

THE WINTER OF 1998 - 1999.

The winter of 1998/1999 was another untypical season of which we have had a succession of late.

The mean daily temperature of 4.9C was well below the 5.7C of last year but was still the fifth highest in the last 20 years of recordings, the previous highest value of 5.4C occurring in 1995.

The warmest day with a maximum of 13.5C was somewhat down on those of the immediate past and ended as the 10th warmest in the last 20 years.

However, the mean minimum of 1.9C was well above expectation for winter and was the best figure since the 3.0C of 1990 apart from the 2.8C registered last year, giving the fourth highest value since 1976.

Surpassing all of this was the grass minimum of -7.1C, which produced the highest value on record here in data extending back to 1956 for any winter season.

The rainfall total of 231.1mm made 1999 the wettest winter since 1985 and the fifth wettest since 1980. In all rain fell on 59 days, the driest since 1985 and 10 days better than for an average winter.

Snow lay on only 1 day as opposed to the nil for 1998 but much better than the 10 days for the winter of 1996. Snow or sleet occurred on 15 days (normal 14), again higher than in 1998 and 1997 but much better than the 28 occasions in 1996.

It was the sunniest winter since 1985 with 187.5 hours of sunshine against a norm of 158.2 hours. In all 24 days were totally sunless, 2 better than last year but much worse than in 1995, 1996 or 1997. The 9 hours of bright sunshine recorded this winter was better than for a normal season but a little down on many recent winter seasons.

All in all, an unusual winter.