

SPRING OF 2002

Spring 2002 was the most "open" since that of 1997 and was also the sunniest since that year as well as ending the driest since 1996. In all there were 42 days with rain, 2 better than average, with 27 of these classed as "wet", some 6 better than an average spring.

Temperatures were around the 30-year means though the coldest night, March 2 with an air minimum of -3.7°C was well below the normal figure for the season. Despite this, all mean air temperatures managed to end with positive anomalies by as much as 1.2°C for the mean maximum. The exceptional April has much to do with this "better than average" nature of this spring.

In all 6 days were sunless when we could have expected 13, both April and May seeing sunshine every day. Winds were a little stronger than average, the maximum gust of 45 knots occurring on March 9, though we had no gales. Thunder occurred once and we had 23 frosts on the ground and 9 in the air, both figures being well down on the seasonal norms.

SUMMER OF 2002.

The past summer was the poorest in overall conditions since 1998. The mean daily temperature of $15.9^{\circ}\text{C}/60.6^{\circ}\text{F}$ was itself the lowest since 2000 but the coldest summer's day, July 1st with its $14.6^{\circ}\text{C}/58.3^{\circ}\text{F}$, turned in the best figures since 1996. In addition, the warmest night, July 30th, produced a night minimum no lower than $16.6^{\circ}\text{C}/61.9^{\circ}\text{F}$, the highest figure since 1994.

Rainfall totalled 163.8mm/6.45ins, the highest total since 1999. There were 39 days with rain, the lowest number since 2000, and 7 days had thunder, 3 lower than the 10 heard in 1999. However, none of these produced heavy falls of rain, a situation not reflected elsewhere in the region.

Sunshine at 559.2 hours was the lowest summer total since 2000 though the 4 sunless days was 2 better than expectation. In terms of the sunniest day, June 1st with 14.7 hours, the total eluded the 15-hour figure for the first time since 1991.

Humidity's were high, the mean value of 74.3 being the highest figure since the 73.3% observed in 1996. Hail occurred once but no fog was reported, the first time since 1998. The highest wind gust of 27knots/32mph was the lowest gust noted since wind records began here in 1980.

It will be obvious from

the dates noted here that the summer of 2002 just passed was in no way likely to breach any long-term records and very much in line with recent summer seasons.

This was far from true of our Continental neighbours who had torrential rain and high winds that caused widespread damage right across Europe with all of the major rivers in flood and a good proportion of the more elegant capital cities thrown into total disarray. Here damage runs into billions of Euros and it will take years to rectify the problems caused to the infrastructure. For once Britain was fortunate not to have to suffer the vagaries of the climate that are normally heaped upon these shores in the summer season.