THE SUMMER OF 2000.

With an index of 688.9 summer 2000 was the best in general conditions since 1996 (714.7). Much of this was due to the very low rainfall total [21.2mm (0.83in)] in June and the 204.2 hours of bright sunshine in August. Couple with these were the advantages conferred by temperatures, which were themselves well above the 30-year means.

The seasonal sunshine total of 530.3 hours was down on average due to low returns in June and July. Though 1998 had less, we have to go back to the late 1980's to find worse totals, yet the 6 sunless days were a little better than expectation.

Rainfall worsened as the season progressed with 50.3mm (1.98ins) falling in August, almost 3 times that recorded in June. In all, 44 days saw rain falling, appreciably above the seasonal norm with 26 days "wet" and 6 "wetter" [>5mm (0.20in)], the latter two much better than expectation for summer. Final rainfall totals at 113.8mm (4.48ins) were much down on a normal season, which sees 186.9mm (7.36ins).

All temperatures were well above average with a maximum of 29.5C (85.1F) on June 18th and a minimum of 5.8C (42,2F) on July 17th. The entire season produced a mean daily of 15.8C (60.4F), which was 0.6C above expectation. Soil temperatures produced large positive anomalies ranging from 2.2C for the surface to 0.9C for the 30 cm.

Fog was recorded on just one day with thunderstorms on 5, though no hail fell at all during the three-month period. Winds were from a westerly quarter averaging 4.8 knots (5.8mph), the highest gust of 28 knots (34 mph) occurring on June 1st.

These figures reveal further evidence of climate change with the summers becoming warmer and sunnier, but also with more severe storms.