

Jan 87

Friday, February 13, 1981

'Icy winter' forecast seems to be off beam — up to now anyway!

Despite the earlier predictions of the Canadian long-range forecasters that the winter of 1980-81 was likely to be one of the five worst on record, so far we have had little in the way of severe weather.

Indeed, January was to be noted for its exceptional mildness, being the sixth warmest in the last 26 years with a mean daily temperature of 4.6C (40F).

These conditions resulted from the winds blowing from a westerly point for the entire month.

Rainfall recorded at the Halesowen Climatological Station was also down on a normal January, which, with 48mm (1.87 in) produced only 73 per cent of the customary fall.

ALTERNATING

The month was broken into alternating spells of cold then

milder weather, no pattern lasting for more than a few days.

The New Year started with low pressure and the passage of weak fronts from west to east across the country. These brought rain on each of the first six days with the heaviest fall of 6.6mm (0.26in) on the sixth.

Pressure built on the fifth and ground frost ensued under the clearing skies and this was to be recorded every night from the fourth to the twenty first with the exception of only one night.

WET SPELL

After the initial mild spell when the daily maximum temperature reached 11.2C (52F) on the second, air temperatures were to hover in the area of 4 to 10C (39 to 50F) until the final week of the month.

By the fifteenth low pressure systems were again exerting an influence and a period of

disturbed and wet weather ensued. Winds gusted to gale force on the twelfth and fourteenth with a period of snow on the fifteenth as winds veered northerly.

However, the slight snow covering of the sixteenth was to last less than a day as winds backed south westerly and temperatures again picked up.

CALMER

By January 21 air temperatures were again peaking to 11.2C (52F) and the spell of ground frosts came to an abrupt end.

The soil warmed appreciably under the increasing power of the sun, surface temperatures approaching 8C (46F) on the twenty second. By the twenty-sixth radiation temperatures had climbed to 28C (82F) near ground level.

The final week saw yet

another change as a large anticyclone over Europe extended its influence westwards. This heralded calm and settled weather with very little wind and some thick fog.

Friday the thirtieth was almost springlike, with clear blue skies and six hours of bright sunshine, one of the gems in an otherwise rather cheerless month.

The calm conditions brought a return of ground and air frost on the last day which was to be the coldest of the month with a recorded air temperature of —2.7C (27F).

19 FROSTS

In all 19 ground and 11 air frosts were recorded over the month with the lowest grass temperature —7.4C (19F) on both the fifth and sixth.

Rain was recorded on 18 days and snow or sleet was recorded on six occasions, though snow only lay on one morning, the sixteenth.

Sunshine totalled 40 hours, a little less than normal, this due to the 13 completely sunless days.