

OCTOBER 2003 (2)

These cooler conditions continued as the month progressed towards its end, night frost being fairly common and daytime maxima much reduced on earlier values. From the 21<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> ground frost occurred on every night bar one, the 23<sup>rd</sup>. However, rainfall was still very scarce with daily sunshine totals remaining well up and reaching 8.4 hours on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

The long-running dry weather was broken on the 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> when a slow moving set of fronts crossed the region bringing the first substantial rain since 22<sup>nd</sup> September. In all a fall of 13.8mm/0.54in was recorded over a period of 17.3 hours during which precipitation was occurring. However, it will need many more events like this to make up the very large deficit. Both nights and days continued cool with below-average temperatures in total contrast to much of the early month with its run of above-average values. A further fall of 11.2mm/0.44in of rain occurred on the 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> that brought the monthly total to a more respectable value.

#### OCTOBER SUMMARY.

October had been a dry month until the final four days for until then the monthly rainfall total had been just 9.5mm/0.37in. However, the final four days brought this to 66.1mm/2.60in with fall of 56.6mm/2.23in, the 30<sup>th</sup> itself yielding a total of 29.8mm/1.17in in a little over 17 hours of continuous and often heavy rain. This was the first fall in excess of 1 inch/25.4mm to occur this year. October has thus ended as the third month this year in which rainfall has managed to exceed evaporation, the others being January and February, October ending as the driest since 1995. Rain fell on 14 days of which 7 were "wet" >1mm/0.04in and 3 "very wet" >10mm/0.4in. De-

spite this belated heavy fall of rain the year still shows a marked deficit of 214.4mm/6.07in of water that is still very serious in terms of water supply.

Sunshine has continued well above expectation with

134.4 hours recorded, a third above average and the best since 1997. Just 4 days were without sun, the best since 2001 and 2 better than normal. The 11<sup>th</sup> saw the most sunshine in a day with 9.3 hours, enough to classify it as a "sunny" day, well in line with recent years.

Temperatures have been down on normal in almost all areas, the mean maximum by 0.6C, the mean minimum by 2.0C and the mean daily by 1.3C giving the coolest October since 1993. Frost has been prevalent with 5 in the air lasting for 19.6 hours and 10 over grass lasting for 56.4 hours giving the frostiest October since 1997. The 19.3C/66.7F on the 1<sup>st</sup> was the lowest maximum since 2000 with the coldest night, the 25<sup>th</sup> with its -3.1C/26.4F being the lowest since 1997. The coldest day, October 22<sup>nd</sup> with 7.3C/45.1F was the lowest since 1993 leaving the warmest night, the 10<sup>th</sup> with 12.5C/54.5F recorded, coming in as the coolest since 2001.

Black bulb radiation temperatures have held up well due to the clear air, relatively cloud-free skies and sunny days. The maximum of 51.8C/125.2F on the 9<sup>th</sup> was the highest since records began here in 1956 which made the mean radiation temperature of 37.8C/100.0F also the highest on file.

Winds have been mainly easterly and light with a maximum gust of 28kn/34mph recorded on the 4<sup>th</sup>. There was no incidence of thunder, hail, snow or sleet during the month.