

Dec 87

Records broken in the big freeze

During this week's freezing weather, temperatures dropped to record levels.

Halesowen Climatological Station said that the existing record minimum air temperature at his station was minus 13.9 degrees C. Or 7 degrees F.

This was set on January 23, 1963, in the worst winter for 100 years.

The record was broken at midnight last Saturday when the mercury fell to minus 14.5 degrees C (6 degrees F). This represents 26 degrees F of frost.

At the same time the snow-surface temperature registered no higher than minus 18.2 degrees C (minus 1 degree F). This represents 33 degrees F of frost.

Severe weather set new winter record, say weathermen

December 1981 produced record low temperatures in the Halesowen and Stourbridge area which are likely to stand for several decades.

The new low of -14.5C (6F) set on December 13 at the Halesowen Climatological Station was 1F below the previous record set in the severe winter of 1962-63.

All temperatures were well down on average, ranging from 10.3C (51F) on December 3, to -14.5C (6F) on the 13th, when a ground temperature of -18.2C (-1F) was also recorded. Frost occurred every night from December 8 to 28, with a total of 22 in the air and 24 on the ground. The mean daily temperature for the month of only -0.1C (32F) made this December the coldest on record.

Rainfall at 111mm (4.39ins) was 66 percent above normal with 31mm (1.20in) falling as snow giving a total of 14ins undrifted. The heaviest fall occurred on December 30, when 21mm (0.84in) was

recorded during 10 hours of continuous, heavy rain, with hail and thunder, this, and the thaw resulting in widespread flooding. Total rain duration at 92 hours was 18 per cent above the December average.

For the first time in living memory, snow was lying in December for 23 days, the maximum undrifted depth being 8ins on the fourteenth. Snow or sleet was recorded on 12 days, four times the usual

for the month. Winds were predominantly easterly and light, averaging 6 mph, though gale force gusts of 46 mph occurred during the blizzard of the thirteenth.

The month was sunnier than normal with 45 hours bright sunshine, the first having 6.6 hours. However, to offset this, 14 days were totally sunless in a month which has been exceptionally severe for early winter.