



Sunny April's shining record

By Donna Bowater

FORGET the traditional reputation for spring showers - last month seems poised to beat the record for Britain's sunniest April.

It has already been named as one of the brightest Aprils since records began in 1929, bringing welcome relief after the coldest winter for 30 years.

And the summery weather earlier this week means the figure is expected to top the record for April set in 1942, when the country enjoyed 204.6 hours of sunshine.

But, true to form, the sunshine is unlikely to continue into this Bank Holiday weekend.

The Met Office yesterday confirmed that April enjoyed 40 per cent more sun than the month's average of 141.3 hours. It will release its final totals next week.

Wales fared best, with 204.9 hours of sunshine followed by England with 195.9 hours. Temperatures were also above average with a high of 54.1F (12C) across the UK. The hottest April on record was in 2007, when daytime temperatures reached just over 59F (15C).

Only 40.5mm of rain fell in Britain last month, a drop of 40 per cent on the average. East Anglia saw five times less rain than usual.

Met Office spokesman Barry

TODAY	TOMORROW	MONDAY
North: Bright start, showers later  Max Temp: 10C (50F) Min Temp: 3C (37F)	North: Sunny spells with showers  Max Temp: 10C (50F) Min Temp: 2C (35F)	North: Wintry with sunny intervals  Max Temp: 10C (50F) Min Temp: 1C (33F)
South: Showers becoming heavy  Max Temp: 15C (59F) Min Temp: 5C (41F)	South: Cloudy with heavy rain  Max Temp: 13C (55F) Min Temp: 3C (37F)	South: Sun and scattered showers  Max Temp: 13C (55F) Min Temp: 2C (35F)

Gromett said: "This April has been much sunnier than normal, with temperatures up.

"It's been caused by high pressure over the Atlantic blocking weather systems and pushing them further north.

"We've had dry, warm weather which coincided nicely with the Easter break as a bonus for families on holiday."

Cooler

He added that a dry spring does not necessarily mean Britain is in for a wet summer.

"Some people read all sorts of things into dry springs, but saying wet summers follow does not work statistically," Mr Gromett added.

"2007 was a sunny, warm April and that summer was the third-wettest recorded with 357.8mm of rain. But 2008 was in the top 10 wettest summers - after average April rainfall."

Forecasters predict rain and

much cooler temperatures from tomorrow. Jonathan Powell of Positive Weather Solutions said: "Temperatures will take a significant dip from Sunday, with 55F (13C) at best in the South and 48F to 51F (11C) in the North.

"But they will pick up into next week. The good news is there will be no rain after the weekend apart from a few showers in the North-east and Scotland on Tuesday and Wednesday."

The unseasonably warm weather also means a bumper crop of "excellent tasting" British summer berries, growers said yesterday.

The combination of warm days and cool nights has been ideal, says industry body British Summer Fruits.

Chairman Laurence Olins said: "The season has been boosted by the recent warm weather.

"We hope customers will enjoy British berries from now until early October with another high-quality crop on the way."