

FEBRUARY DATA

The new month began with heavy rain and fresh to strong south westerly winds, a legacy left from the final week of January. Despite this, it was not cold, both daytime and night-time temperatures holding up well. The very wet weather resulted in a weekly total fall of 44.4mm [1.75ins] of rain, resulting in as many as 40 flood warnings being in operation over parts of England and Wales. Many rivers, including the Severn, reached the bank tops giving rise to fears of a repeat of the autumn of 2000 and its severe inundation of low lying areas. Sunshine was well down as might be expected with a total of just 11.7 hours for the week that contained 4 sunless days.

However, temperatures held up well with daytime maxima as high as 11.8°C [53.2°F] on the 1st and with every day bar the 6th with maxima in double figures. Just one ground frost occurred on the 7th to -2.2°C [28.0°F] with the minimum in the air falling to 1.6°C [34.9°F] also on the 7th. A slight fall of soft hail occurred from Cumulo-nimbus cloud on the morning of the 4th though no thunder was heard. Winds were fresh to strong from a south westerly quarter reaching a peak of 38 knots [45.6 mph] on the 1st. The maximum spot radiation level was 392 watts per square metre on the 6th in a week that saw very depressed levels. Precipitation occurred over a period of 61.32 hours during the week, the worst day producing 23.32 hours on the 1st.

The start of the second week of February brought little sign of any change in the overall synoptic situation, with an array of frontal systems crossing the country from the Atlantic almost on a daily basis. This carried with it a continuation of rain as very mild and moist air flowed across the country. The 8th was particularly mild with a day maximum of 12.6°C [54.7°F] though the overnight minimum had fallen to 3.3°C [37.9°F]. Though sparse, some sunshine did occur with 3.3 hours on the 9th and a spot radiation maximum of 390 watts per square metre. However, long-range forecast did, at last, begin to show signs of an improvement mid-week. During the week the maximum daytime temperature peaked at 14.6°C [48.3°F] on the 11th with the coldest day being the 13th with a maximum of 7.7°C [45.9°F]. Night-time minima held up well ranging from 8.3°C [46.9°F] on the 12th to 0.0°C [32°F] on the 14th. Sunshine for the week totalled 18 hours with rainfall totalling 11.2mm [0.44in], the heaviest fall being of 5.7mm [0.22in] on the 10th. Winds were predominantly from a westerly direction and brisk with a peak gust of 33 knots [39.6mph] on the 8th.

The third week began cool with an air frost to -0.3°C [31.5°F] on the 15th. After a peak of 10.7°C [51.3°F] on the 15th, maximum temperatures began to fall off and frosts continued over the next three nights, the worst of -3.0°C [26.6°F] on the 15th. Winds were variable in direction and fairly light and days generally cloudy which held back sunshine totals. The 18th produced 7.1 hours of bright sunshine, though other days saw small amounts in general. Rainfall was light though enough to mar days. The worst grass frost was of -6.3°C [20.7°F] on the 15th under a short-lasting ridge of high pressure. The final few days of the week saw more unsettled weather with spells of rain and even hail on the 20th. Sunshine totals were low, as was rainfall, though the general conditions were depressing. By the 21st further wintry precipitation seemed likely, especially in the north indicating that winter had not yet relinquished it's grip.

After a slight ground frost on the morning of the 23rd heavy and persistent snow flurries occurred throughout the day though no snow accumulated. Winds gusted regularly to gale force, one to 39 knots [47mph] on the 22nd though the 23rd managed just 32 knots [38mph]. Conditions remained cold and unsettled with rain on the 24th amounting to 10.8mm [0.43in], the heaviest fall since the 2nd. After a cool day on the 23rd [5.7°C/42.3°F] temperatures rose appreciably by the morning of the 25th to stand at 8.6°C/47.5°F by 9 a.m. The weather in general remained very unsettled and windy with gusts as high as 50 knots [60mph] around dawn on the 25th. It remained blustery with frequent showers, some of snow on the 27th when a heavy fall occurred over a short period though it did not settle. By the end of the month high pressure began to exert an influence from the Azores high and this killed off much of the shower activity though it did lead to cooler, though sunnier days, and night frosts.