

AUTUMN 2003

Autumn 2003 with its index of 543.9 was the fourth most open season in 48 years. The 26.7C/80.1F registered on September 16th was the highest since 1991 and the third highest on record for an autumn day. In contrast the coldest night, November 24th with -3.7C/25.3F was the lowest since 1997. November 23rd was the coldest day with a maximum of 4.9C/40.8F, this time the lowest since 1996. The mean maximum of 14.7C/58.5F equalled the figure for 1999 whilst the mean minimum of 5.8C/42.4F was the lowest since 1993 giving a mean daily of 10.2C/50.4F, a little down on the recent past. This pattern resulted from warm days but cold, clear nights. Nine nights had an air frost and 24 saw a ground frost, the highest on record.

Rainfall at 156.7mm/6.17ins was the lowest since 1996 and well down on average, the duration of 153 hours being the lowest recorded since 1989. Air pressure remained around average for the season. In all 41 days saw rain, well below expectation, with 24 of these "wet" days, the lowest since 1988. Again we have had no incidence of snow or sleet and just one thunderstorm.

Sunshine totalled 378.6 hours that was the 2nd highest on record behind the 393 hours set in the autumn of 1971. Just 15 days were sunless, 5 below normal and the lowest for 5 years. Cloud cover at 62.5% at 09 hr was also the lowest in 5 years and well below the mean of 68.8% for autumn. The mean 09 hr humidity of 83% was itself the lowest in 48 years of records, making the autumn of 2003 quite a good one overall.