

Anomalies in weather

November has been a month of anomalies in the weather—varying from very mild to much colder than usual.

Both the beginning and end of the month were far milder than one would expect for November, conditions brought about by the encroachment of warm air from southern latitudes.

At the Halesowen Climatological station the first three days were almost spring-like, culminating on the third with air temperatures as high as 16.0C (61F), making this the mildest November day since 1971. (In fact, since 1956 there have only been two warmer November days, these in 1969 with 16.9C (62F) and 1970 with 16.2C (61F).

With high pressure predominating, however, night skies were relatively cloud-free, and the long nights resulted in rapid temperature falls.

Ground frosts ensued on November 2 and 3, though

these were not severe and soon dispersed on sunrise.

By the end of the first week daytime temperatures were down to maximum in the region of 8.2C (47F) as winds backed north-westerly.

There now set in two-weeks of abnormally cold weather as both daytime and night temperatures continued well below average.

From November 9 to 24 there were 10 ground and six air frosts, the coldest night being November 13 with an air minimum of -5.2C (23F) and a grass temperature of -7.0C (19F) by 6 am.

In fact it was so cold on Tuesday 13 that the mean temperature over the whole day was barely above freezing at 0.1C (32.2F).

By November 15 the Arctic air mass lowered temperatures sufficiently for a substantial snow shower around midday, though the snow did not settle except on the highest parts of the Cilent Hills.

The week from Monday 12

to Sunday 18 was the coldest since last winter, the mean daily temperature attaining only 2.5C (37F).

The mean night minimum during this period was no more than -1.4C (29F).

Setting aside the cold spell at the end of last November, one has to go back to November 1967 to find a comparable cold spot, making this part of the month the third coldest in the last 24 years.

As the month entered its final stages, air temperatures again picked up with air from North Africa spreading across the British Isles.

Monday November 26 was a very mild, if somewhat damp, day, recording an air temperature of 14.6C (58F) in addition to 8 mm (0.31 in) of rain during a nine hour wet spell.

Temperatures were to remain up on expectation to the end of the month, and a few rain-free days did much to dispel the gloom created by

the dismal weather of the previous fortnight.

Rainfall was below expectation by 21 mm at 58 mm (2.28 in), falling for a total of 59 hours during the month.

The longest period of rain was 9.3 hours on November 26, with measurable rain noted on 19 days, slightly more than usual.

Fog was observed on November 20 and 21, with the visibility on the 20th being only 60 metres (180 yards) at 8 am. Winds were predominantly south-westerlies and light with no gales recorded.

In contrast, by the end of November last year we had had the first substantial fall of snow (November 25) and a severe frost -6.2C (21F) (November 29), with the ground frozen to a depth of one inch from November 27 onwards.

Though not known at the time, this was to be the first sign of the long and bitter winter of 1978-79 which did not finally break its grip until early May.

HAYLEY GREEN

52°26'N 02°04'W 155m AMSL

CC Roberts