

Bracknell Harmanswater March 2004 Weather Summary

March began with cold conditions and overnight frosts from 1 to 3rd. The lowest air minimum and grass minimum occurred during this period on 1st, with -5.5c (air minimum) and -7.7c (grass minimum), these were only the lowest March temperatures since 2001. Although there were 4 other nights with air frost during the month, 77% of the total frost duration (43.4 hours) occurred during this 3-day period. The lowest 20cm earth temperature occurred on 2nd 2.3c . Thereafter the earth temperature generally rose to reach a maximum of 8.6c on 21st.

Milder air moved into the area from the 4th with much cloudier skies and the only fog day on 5th. The milder air was replaced by colder air again from 7th with slight frosts on 8th and 10th. Snow and hail showers fell on the 7th with further snow recorded on 10th to 12th with 3cm of lying snow recorded on 12th at 0900hr. This was the first time in 8 years that there has been snow lying in March and the deepest snow recorded since 1986 (18 years), equal with 1987. 1975 holds the record with 9cm.



The 11th recorded the lowest maximum of 5.5c , which was only the lowest since 2002. The highest daily rainfall total occurred also on the 11th, from the snowfall on the 11th during the day but in the main the overnight snow on the 11th/12th recorded at 0900hr on 12th and 'thrown back' to the 11th.

(Photo. To left of Martins Heron Station at 0915hr on 12th March 2004)

From the 13th, much milder air moved into the area on a south-westerly airstream with maximum temperature in the range of 11 to 17c . The warmest overnight temperature of the month occurred on 16th with 10.3c . On the 19th and 20th there were windy conditions with gusts in excess of 35 knots. Apart from a few small tree branches no other damage was observed. The highest gust recorded was 42 knots on 20th at 1630hr. More exposed locations would have recorded much higher wind speeds. Cooler and calmer conditions were recorded from 23rd, with milder air returning on 29th to 31st with 18.4c , the highest maximum recorded on 31st. 9.6 hours of sunshine was recorded on 30th the highest daily total for the month.

The month overall was drier than normal with 38.0mm of rainfall 72% of average making it the 10th driest March since 1973 (32 years). Temperatures were close to average with mean maximum 10.5c (-0.1c below average) and mean minimum 2.9c ($+0.2\text{c}$ above average). However, there were 6 days with hail recorded, this was a new record in 32 years, the previous was 5 days in 1982.