

THE AUTUMN OF 2002.

The autumn of 2002 was not so open as that of the previous year but bettered 2000 in a number of ways. All mean air temperatures managed to remain above the 30-year values, though the mean maximum at 13.7°C/56.7°F was the lowest for 3 years and the fifth lowest since 1988. However, in compensation, the mean daily temperature of 10.7°C/51.3°F was the fifth equal highest on record. Soil and earth temperatures all carried positive anomalies by as much as +0.7°C for the 5cm, 50cm and 100cm depths. No day was classified as “hot” [air maximum above 25°C/77°F], and the maximum recorded on 3 September of 23.5°C/74.3°F was low when compared with those in the immediate past.

Rainfall was well above the 30-year mean by over 20% giving the fifth wettest season since 1981. Rain fell on 48 days, a little above expectation, with 37 classed as “wet” and 22 as “wetter”, both figures higher than normal. Rain duration was over a time-span of 226 hours, the fourth highest since 1984 and the single thunderstorm reported was down on normal. In contrast the 2 occasions of hail was above average for autumn.

Sunshine was marginally above expectation at 337.2 hours, the third best since 1986 with the sunniest day, 1 September providing 11.5 hours of this. In all 19 days were sunless, somewhat better than average and continuing the trend towards sunnier seasons.

Winds were generally light, averaging 5kn/6mph though a full gale occurred on 27 October with winds gusting to 54kn/62mph causing widespread structural damage in the area. Air frosts numbering 2 were down on a normal season giving the second lowest incidence since 1994. In contrast the 12 frosts on the ground was 3 above expectation and much in line with the last 4 seasons.

Cloud cover was a little less than customary with the 09 hr humidity at 85.2% also better than expectation. Again, autumn showed no incidence of snow or sleet, a feature that has become quite common in recent years. So, all in all, the autumn of 2002 produced no outstanding climatological features.