

FEBRUARY 1986: A VERY COLD, BUT DRY AND SUNNY MONTH.

The month was cold throughout, only the first four days being frost-free. Temperatures failed to rise above 4.3C [38F] at all during the month, this on the 24th and 28th. Comparable figures were 4.5C [40.1F] in 1963 and 1.7C [35.1F] in 1947.

It has been the third coldest February this Century overall, February of 1947 having a mean daily temperature of -3.1C [26.6F], 1963 a mean of -1.6C [29.1F] and this year a mean of -1.5C [29.5F]. The coldest night, the 21st had a minimum air temperature of -10.4C [13.3F] against the -11.6C [11.1F] recorded in February last year.

Snow fell on 8 occasions and lay on 16 days, though not to any great depth. The February of 1947 saw undrifted snow depths of almost 3 feet and drifts of over 18feet in outlying districts and rural areas.

Total rainfall has been low, with only 10.4mm [0.41in] recorded, making this the driest February since 1965 and the third driest since 1946. Rain fell on only 9 days [as snow], the greatest fall being 3.5mm [0.14in] on the 5th.

Sunshine has been well above average, almost 80 hours being recorded and with almost 27 hours of this over the final three days. This gave the sunniest February since 1970.

Frost was recorded on 25 nights, with the minimum ground temperature as low as -13.8C [7F] on the 10th. At the height of the cold spell the ground was frozen to a total depth of 18cm [7in] where the sun caught it, but to a depth of 30cm [1 ft] in permanent shade.

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