

THE AUTUMN OF 2000.

The autumn of 2000 was the third worst in general weather conditions since recording began here in 1956, marginally better than 1993 and 1976. It was exceptionally wet with 384mm [15.1ins] of rain, twice as much as is expected in a normal autumn. Rain fell on 64 of the 91 days of the season, second worst behind the 66 days of rain in 1960. Of these, 22 days produced over 5mm [0.2in] and 2 days over 25.4mm [1 inch]. At times up to 20 rivers across the U.K. carried flood alerts with the Severn particularly badly hit. Rain duration was 299.6 hours, by far the worst on record, with almost half of this in November.

Sunshine was marginally below the 30-year mean with 268 hours, the best day, September 3rd providing 11.6 hours of this. In all 20 days were sunless, spot on average for the season yet the worst since 1997.

Temperatures held up well, the mean daily of 10.3C [50.5F] being half a degree up on the average. Surprisingly, the highest temperature recorded was 26.4C [79.5F] on September 11th, quite high for so late in the year. Nights have been particularly warm with the lowest minimum no lower than -0.4C [31.3F], 3.5 degrees above expectation for autumn. In all there were 13 ground frosts out of an expected 20 and just 1 frost in the air when we could have expected 8. In line with Climate change the frequency of frosts is declining appreciably year on year.

Unusually again for autumn there was no incidence of sleet or snow and just one occasion of hail. Thunder occurred twice, once each in September and October. Winds have been stronger than usual averaging 6.1 knots [7mph] with a full gale blowing on October 29th when gusts peaked at 56 knots [67mph] causing some structural damage. Both cloud cover and relative humidity were down on the 30-year means..