

A SUMMARY OF THE YEAR 2000..

SUMMARY FOR YEAR 2000 AS A WHOLE.

The year 2000 will be remembered for its wetness, though, unlike most Midland stations, Halesowen did not note record falls for the year as a whole. The total of 976.1mm [38.4ins] was second wettest behind 1960, which saw a fall of 1033.7mm [40.7ins]. The 205 rain days make 2000 the fifth equal wettest since 1946 and 2 days saw falls in excess of an inch [25.4mm]. The final 4 months each produced falls in excess of 100mm [3.94ins], on a par with 1960. Residents along the major [and many minor] rivers in the UK will have cause to remember 2000 as the "Year of the Floods". The excessive rainfall resulted in wide tracts of the countryside being inundated on at least two, in some cases three, occasions as rivers peaked at 5 metres above their normal summer levels. Bewdley and Shrewsbury were under water in the early spring, and again in November as water from the Welsh Hills, swollen by that from lower tributaries, engulfed the towns and surrounding flood plains.

The mean maximum temperature of 13.9C [57.0F] was marginally down on the last few years but well up on values recorded in the 1950's and 1960's. The mean daily of 10.1C [50.2F] was equal to 1998 and only the eighth time in 54 years that the mean has exceeded 10C [50F]. The highest temperature

reached was 29.5C [85.1F] on 18th June, only the second time in the last 7 years that the maximum has failed to reach the magical figure of 30C [86F]!

After two years when grass minima remained relatively high, 2000 saw them plunge to -14.3C [6.3F] on December 29th, the lowest since 1991 with its -17.7C [0.1F]. Mean soil temperatures were marginally up on the 30-year means, though still well below the temperatures in the low and mid teens last seen in the late 80's and early 90's. Maximum radiation temperatures reached 60.4C [140.7F] on 27th July, the highest since 1997 and only the third time since 1979 that these have breached the 60C [140F] barrier!

Sunshine at 1471.9 hours in total was a little down on last year but remains well above the 30-year mean. The sunniest day was again in June, on the 18th with 15.2 hours, just 0.4 hr [24 minutes] behind the all-time record set on 19th June 1989. In all 65 days of the year [17.8%] were without any sun at all, the worst figures for 3 years but well below the mean of 75 which we could expect. Sunshine totals have risen from 1301.7 hours in 1956 to 1650.3 hours in 1990, falling back to the 1471.9 hours for this year.

The incidence of snow was well down yet again, only 7 occasions being noted, the lowest since 1992 and the 3rd lowest on

record. Snow lay on just 4 days, the same as last year but well below the norm of 11 days. The incidence of lying snow has fallen dramatically over the last 40 years.

Fog was more prevalent than for 3 years being noted on 10 days. However, this is a mere fraction of the 37 days noted in 1956 and the 41 in 1958, both before smokeless zones became established in the area. Air frosts reached 35 from a mean of 50 and ground frosts 85 from a mean of 104, both well down on expectation.

In all six new records were set during the year. February sunshine at 105 hours was the highest on record whilst March 9th produced a new night minimum record of 10.6C [51.1F]. April was the wettest on record here with 260% of the normal rain falling over the month whilst the night of the 18th/19th June was the warmest June night ever recorded in Halesowen with a minimum no lower than 18.1C [64.6F]. November was the wettest on file with 136.5mm [5.37ins] of rain falling on already sodden ground leading to further flooding along the Severn. Finally December produced the heaviest rainfall rates ever seen here with a fall of 175mm/hr [6.89ins/hr] on the 12th.

Thus the year 2000 will go down as one of great climatological interest.