

## SUMMARY FOR THE FULL YEAR 2002.

2002 was the warmest year since 1990 in terms of “mean daily temperature”, though the daily maximum of 28.6°C/83.5°F on July 29 was a little down on last year’s value and 0.6°C below the 30-year mean. The year eventually ended as the second warmest on record here [1956] with only 3 years, 1995, 1990 and 1989 having seen higher mean maximum temperatures. Solar radiation [black bulb temperatures] have set new records for the months of March, April, October and November with December the second highest since 1964.

It was also the sunniest year since 1999 with 1571.4 hours of bright sunshine with only 4 years producing higher values, 1999, 1995, 1990 and 1989. Howbeit, no sunshine records were broken in 2002 though individual months turned in some unusual data. June’s sunshine was significantly up on a normal month, whilst August was the dullest since 1987. September was the sunniest since 1991 whilst December ended as the dullest since 1995.

The year was also the fifth wettest since 1981 with 829.5mm/32.7ins of rain falling over a time-span of 197 days that was the wettest in terms of “rain days” since 1972. Just 2 days produced falls in excess of 25mm/1inch, July 30 with 26.5mm/1.04in and October 13 with 30.1mm/1.19in. In terms of duration 2002 saw rain falling over 786.6 hours with the highest daily total of 21.5 hours occurring on October 13. By far the heaviest fall of rain was on August 3 when it was falling at a rate of 125mm/4.92ins per hour for a minute or so.

Winds were predominantly from the WSW on 45 occasions though the year saw an easterly component on 39 days with both a westerly and SSW on 38 occasions. Over the year just 1 incidence of a “calm” was reported, on January 6, the mean speed over the year ending at 5.9 knots/6.8 mph. Gusts in excess of gale force occurred in 6 individual months with the strongest to 54kn/62mph on October 27, a day that saw widespread structural damage throughout the region. This was the only gale reported in over 2 years.

Over the year there were 67 sunless days, the most since 1997, with 60 “sunny” days [>9hrs daily] and 12 “very sunny” days [>12hrs daily], the former showing the best results in 5 years. In all 6 days were “hot” [max>25°C/77°F], poor by recent standards and when compared with the 41 such occasions in 1995 and the 32 in 1990!

The area indication the most dramatic change was with the incidence of snow, sleet and frost. In 2002 just 2 days saw snowflakes as against the 19 last year, 20 in 1999 and 44 in 1979. Lying snow has been equally sparse, the year seeing 5 days, all in January, roughly similar to the preceding 5 years. 1996 saw 18 days of lying snow and 1986 and 1987 23 days each. The notorious winter of 1962/1963 saw snow lying on no less than 56 days.

In terms of ground frost, 2002 saw 66 whereas 2001 produced 111. By far the worst year was 1986 with its 134 frosts over grass. In the air, the year produced 26 frosts against the 64 last year though, again, 1963 was the most severe with 89!

So it is possible to see quite marked changes in our climate towards far less harsh conditions in winter and wetter and stormier autumns with a trend towards sunnier days all round.