

SUMMARY FOR MARCH 1999.

Though March was a relatively mild month it was not as warm overall as the past two years. The mean maximum of 10.4C was 1.4C above the 30-year mean but was still the lowest since 1996. Both the mean minimum and the mean daily temperatures were appreciably above average, the mean minimum by over 2C due to some warm, cloudy nights and lack of frost of which there were only 2 in the air and 9 over grass, both well down on expectation, the grass the best since 1981 and the air since 1990. All soil and earth temperatures showed positive anomalies ranging from +3.5C in the surface to +0.8 at 100 cm depth.

Rainfall was 9% down on average with a fall of 55.8mm, 9.3mm of which fell on the 6th., the wettest day. The month was, however, wetter than those of 1995, 1996 and 1997. Rain fell on 20 days of the month, well above expectation and the worst since 1992 which had 24. In all 15 days were wet (>1.0mm), equalling 1988 and 1983 but the worst since 1982.

Sunshine at 98.6 hours was marginally above average with 10 hours occurring on the 17th., the sunniest day. A total of 5 days were sunless from a norm of 7 in March, and 2 days saw a total of 9 hours or more.

Snow or sleet occurred on 4 occasions though no snow lay at 09.00 on any morning. There was one incidence of hail but no report of thunder whilst fog occurred once during the month.

The prevailing wind direction was SW with a mean speed of 6.5 knots. No gusts to gale force were recorded the maximum of 33 knots being registered on the 21st which was the windiest day.