

May makes mockery of spring season —

weather station report

The month of May saw one or two long-standing records tumble as the weather continued to make a mockery of the seasons.

The deluge of May 30 which swept parts of the West Country also left its mark on this area.

The fall of 34mm (1.32in) was the heaviest May fall at the Halesowen Climatological station since rainfall records began in 1946.

The fall is even more striking when examined, for

over 29.2mm (1.15in) fell in the five-and-a-half hour period from noon until 5.30 pm. At its worst rain was falling at a rate of 60mm (2.36in) per hour during a particularly intense down-pour from 2.28 pm until 2.31 pm.

The monthly rainfall total at 131mm (5.16in) was 67mm (2.64in) above expectation and was the second highest May total since 1946, falling for 87.3 hours during the month.

Temperatures were, in

general, again below average, the highest daytime maximum being 25.1C (77F) on May 14 and 15. Minimum temperatures were well below normal at -2.4C (28F) in the air and -5.5C (22F) on the grass, both recorded on May 5.

These were 2C (4F) below the extremes to be expected in a normal May. In fact, only May 1967 has been colder since at least 1956.

Soil temperatures from the surface down to 100cm (3ft) are still up to 2.2C (4F) below

average, and with the longest day now less than three weeks away will be hard pressed to attain average values this year.

Air frosts for May also set a new record with five occurrences, all during the first week, and the incidence of snow also created a new record having been observed on four occasions May 1, 2, 3 and 5. The incidence of ground frost on six nights, was a little up on expectation but did not create any records.

The month began with a

period of unusually cold weather as north westerly winds originating in the Arctic spread cold air over the British Isles.

Air frosts were recorded each night from May 2 to 6 and ground frosts each night from May 1 to 6.

As milder south westerlies came on May 6 temperatures picked up a little, daytime maxima reaching 25.1C (77F) on May 14 and 15. The period was, however, very disturbed with rain on most days and only fleeting sunshine.

May 10 produced 18.6mm (0.73in) of rain during a period of 16½ hours. May 12 to May 15 was appreciably drier though the long-awaited and much promised, warmer weather failed to materialise.

The second half of the month was exceptionally wet and cool. Rain fell on all but two days from May 20 to May 31 totalling 89mm (3.5in), itself almost 50 per cent above the total for the entire month.

During this wet spell temperatures were markedly

down on normal, daytime maxima failing to reach even 20C (68F) on any day. In fact, on Saturday, May 26 the highest reached was 9C (48F), which is quite normal for a March maximum.

Solar radiation temperatures were reasonable, averaging 36C (97F) for the month. The peak of 49C (120F) was on May 15 whilst the low point of 14.9C (59F) was on May 30 when we had no sunshine at all.

Spring came to an end on May 31, though some would argue that it had ever begun.

HAYLEY GREEN

52°26'N 02°04'W 155m AMSL

C. Roberts

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