

JANUARY 2003 (3)

Rainfall totalled just 5.0mm/0.20in of which 1.9mm/0.07in fell on the 28th that was the "wettest" day of the week. Sunshine was in short supply however, just 20.8 hours occurring over the period with a max-

imum of 7.3 hours on the 23rd. In contrast rainfall duration topped 20.5 hours, almost equal to bright sunshine, with winds in a westerly quarter over the whole period. These were light averaging 8.6knots/10mph with a maximum gust of 34knots/39mph on the 28th, which was a day that introduced appreciable wind-chill as winds turned north-westerly.

As the final few days of the month approached Polar air flowed across the entire country round the eastern edge of a large anticyclone situated well to the west of Ireland. This brought sleet showers on the 28th as well as a few claps of thunder around lunchtime on the same day.

JANUARY SUMMARY

The month was slightly warmer than average, all mean air temperatures being above

their 30-year values by +0.4°C. The maximum air temperature of 14.2°C/57.6°F on the 26th set a new record for January, the previous being 13.3°C/55.9°F set in 1957. However, there were cold "snaps", the month

beginning cold with frosts and even a sprinkling of snow on the 6th. The second week was even colder, ground frost occurring every day except the 14th.

Soil and earth temperatures all showed positive anomalies, save for the mean 10cm soil that was slightly down on normal. Black bulb radiation temperatures were significantly above average, the maximum by as much as 16°C reaching 41.6°C/107.2°F on the 23rd to breach the 100°F mark for the first time this year.

January was also a sunny month with almost half as much again bright sunshine as could have been expected and totalling 72.1 hours. This was spread fairly evenly across the month with no appreciable number of consecutively sunless days. The best day produced 7.3 hours, almost an hour

above expectation and in line with current trends towards sunnier seasons. The 7 sunless days was roughly half of expectation, much improved on the statistics for the 1990's which were regularly into double figures and as high as 21 as recently as 1996!

With a total of 51.6mm/2.03ins of rain, the month was significantly down on average and much better than 1999, which saw a fall of 120.8mm/4.76ins. Rain fell on 18 days of the month of which 12 were classed as "wet" [above 1mm] and 1 "exceptionally wet" [greater than 10mm/0.39in].

Snow or sleet occurred on 6 days but no snow lay at 9 hr on any day that seems to be becoming a regular feature of recent January's. The last substantial lying snow was in 1987 when it lay on 13 days. In 1963 it lay on every day of the month! There were 4 cold nights [minimum below -5°C/23°F] and 4 cold days [mean daily less than 0°C/32°F] giving yet another "open" month in what has been a fairly mild winter to date.

