

Dec 90

Friday, January 23, 1981

Wet year finishes with a drier December

Though the weather of 1980 had been, in general, dismal with excessive rainfall, December turned the scales by being drier than usual with 13 per cent less rain falling than was customary.

Despite this, days on which rain fell were up to normal at 17, with 11 wet and 5 very wet days. Total rain duration, at 53 hours, was 32 per cent less than could be expected.

The beginning of the month was cold, ground frosts being recorded every night from the

first to the ninth with the exception of two, and air frosts on all but three nights over the same period.

WARMER

Rainfall during this spell was both intermittent and slight with winds north westerly and light.

The weather became appreciably warmer from the tenth as winds backed south-westerly, air temperatures peaking at 13.8C (57F) on the twenty third.

Wind speeds also picked up from the second week, gusting to gale force on the thirteenth, twenty fourth and thirty first.

The windiest day turned out to be the tenth when the mean 24 hour wind speed was 15kt (17 mph).

CHRISTMAS

Total wind run for December was 7876 miles giving a mean hourly speed of 9kt (10 mph) over the whole month.

The final eleven days were relatively dry, small amounts of rain falling on only four occasions.

Although air temperatures were maintained there were three ground frosts, and the Christmas period was both warm and frost free, though some rain fell on each of the main holiday days.

WETTEST DAY

Total rainfall at 58mm (2.29in) was 87 per cent of normal, the wettest day being December 19 when 19mm (0.75in) fell in just under 9½ hours.

Air temperatures ranged from a peak of 13.8C (57F) on the twenty third to a low of -5.8 (22F) on the first, when the grass temperature was also at its lowest point of -9.0C (16F).

Despite these rather cold nights the mean temperature for the whole month was 1.1C above normal for December, though the 18 recorded ground frosts were three above expectation.

In line with most years since the introduction of smokeless zones, fog was totally absent as also was the incidence of snow.

MORE SUN

Sunshine was well above anticipated values with a total of 67.5 hours, the sunniest day being the seventh with 6.8 hours.

Surprisingly, in view of these figures, there were 11 days with no sun at all and 16 totally overcast mornings.

The final month of what had been a depressing year in many ways, was therefore, a reasonable one, quite warm and sunny, with low rainfall totals and generally bracing air in the mornings.