

Jan 80

January was chilly

Temperatures for January recorded at the Halesowen Climatological Station were well below normal.

The month began with a very cold spell, air and ground frost being quite severe on the second with minimum temperatures of -8.5C (20F) and -9.6C (15F) respectively.

RECORD

Daytime temperatures picked up a little on the third, when, at 9.2C

(49F) the afternoon was almost springlike. However, apart from January 5, 6, 22, 29 and 30, ground frost was to occur every night.

One unusual feature of the month was the abnormally high pressure. A new 34-year record was set on January 12 with a sea-level air pressure of 1043.4Mb (30.81 in Hg).

High pressure was not, however, the main pattern for the month, for depressions were the predominant feature, particularly at the latter end.

Rainfall at 68mm (2.68 in) was only marginally above expectation, and days on which rain fell, 14 in number, were three down on a normal year.

In contrast to December, when the maximum daily fall was well over an inch, the wettest January day, the fourteenth, produced a fall of 9.8mm (0.39 in).

CLEAR SKIES

The most severe part of the month was the second week, when anticyclonic conditions brought a light air flow and cloudless skies.

This resulted in a mean maximum temperature for the week of only 2.9C (37F), a mean minimum of -2.6C (27F) and an average daily temperature of just 0.2C (32F), barely above freezing. Ground frosts occurred every night during this week and air frosts on all nights bar one.

The colder than usual weather continued until the end of the third week, when south-westerly winds brought in milder, but moister, air-

Rain fell on every day from January 19 to 31 except three, though air temperatures did rise considerably.

In fact, the warmest day was January 30, when the afternoon temperature peaked at 10.3C (51F).

We also had an exceptional January solar radiation temperature of 33.7C (93F) on the last of the month, which brought all soil temperatures up considerably.

Nevertheless, soil temperatures at all depths down to 100cm (3ft) failed to reach the growth temperature of 5.6C (42F) on any day of the month apart for a short spell during late afternoon on the last two days.

'QUIET' MONTH

Snow lay on four days, one occasion less than usual, though the incidence of snowflakes was only 25 per cent of that customary for January.

There was no report of fog, hail or gales, the highest wind speed being 18kt (21 mph) on January 21.

The month was therefore fairly quiet, though somewhat colder than usual, especially in respect of ground frosts.

Rainfall was about normal, though soil temperatures remain marginally below average. Though by no means as cold as the January's of 1979 and 1963, this has been the fifth coldest in the last 24 years.