

THE SPRING OF 2001.

Conditions in the spring of 2001 were the worst overall since 1996. It was slightly cooler than average, considerably wetter, though it did produce a little more in the way of bright sunshine.

The mean maximum temperature of 12.7C [54.9F] was the lowest since 1996 though only 0.1C below the 30-year mean. The mean daily temperature of 8.3C [46.9F] was also the lowest for 5 years and ended 0.2C below expectation. May 13th was the warmest day with a maximum temperature of 24.7C [76.5F], about average for spring, though the warmest night, May 28th with its 14.6C [58.3F] was well above the spring mean and the warmest ever recorded here. The previous best was 13.8C [56.8F] seen on May 31st 1970. There were 12 air frosts, the worst figures since 1996, with 29 frosts in the air, again the worst since 1996.

Rainfall totalled 221.8mm [8.73ins] the lowest total since 1999 with 51 days of rain turning in the worst figures in the same period. The duration of rain at 204.9 hours was 39.8 hours above average. In all 39 days were classed as "wet", 6 above expectation for spring, though the highest daily fall of 17.7mm [0.70 in] on April 3rd was well down on expectation.

The 435.7 hours of bright sunshine was the highest since 1999 and 9.6 hours above average. The 11 sunless days are seen against the 16 of last year and 20 in 1996, but just 6 in 1995! The sunniest day was May 29th with 14.9 hours, an hour above average, making it a sunnier season than is customary.

Snow lay on 2 days, the highest incidence since 1998 though the days with snow falling at 7 was the same as last year but just half of that in 1995. Fog occurred on 2 days, just half of expectation, with hail recorded on 3 days, marginally below average. Thunder was heard on 4 occasions, 1 above expectation though, yet again, no gale was recorded, the maximum gust of 33 knots [38 mph] occurring on March 16th.