

RECORDS TUMBLE IN FEBRUARY WARM SPELL.

FEBRUARY 1998 SET SEVERAL NEW RECORDS IN THE FIELDS OF TEMPERATURE, SUNSHINE AND RAINFALL IN A DATABASE EXTENDING BACK HALF A CENTURY.

THE 16.8C [62.2F] ON THE 13TH WAS THE HIGHEST FEBRUARY TEMPERATURE ON RECORD HERE, BEATING THE 16.1C [61.0F] OF FEBRUARY 23RD 1990. THE MEAN DAILY TEMPERATURE OF 7.1C [44.8F] ALSO TOPPED THE PREVIOUS RECORD OF 7.0C [44.6F] ALSO IN 1990, WHILST THE MEAN MAXIMUM OF 10.6C [51.1F] WAS ITSELF THE HIGHEST EVER RECORDED IN FEBRUARY. IN FACT, ALL TEMPERATURES, AIR SOIL AND RADIATION, WERE SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE THE 30 YEAR MEANS BY AS MUCH AS 5.5C [9.9F] IN THE CASE OF THE WARMEST DAY.

RAINFALL TOTALLING 14.1MM [0.56IN] WAS THE LOWEST SINCE 1993 GIVING THE SIXTH DRIEST FEBRUARY SINCE 1946. MEASURABLE RAIN FELL ON ONLY 5 DAYS [NORMAL IS 14] WITH THE WETTEST DAY ON THE 21ST WITH NO MORE THAN 4.5MM [0.18IN]. THE DURATION OF RAIN OVER THE MONTH WAS 11.9 HOURS FROM A NORMAL EXPECTATION OF 53.7 HOURS, OR JUST 22%.

SUNSHINE, THOUGH NOT BREAKING ANY RECORDS, WAS WELL ABOVE AVERAGE, THE 90 HOURS RECORDED BEING AROUND HALF AS MUCH AGAIN AS EXPECTED. IT WAS THE SUNNIEST FEBRUARY SINCE 1988 AND THE SECOND SUNNIEST ON RECORD. THE 9.7 HOURS RECORDED ON THE 17TH WAS ABOUT THE MAXIMUM ATTAINABLE FOR SO EARLY IN THE MONTH.

THERE WERE 4 AIR AND 12 GROUND FROSTS, BOTH DOWN ON EXPECTATION, WITH ONE DAY OF THUNDER AND 2 OCCASIONS OF SNOW OR SLEET, THOUGH NO LYING SNOW WAS RECORDED AT 9 AM.

MUCH OF THIS EXCEPTIONAL WEATHER WAS DUE TO THE PREDOMINANTLY SOUTH TO WEST WINDS WHICH BLEW ACROSS THE REGION FOR 22 DAYS OF THE MONTH BRINGING IN WARM AIR FROM THE ATLANTIC,