8.8	100	10	9.1	18	NIL	9.9	Fine after early haze		
Tue	2	1026.6	11.1	5.6	8.4	2.1	7.9	8.8	070	08	9.0	19	2.3	6.0	Fine w/ haze became cloudy during afternoon		
Wed	3	1027.5	11.0	8.1	9.6	5.8	8.4	8.8	180	16	7.7	16	0.1	1.4	Clody w/ isol shw rs early am & pm. Mst patches/fog late		
Thu	4	1024.2	9.7	6.3	8.0	5.2	8.8	8.8	330	06	8.0	20	TR	0.6	Cloudy w/ mst or haze. Drz early pm		
Fri	5	1029.0	7.3	4.6	6.0	4.2	8.4	8.8	050	08	11.0	26	0.1	1.2	Clody w/ sct lt rain and hail show ers. Dry air		
Sat	6	1032.8	7.4	3.1	5.3	0.4	7.6	8.9	060	11	11.0	22	NIL	9.3	Cloudy became fine		
Sun	7	1027.4	5.7	2.7	4.2	-0.1	7.3	8.9	030	08	7.0	17	NIL	0.9	Cloudy by dawn		
Mon	8	1025.6	7.2	3.0	5.1	0.5	7.3	8.8	040	03	4.3	12	NIL	1.6	Cloudy becoming fine by late eve		
Tue	9	1023.8	9.0	2.8	5.9	-3.4	6.7	8.7	030	06	6.7	20	1.4	8.3	Early hoar frost, fine w/ high cloud encroaching late pm		
Wed	10	1013.6	10.6	6.0	8.3	1.8	7.3	8.6	190	18	17.7	34	6.0	NIL	Clody w/ rain from dawn to mid pm. Drz eve		
Thu	11	1003.6	11.0	5.4	8.2	5.9	8.0	8.5	260	23	23.6	51	4.1	6.8	Sct shw rs, occn hvy w/ hail. Gales 0120-0135 & 0525-0530		
Fri	12	1009.0	9.8	6.4	8.1	3.9	7.9	8.5	250	22	20.5	41	7.3	0.7	Clody w/ squally shw rs, occn hvy w/ hail. Rain by eve		
Sat	13	1003.2	9.5	4.3	6.9	2.9	8.0	8.6	290	20	22.2	46	0.7	4.9	Fair w/ sct shw rs, occn w/ hail. Lightning @ 0010		
Sun	14	1020.0	10.6	6.7	8.7	3.4	7.8	8.6	300	14	16.5	29	TR	5.7	Clody bec fair or fine. Clody pm w/ lt rain eve		
Mon	15	1023.9	11.7	8.5	10.1	6.7	8.4	8.6	310	14	13.1	26	TR(fog)	5.7	Cloudy occn fair pm		
Tue	16	1030.8	11.1	7.8	9.5	5.6	8.9	8.7	290	10	10.5	23	0.3	3.5	Thick fog am w/ th rain @ noon, bec fine pm		
Wed	17	1035.3	10.3	5.5	7.9	0.5	9.0	8.8	350	04	6.0	16	NIL	4.3	Fine early am bec cloudy, clrng eve		
Thu	18	1032.2	10.2	5.0	7.6	-0.5	8.5	8.9	350	09	7.9	18	TR	3.1	Bec cloudy am w/ th occ light rain		
Fri	19	1025.8	9.2	5.3	7.3	6.4	8.9	9.0	030	13	11.1	27	TR	7.1	Cloudy w/ th occn shw r or drz am, bec fine		
Sat	20	1033.5	9.3	4.1	6.7	-0.7	8.5	9.0	010	07	5.7	19	TR	2.4	Mainly cloudy w/ some brighter spells		
Sun	21	1029.7	10.5	5.9	8.2	7.3	8.9	9.0	020	07	6.2	14	NIL	2.9	Cloudy, w/ th fair periods pm		
Mon	22	1028.4	11.7	3.7	7.7	-0.3	8.7	9.0	280	05	3.6	10	TR(dew)	4.2	Mst early am, cloudy bec fine pm		
Tue	23	1026.7	9.5	5.3	7.4	0.0	8.7	9.1	190	10	6.5	16	NIL	10.7	Early fog soon clearing to fine		
Wed	24	1023.0	12.3	4.5	8.4	-0.4	8.8	9.1	190	07	7.4	18	0.1	2.8	Clody w/ th some light drizzle & rain later pm & eve		
Thu	25	1022.7	11.5	5.2	8.4	1.0	9.2	9.2	200	10	10.0	21	0.3	1.6	Some fair periods, show ers by evening		
Fri	26	1012.9	11.5	4.9	8.2	6.2	9.5	9.3	200	17	15.3	30	3.8	1.8	Cloudy w/ th rain am, fair w/ th rain/hail show ers pm		
Sat	27	1026.0	11.4	4.2	7.8	2.0	8.9	9.3	250	12	13.5	33	TR	8.0	Fair w/ th occn shw rs, bec clody eve		
Sun	28	1027.2	12.4	7.1	9.8	5.5	9.4	9.3	200	15	11.5	24	NIL	6.0	Cloudy am, fair periods developing pm		
Mon	29	1029.1	16.5	5.9	11.2	1.5	9.5	9.4	170	07	7.1	15	NIL	11.5	Fine		
Tue	30	1026.9	19.6	11.5	15.6	5.8	10.4	9.5	140	13	10.3	18	NIL	9.3	Fine bec cloudy mid pm. Dry air		
Wed	31	1020.1	17.7	10.6	14.1	6.2	10.9	9.6	160	10	7.4	14	NIL	0.9	Cloudy, briefly fair pm		
MEAN 30 YEAR AVG 1991-2020	1024.1 1017.2	10.9 10.2	5.6 5.8	8.3 8.0	2.8 3.1	8.5 8.1	8.9 8.4	S SW	11.1 11.8	10.6 11.7	TOTAL /////	26.5 63.3	143.1 135.3				
Diff from prev Avg	+0.2mb	+0.2°C	+0.2°C	+0.2°C	+0.2°C	+0.3°C	+0.4°C	W	-0.6Kt	-0.6Kt		-3.7mm	+7.7hrs				
EXTREMES ARE IN BOLD TYPE	NUMBER OF DAYS WITH	RAIN ≥0.2mm 9	WET ≥1.0mm 6	SNOW/ SLEET 0	HAIL 5	THNDR 0	LGHTNG 1	AIR FROST 0	GROUND FROST 6	FOG 4	FOG 9a.m. 1	GALE 1	NO SUN 1				
RECORDS FROM JANUARY 1947														TOTALS FOR YEAR TO DATE			
WETTEST DAY	30.0mm	DRIEST MONTH		2.7mm	LOWEST MN		-2.2°C	WARMEST MNTH		10.3°C	SUNNIEST MNTH		214.8	RAINFALL	269.0 mm	SUNSHINE	288.1 hrs
DAY/YEAR	28th/1960	YEAR		1961	DAY/YEAR		10th/11th/1958	YEAR		1957	YEAR		2009	RAIN DAYS	50	SUNLESS I	16
WETTEST MNTH	179.6mm	HIGHEST MAX		19.6°C	LOWEST GRASS		-9.4°C	COLDEST MNTH		4.4°C	DULLEST MNTH		67.4hrs	WET DAYS	41		
YEAR	2001	DAY/YEAR		30th/2021	DAY/YEAR		3rd/1965	YEAR		1962	YEAR		1964				