

## THE SPRING OF 2000.

With an index of 514.7, spring 2000 was the third least "open" in the last decade, 1996 being the last spring season, which was worse in overall conditions. Much of this was due to the heavy spring rainfall, 240.1mm (9.45ins) falling over the 3-month period, and the worst since 1983 when 289.6mm (11.40 ins) fell. Of this total 150.6mm (5.93 ins) fell in April alone. Though the number of rain days was on average, the number of "wetter days" [ $>5\text{mm}$  (0.20in)] was the worst since 1983 and well above average. Widespread flooding occurred in the western suburbs of Birmingham and along the Severn and Leam rivers in the Midlands with the water up to 15 feet above normal levels.

However, it was not a cold season, the mean daily temperature of 9.0C (48.2F) being well above the customary 8.5C (47.3F) and among the ten best seasons in the last two decades. Frosts, both in the air and on the ground, were well below expectation at 10 and

26 respectively. This put 2000 in line with the past three springs and well below the figures for 1995 and 1996. Air temperatures in general were well above expectation by as much as 1.6C for the coolest night to 1.8C for the warmest day. On the ground the deviations were much more impressive returning anomalies of +3.1C for the grass and +2.4 for the slab.

Again, no gales were recorded, the maximum wind speed being 35 knots (42mph) on April 4th. Thunder was above the 30-year mean with 4 occurrences though we had no reports of snow lying on any morning despite the 7 occasions on which snow or sleet fell. Hail was also above expectation, not all of this occurring in the thunderstorms.

Sunshine was again above average at 456.1 hours, the best in 4 years, with the number of sunless days at 16 almost 3 above the spring mean. In general conditions, not too bad a season, though it was the memories of seasons such as 1990, which made