

MARCH SUMMARY.

The month began with decaying anticyclonic conditions, enough to give air frost on each of the first five nights, as low as -6.0C [21.2F] on the 3rd. This night also saw a grass minimum of -7.8C [18.0F], both the lowest of the week. In fact grass frost occurred on six out of the seven nights.

Rainfall was sparse, totalling just 14mm [0.55in] for the week, 10.7mm [0.42in] of this falling in 5 hours on the 6th. In contrast it was very sunny with sunshine on each day of the week totalling 43.3 hours, the best day [5th] providing 9.2 hours making it a "sunny" day. Throughout the week the winds were in a mainly easterly quarter, hence the cool, dry and sunny conditions.

The second week started with low pressure surrounding the UK, though it did become much milder as the winds swung round to a westerly direction. From the 8th to the 11th maximum temperatures remained above 10C [50F], peaking at 12.1C [53.8F] on both the 10th and 11th.

It was also wetter with rain on every one of the first five days of the week. There was also an absence of ground frost until the 12th when a touch to -1.4C [29.5F] was recorded. Consequently, with the increased rainfall, sunshine totals dropped off considerably, two days, the 10th and 11th producing a meagre total of just 0.3hr [18minutes] sunshine. The week as a whole produced 21.7 hours of sunshine with 7 hours of this on the 13th. Rainfall for the period totalled 15.1mm [0.59in], the wettest day being the 12th with 8.6mm [0.34in]. During this period there was just one ground and no air frost recorded.

The third week saw a continuation of the belts of low pressure near to the country with a large anticyclone to the north of the U.K. bringing in mainly easterly winds from a still cold continent. The 17th was particularly cool with a daytime maximum of just 2.9C [37.2F], more like early January than near spring! The 17th saw an appreciable fall of snow with a 3cm covering at 09.00. Snow fell on the 16th, 17th and 18th though the lying snow thawed quite rapidly. An air frost of minus 3.5C [25.7F] was noted on the 19th with a ground frost of -3.8C [25.2F] to go with it. Apart from the 19th, which saw 7.9 hours of sun, it was a relatively dull week with rain, sleet or snow on most days, the wettest day, the 16th seeing a fall of 12.4mm [0.49in] of rain. Late on the 20th an active frontal system moved in from the Southwest into the very cold air over the central and northern districts of the UK. This brought in a belt of snow, some quite heavy, giving a ground cover of 4cm by 09h on the 21st. This rapidly thawed as warmer air encroached from the southwest, the maximum temperature rising to 4.2C [39.6F].

The fourth week began with much milder air over the UK, temperatures rising to 12.2C [54F] on the 22nd. This rise in temperature brought widespread fog on both the 22nd and 23rd, much of which lasted all day. However, under further easterly winds, temperatures again fell back though frost was absent. No sun at all was recorded from the 23rd to the 26th and some precipitation occurred on every day of the week totalling 16.4mm [0.65in]. Against this just 4.5 hours of sunshine was recorded.

With winds swinging into a westerly quarter at the end of the fourth week temperatures began a slow rise from a maximum of 10.1C [50.2F] on the 28th through 12.3C [54.1F] on the 30th to 14.1C [57.4F] on the final day. In contrast to the beginning of the month which saw air maxima in the region of 2 to 3C [35.6 to 37.4F] the end of the month was distinctly spring-like.