

APRIL 1997.

The decline in pressure which began in late March continued into April, though days remained warm with temperatures as high as 15C on the 1st. However, the proximity of the high did allow cooling at night under clear skies with a widespread ground frost on the 1st. Slight frontal rain on the 3rd was followed by further falls on the 5th as a more active warm front crossed the country.

Pressure rose rapidly behind this and the 6th was dry, sunny and warm. Under the influence of this anticyclone daytime temperatures rose steadily, peaking at 20C on the 9th, the warmest day of the month so far. Sunshine was plentiful with the 9th and 10th producing almost 12 hours each.

Much cooler air encroached on the 11th behind a weak cold front, temperatures on the morning of the 12th falling to -2.8C in the air and -6.4 on the grass. Despite the cold nights sunshine totals continued high on the 12th and 13th raising temperatures to almost 15C.

This dry interlude was broken late on the 14th as a warm front brought intermittent light rain totalling 1.0mm. Pressure began to rise again from the 15th giving settled and sunny days. With the centre of the high moving to the NW of Scotland, winds became more NE'ly giving chillier conditions. The maximum daytime temperature of just 9.5C on the 17th was in sharp contrast to the 16.4C of the day before !

During the early hours of the 19th the wind backed NE with light rain falling as a weakening cold front moved southwards across the U.K. This brought some rather cool and dull days until the 22nd which was decidedly cold with the air minimum in the early morning standing at -3.2C and the grass at -6.3C.

Low pressure became established from the 24th giving a spell of more substantial rain, the heaviest daily fall of the month occurring on the 25th with 11.2mm. By the 29th pressure was again rising and the month ended sunny and warm with an equal highest maximum temperature of 20C on the 31st.

In overall conditions the month was dry with only half the expected rainfall occurring. It was also sunnier than normal and appreciably warmer with mean temperatures significantly above the 30 year means by as much as 1.7C.