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THE SPRING OF 1997.

Spring 1997 was unusual in that it furnished positive features for all areas under review, above average temperatures, low rainfall and prolific sunshine. It ranked with the Springs of 1992 and 1990 as one of the most clement in records dating back for 42 years.

Total rainfall at 109.8 mm was 73mm below the 30 year mean, lower than both 1996 and 1994, but above the total for 1995. Measurable rain fell on 32 days, 70% of normal, with the heaviest fall on May 5th with 18.3mm making this the eighth driest season since 1956. Rain fell over a period of 103.5 hours, 57.5 hours below the seasonal mean, the lowest since 1985.

Sunshine was appreciably up on average, the total of 535.8 hours being 121.6 hours above expectation turning in a surplus of 29.4%. Only 9 days in the three month period were totally sunless, just 65.7% of expectation. Additionally a new May and Spring record was set on May 30th when 15.5 hours of sunshine was recorded, bettering the 15.1 hours for the previous record set on May 31st 1994. In all 12 days were classified as “very sunny” providing over 12 hours each .

Temperatures all showed positive anomalies, the mean daily of 9.7C being 1.7C above expectation. The mean maximum of 14.5C was 2.2C above the 30 year average, the warmest day being May 30th with 25.0C. Overall it ended as the third warmest Spring since 1956 behind 1990 and 1992.

The incidence of snow or sleet was well below expectation with 2 occurrences as opposed to the customary 8, though these came late in the Season on May 6th and 7th. The snow flakes of May 6th were only the fourth such incidence in 42 years.

Air frosts at 6 were 45% of average whilst ground frosts were 78% of expectation. The incidence of fog was slightly down on normal as was that for hail.