

Weather for the Winter Quarter 2020/21

Not unusually December began rather grey and wet with 22.5 mm of rain in the first week - but there were some brighter moments to enjoy. Friday 4th brought the first snow of the winter to southern England. The ground was too warm for any of it to settle in Wickham Market, but elsewhere there were significant accumulations as far south as Kent.



High Speed train in Kent 4th December 2020

December continued rather mixed with great variations from one day to the next - we had freezing fog (7th), then bright sunshine (8th) and then heavy rain (9th). Overall it was rather grey and damp which made the occasional bright sunny days all the more welcome - the 14-17th gave us a run of four bright sunny days. However the run up to Christmas was again grey and damp - all the more bleak because further Covid restrictions were announced on 19th December. The winter solstice was miserable day, grey and wet with 17 mm of rain in total.

Christmas Day was bright but over Christmas Eve night snow had been recorded at Wattisham (and at one location in Yorkshire) allowing the Met Office to officially



Dallinghoo Road 27th December 2020

declare it to be a 'White Christmas'. Unfortunately after this brightness the weather went downhill as storm Bella brought high winds and rain in the early hours of Sunday 27th. We had 9 mm of rain between 1:00 am and 8:00 am, but elsewhere in the country there was heavy rain and significant flooding and there were wind-gusts of over 100 mph at the Needles on the Isle of Wight. The rain was falling onto ground already saturated and even in Wickham this left water lying on the roads and fields. The last few

days of December brought snow and disruption to many parts of the country, but not in Suffolk. In fact we ended the year with a sunny day - some small compensation for what had gone before.

Overall December was not unduly cold, but it was very dull and wet. 116.2 mm of rain was recorded (against 10-year average for December of 68.2) and there were 27 rain days. Just 47 hours of sunshine were recorded at Wattisham.

The start of January continued the theme of grey and wet, with just the occasional hint of brightness. Tuesday 6th was particularly wet when a ribbon of rain moved in from the east and stayed put for more than 24 hours - the rain was never particularly heavy, but it was continuous. An ideal day in fact for the first day of the next National Lockdown! Later in the week it got colder and on Friday 6th we had freezing fog that lasted most of the day, but the following day we woke to a hard frost and then clear skies gave us 7 hours of continuous sunshine. And so we went on - some good days and some bad - Thursday 14th was another day of continuous rain - a total of 19.3 mm between midday on 13th and 4.00 pm on the 14th.

On Saturday 16th a band of rain moved across the country from west to east turning to snow as it met the colder air across East Anglia. It was difficult to say what depth of snow we had because the ground wasn't quite cold enough and it began to melt as it hit the ground, but there was certainly enough for a good snowman!



Yew Tree Rise, Saturday 16th January

Thursday night (21st) brought us storm Christoph but it swept through Suffolk with little rain and no damage. However, further north and west there was severe flooding and once again we were made aware of just how lucky we are to be in this part of the country. The storm clouds were followed by a good deal of sunshine and the Saturday was a brilliant day of blue skies and a southerly breeze (the first hint of spring?). It couldn't last, of course, and over the weekend we returned to a cold greyness. January continued much the same right up to the end of the month - bands of cloud and rain moving across the country with only short gaps of brighter weather between.

Overall January was a very disappointing month. We had 97.7 mm of rain, compared to a 10-year average of 59.2 mm. So the total for December and January together was over 200 mm. There were 54 rain days in the two months. Towards the end of the January the water meadows alongside the Deben were deep in water making an attractive but also rather scary sight. Light levels were again very poor with just 43 hours of sunshine recorded at Wattisham compared with a 10-year average of 60 hours. This was not the sort of bleakness that we needed when we were coping with COVID lockdown!

February began much as January had ended - dull and damp. But on Saturday 6th snow swept in from the east with Storm Darcy driven on by a Siberian wind. Initially the temperature was above freezing and the snow was melting on the ground, but as

day went into night the temperature dropped and the snow became heavier. By Sunday morning the temperature was firmly below zero and stayed there almost constantly until the following Saturday morning. All very pretty, but not good weather to travel anywhere - even to a vaccination clinic and many in the East of England were closed. The snow and ice affected the whole length of the eastern

coastal regions of England and in many parts of the UK record low temperatures were recorded, including -23°C at Braemar in Aberdeenshire - the UK's coldest temperature since 30th December 1955.



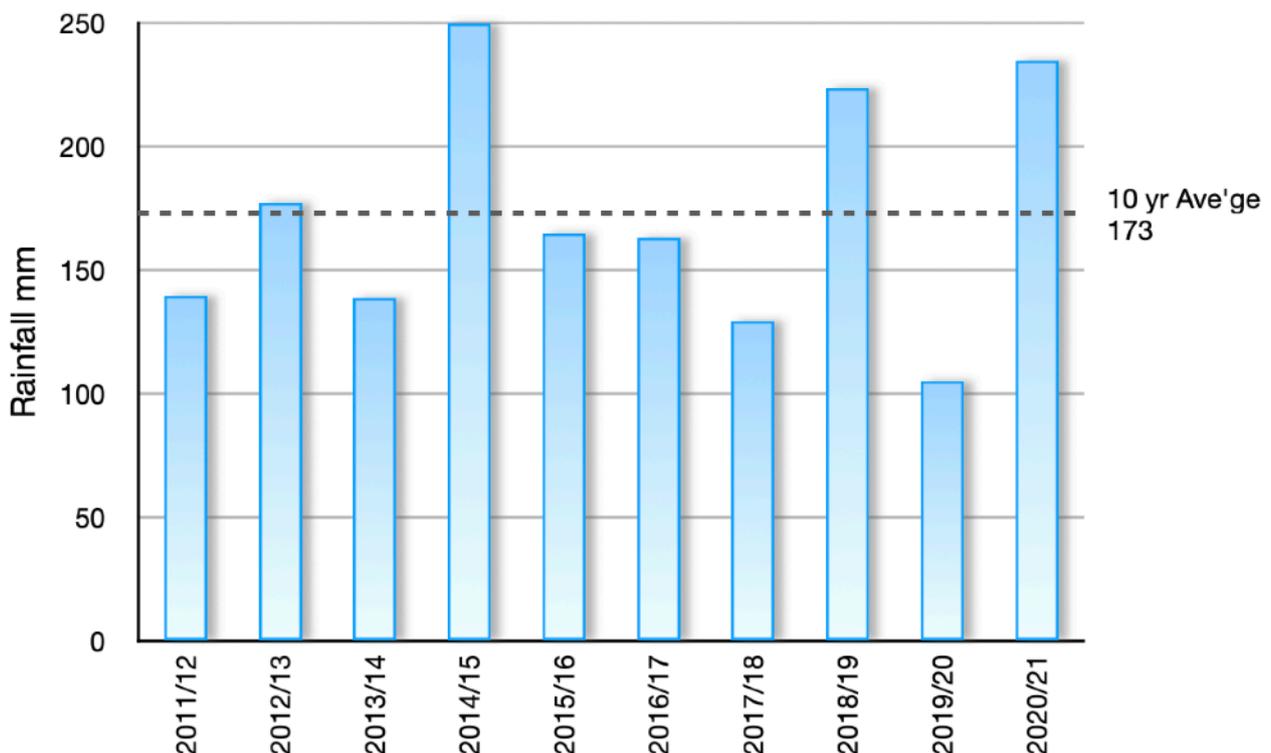
Wickham Castle, Tuesday 11th February 2021

Not until Sunday 15th were there significant signs of a thaw, but then we had rain overnight so that by Monday morning a transformation had occurred. Squashed plants were beginning to re-emerge in the garden.

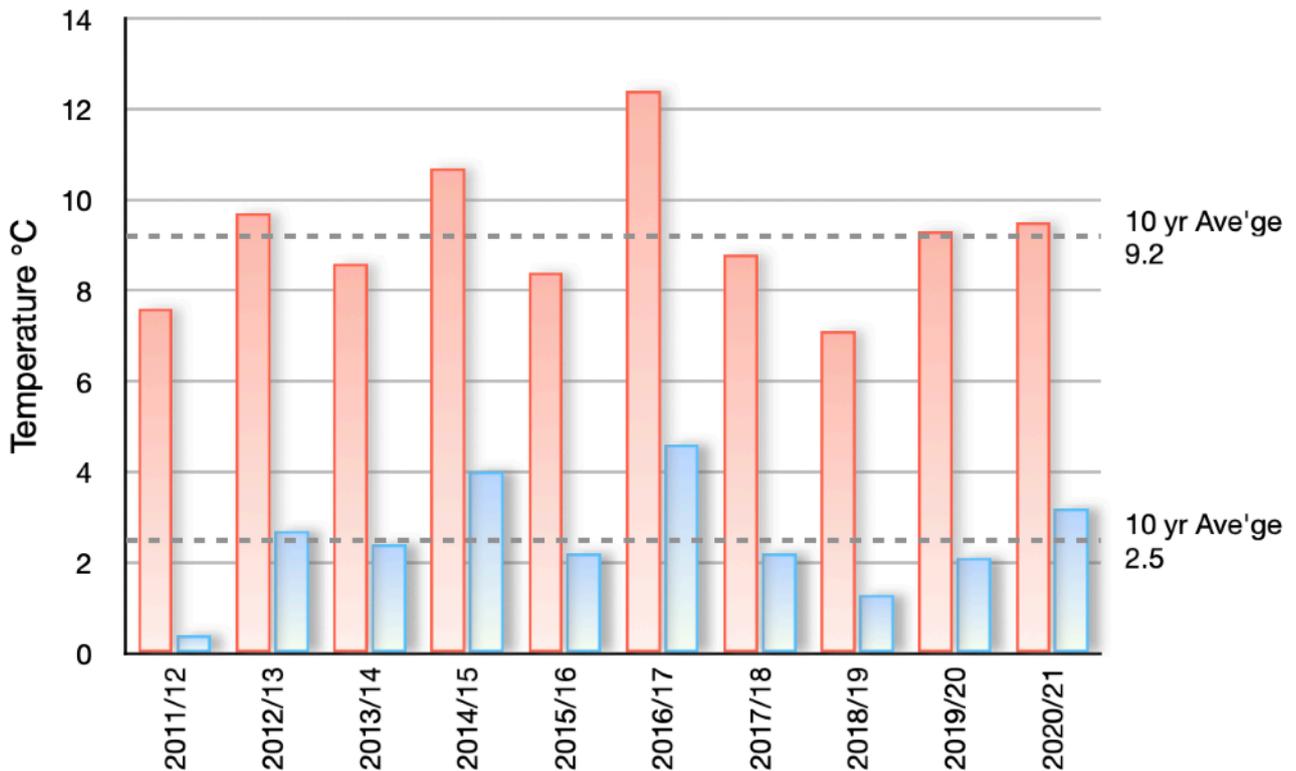
We quickly changed from white and frozen to mild and damp. The local

temperature reached 14.3°C on Saturday 21st. The final week of the February brought some welcome dry weather and several bright sunny days - the first proper opportunity in the year to do some useful work outside in the garden.

Winter (Dec, Jan and Feb) Rainfall 2020/21



Average Maximum and Minimum Temperatures



So overall the Winter Quarter was rather dull and significantly wetter than the ten-year average. It brought us the deepest snow and the most prolonged cold spell that we have experienced for many years.

Overall it was not a particularly cold winter quarter with average maximum and average minimum temperatures close to the 10-year averages. The major consistent feature of the weather was its dullness - there were 29% fewer sunshine hours recorded at Wattisham as compared with the 10-year average.

However, and despite all this, by the end of the quarter the early spring bulbs were in full flower and it felt as if spring really might be just around the corner.