

## THE WINTER OF 1999-2000.

The winter just passed was fifth in order of “openness” since records began here in 1956. Only 4 others have been better, 1976, 1998, 1975 and 1989 in ascending order.

In terms of sunshine the winter has been the best on record with 219.8 hours of bright sunshine, the previous best being 201.2 hours in 1985. In all 21 days were “sunless”, also the best on file, the average being 35 for a “normal” winter. The sunniest day with 8.5 hours was well behind the record of 9.9 hours set in 1996.

Rainfall at 190.7mm was just 5.4 mm below average, well behind the 231 mm for last year and the 336.1 mm for the worst winter, 1960. Rain fell on 55 days, somewhat above normal and much worse than the best on file, the 24 days in 1964. Rain was falling for a period of 177.5 hours, some 17.8 hours below average and well behind the record of 318.1 hours set in 1959.

Temperatures have been quite high, the mean daily of 5.0C being 0.9C above average and the fourth best in 10 years. The lowest on record was minus 1.0C in January 1963 and the best 6.3C in 1975. The highest daily temperature of 12.5C on January 30<sup>th</sup> was the lowest since 1996 which had 11.9C, and the second lowest since 1984.

Grass minimum temperatures have also held up well, the lowest of minus 8.5C on December 20<sup>th</sup> being 3.1C above average and 12.1C above the worst ever recorded here, the minus 20.6 in January of 1963. There have been 55 ground frosts, the same as last year and 4 above expectation. The worst occurred in 1963 which had 82 and the best was in 1975 which produced 24.

Air frosts numbering 21 was 9 better than in a “normal” winter and stands up well against the worst on record, again in 1963, which saw 74. Snow or sleet occurred on 13 occasions, about normal, though snow only lay on 3 days against a norm of 9.4, well below the 62 occurrences in 1963. Fog was just one third of normal prevalence with thunder occurring on one day, normal for winter. There were no gales, the maximum gust being to 44 knots on December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Thus the trend to warmer, sunnier, wetter and less “snowy” winters would seem to be becoming well established..