

DECEMBER DATA

Early December came in with low pressure and mild air dominating the scene. Winds were in a westerly quarter bringing air from the Atlantic, air that was both warm and moist. The maximum temperature on the 1st was 10.1°C [50.2°F] with 0.5mm [0.02in] of rain falling as a shower during the afternoon. After several weeks of relatively “quiet” weather it became stormier with winds approaching gale force on the 3rd and peaking with several gale force gusts on the 5th reaching a maximum of 38 knots [46mph]. This finally saw the end of all leaves; trees become almost “skeletal” overnight. Ground frost was quite common, occurring on several nights during the early part of the month with a minimum of –4.4°C [24.1°F] on the 2nd. Rain fell on three of the first five days totalling 14.9mm [0.59in] with a maximum fall of 9.4mm [0.37in] on the 3rd. Pressure began to rise appreciably from the 6th as a large and intense Siberian high developed and pushed an arm westwards to cover the UK. This gave sharp night frosts and cool to cold days.. Fog also became a problem at night on both the 8th and 9th though at no time did it become dense.

The early month period produced a day maximum of 12.2°C [54.0°F] on the 5th and a nighttime minimum of –1.8°C [28.9°F] on the 9th. The warmest night occurred on the 1st with a temperature of 8.6°C [47.5°F] whilst the coldest day was the 10th when the temperature failed to rise above 4.6°C [40.3°F] under anticyclonic gloom. During the period 15.3mm [0.60in] of rain fell whilst sunshine totalled 20 hours. Winds showed an easterly component on 3 days and a westerly on 7 with a maximum gust of 38 knots [46mph] on the 5th.

Mid December followed on from the earlier part of the month with little change in the overall pressure pattern, the anticyclone making only slight migrations from its original position. This resulted in minor changes in wind direction and little general change in the prevailing weather that remained in general, cold but dry with quite sharp night frosts and occasionally foggy nights. The morning of the 15th saw a ground frost of –4.8°C [23.4°F] whilst the air fell to –4.4°C [24.1°F], the coldest night of the month to date. This period remained generally dry with just occasional slight drizzle on the 15th/16th and sunny days. The 14th saw 5.8 hours of bright sunshine recorded at ground level, whilst the electronic recorder on the roof measured 6.6 hours, almost a maximum for this time of the year. The electronic record for the 12th was even higher at 6.9 hours measured from sunrise to sunset.

From the 17th to the 20th just one night, the 19th recorded no ground frost. The period was not particularly wet, rain falling on most days, but just a trace on many. The heaviest fall was of 1.5mm [0.06in] on the 19th. Days remained cool with a maximum temperature of 6.1°C [43.0°F] registered on the 19th and 20th. Winds remained in a westerly quarter and were light, peaking at 30 knots on the 20th.

The latter part of December was ushered in with high pressure to the east and low to the west giving a mainly west to south west air flow. Temperatures remained suppressed reaching no higher than 8.6°C [47.5°F] on the 24th. Night frost was quite common, occurring on eight nights from the 20th to the end of the month in the air reaching a low of –7.5°C [18.5°F] in the air and –11.0°C [12.2°F] both on the 31st. To add to the problems snow showers began during the 25th with a few flakes, becoming more widespread and heavy by the 30th when 7cm [2.8in] of level snow lay on the ground at 09.00. Further heavy snow showers occurred on the 30th itself giving a further 3cm [1in] of fresh snow with a total depth of 9cm [4in] by the 31st. The last day saw a maximum no higher than 1.0°C [34°F] though we had continuous sunshine all day.