

Bracknell Harmanswater April 2004 Weather Summary

April began as March left with mild temperatures during the day and night. A fall of Sahara dust was noted on the morning of the 1st from overnight rain. The start of the month was a mixture of sunshine and showers and hail on 4th, when cooler conditions had moved into the area. The evening of the 5th saw a glorious sunset after some 'moderate' showers. (See photo to the right)

The 6th saw hail, sleet and thunder in a blustery day with wind speeds gusting at 27 knots (31 mph) and one shower fell at a rate of 21.3mm/hour commencing at 1545hr. However, the showers were short lived therefore no flooding was reported. The maximum on the 6th was 10.9c the lowest of the month. Colder conditions overnight were recorded from the 7th with ground frosts on 8th and 9th and just above an air frost on both of these nights. Conditions were more settled from the 7th and drier but feeling 'cold' during the day. By the 12th it began to feel warmer during the day and there was thunder at 0120hr and possible Sahara dust in the rainfall. Light winds persisted from 9th with mean speeds under 3.0 knots and maximum gusts less than 15.7 knots (18 mph). The 16th recorded a maximum of 19.1 the highest of the month with 8.46 hours of sunshine



Photo left. Frontal system approaching area on evening of 17th. 7.2mm of rain fell overnight 17th/18th. Pressure fell to a low of 975.8mb at 1215hr on 18th.

The weather turned cooler again from 17th, with frontal systems crossing the area on the night of 17th/18th with further rainfall on a 'wet' Sunday afternoon on the 18th and a maximum of only 10.4c (09-21hr 10.8 09-09hr) the lowest of the month. The Mean Surface Level barometric pressure fell to a low of 975.8mb at 1215hr. This was the lowest during April since 1st April 1994 when it fell to 973mb at 0145hr. The 975.8mb reading was lower than any other reading during the 2003/04 'winter' period. The 19th saw some showers after a cold start with hail at 1825hr. Some large and heavy showers were around the area but none fell at Harmanswater. 10mm hail fell at Staines during a heavy thunderstorm around 1345-1400hr. The 20th recorded an air (-0.2) and ground (-2.9) frost, the lowest temperatures of the month but the highest air minimum since 1993 (11 years and equal to 1994). However,

milder air pushed into the area with a damp and mild night on 20th/21st with minimum air temperature of 8.6c at 2100hr. As high pressure began to build over the UK the weather improved from 22nd with warmer and sunnier conditions, although temperature overnight on 22nd/23rd was low enough to produce a slight ground frost under clear skies.

The 24th to 26th saw maximum temperature above 21c for three consecutive days, with 22.4 on 24th the 7th highest reading in 32 years. 20.9c or above, has only occurred on three other occasions during April since 1973, 24-26th 1984, 26th – 29th 1987 and 15th-18th 2003. There was a sea breeze noted on 26th around 1930hr as the wind veered from NNW to ESE and dew point rose 1.5c. The 27th to 30th were noted for cooler conditions, dull, with only 0.47hrs of sunshine and 16.4mm on 27th the wettest day of the month. During this period of rain 6.1mm of fell in 1 hour commencing at 0100hr on the morning of 28th and with thunder. The 27th saw the highest minimum of the month 10.1c, but this was the 10th highest reading in 32 years.

Overall the temperature was above average and the mean was the 5th highest reading in 32 years, equal with 2003. Rainfall total was 77.7mm (152%) and the wettest since 2001 and the 7th wettest in 32 years. Thunder was recorded on four days, which is the highest since 1998 and 3 days with hail equal highest in 32 years with 1986, 1990 and 1994. There was only 1 air frost, equal lowest with 1993 and 2002 since 0 days recorded in 1987.

Paul Fishwick FMets
Observer

e-mail P.fishwick@tesco.net