

2003

JANUARY DATA

The new year began with very cold Siberian air streaming across the UK bringing with it snow showers, longer spells of snow for some districts, and severe frost which

Despite this, black bulb radiation temperatures managed to peak as high as 30.3°C/86.5°F on the 6th, having fallen to a low no higher than 6.9°C/44.4°F on the 3rd. Over the week solar radiation levels peaked at a



lasted in some places, all day. In this part of the Midlands we were spared the worst of the weather, snow showers bringing little in the way of accumulations and resulting in a patchy cover of 1cm/0.5in depth by 09 hr on the 9th.

Following the very mild and extremely wet weather of December, the first week of January came as a complete reversal in conditions. After a maximum air temperature of 10.6°C/51.1°F on the 1st conditions deteriorated markedly to give a maximum of just 0.7°C/33.3°F by the 7th, the night minimum for the week falling as low as -5.5°C/22.1°F on the 5th. Over grass, temperatures plunged even lower, reaching -8.5°C/16.7°F by the 6th by which time there was a slight sprinkling of snow over much of the area.

maximum of 0.265 kw/sq.m. on January 6th, there being just two totally sunless days to contend with, the 1st and the 3rd. The seven days saw a sunshine total of 22 hours, the maximum daily value of 5 hours occurring on the 6th, coinciding with the peak radiation level.

After the first two days during which precipitation was as rain, the remainder of the week saw isolated, and slight, showers of snow giving a total accumulation of 13.9mm/0.55in of "rainwater" of which 9.7mm/0.38in fell on the 2nd. Though no day saw prolonged precipitation, the dribs and drabs over the week amounted to an accumulated total of 24.62 hours. The result of this was to enhance the dreariness being experienced by many who were now feeling the absence of any prolonged sunny days.

Winds were, however, light averaging 5.1 knots/6mph mainly from an easterly quarter on 5 days and peaking at 23 knots/26mph on the 7th. In all there were 4 ground and 4 air frosts over the week, the mean humidity being maintained as high as 91.8% over the period. Due to both the absence of sunny days, and to the fact that the ground was not snow covered, the soil temperatures have dropped considerably since the start of the year, that at 5cm now standing at -0.6°C/31.5°F and at 10cm just 0.4°C/32.7°F. Should this cold spell continue, which seems unlikely according to the forecast, then the ground could soon reach the freezing point at depths of 30cm/1ft or more, bringing risks to water pipes buried not too deeply.

The freezing conditions continued into the second week with frost on the grass every day except the 14th, the worst to -9.0°C/15.8°F on the 8th. In the air frost occurred on 4 nights, falling eventually as low as -5.9°C/21.4°F, also on the 8th. Fortunately, all snow had long since thawed, though this led to the uncovered ground cooling rapidly, with freezing occurring to depths of 5cm/2in. At this depth the worst of this was to -0.8°C/30.6°F on the 8th which was by far the coldest night of the month to date. With a strong anticyclone off Scandinavia winds remained in an easterly quarter with dry Continental air now flowing across the whole of the UK. This brought periods of welcome sunshine, though the week saw just 8.2 hours in total with 4.7 hours of this on the 11th. Three days were still cloud-ridden due