

WEATHER 2016

For much of the past year there has been quite a significant divide in the weather between the North and the South of the UK, with significantly more rain, snow and high winds in the North of the country. In the South East things have been somewhat similar to the 2015 maximum temperatures, except that we had a warmer September and December. However looking at minimum temperatures the winter lasted right into May, where unusually we had a frost on May 1st. The warmest day was July 19th at 32.2 Deg. C, and it was during this month that we had 14 consecutive days without rain (13th to 26th) this period also coincided with temperatures in the comfortable range between 19 and 25 Degrees. In 2015 the maximum temperature was 33.4 Deg.C also in July. June was the wettest month with the middle three weeks having 41, 52 and 64 mm, with 7th having the highest daily rain of 25 mm. The rainiest day was September 16th with 28.4 mm, in a month which was otherwise relatively dry and warm.

I recorded 49 frosts in 2016 compared with only 29 in 2015. We had an average of 8 frosty days from January to April and the same in November and December so despite the maximum temperatures in December being higher than 2015 the clear skies brought on more frosts. The coldest night was on 19th January at -3.2 Deg. C. This compares with -3.4 Deg. C on January 23rd 2015.

There were 197 days when there was more than 0.2 mm of rain compared with 193 last year, but we also had 6 days with more than 20 mm rain but only one last year, however I do not think that this is of particular significance. My automatic weather station only records rainfall of over 0.2 mm.

I have added some additional statistics to the data and graphs I have sent to the editors, these record rainfall over the last 16 years and I will continue to build on this. For those of you interested in statistics, the average rainfall over the last 6 years is 861 mm compared with 906 mm in 2016. We have a nearly 50% difference between the lowest and the highest over the last 16 years (536 mm in 2003 and 1059 mm, in 2014). I only have monthly data recorded in a useable format since 2011.

2017 seems to have started with frosty mornings brought on with the clear skies and the high pressure planted over the UK, but the only thing you can be sure of is that it will change!

What is the outlook for 2107? Firstly a look back over the last few years, with edited help from some weather experts.

Looking through the headlines in the press over 2016 I noted that it was going to have very low temperatures and snow, and that the summer would be

very hot, none of these actually materialised showing that despite all the science available forecasting is a hazardous business with many more wrongs than rights. (Not only applies to weather forecasts!)

Between 1991 and 2007 most UK winters were milder than the long term average with snow in lowland Britain often notable by its absence. Since 2008/09 the picture has been mixed and four winters have been colder than the long term average. However, during the last five years four of the winters have been in the mild category. Does this mean the law of averages favours a colder winter this year? No, if anything it suggests the opposite due to the persistence of background forcing mechanisms which load the dice in favour of a mild outcome.

Computer forecasting models. These now look months ahead but their accuracy for the UK and North West Europe in general is low, in large part due to the number of different air masses which affect our weather. Currently they are leaning towards the possibility of higher pressure to the north of the UK during the early part of the winter and perhaps a more neutral set-up later in the season. Arguably there is currently a weak signal for a colder winter.

In the last five years four winters have been milder than average. In 2016 eight of the first nine months have been milder than average. Persistence patterns favour a milder winter.

The latest forecast indicators are much more mixed than they were at this time last year when a mild winter was strongly favoured. Currently there are suggestions of a relatively cold winter but the persistence of above average temperatures in 2016 and in recent winters provides an offsetting counterweight to these. In conclusion things seem finely balanced at this early stage.

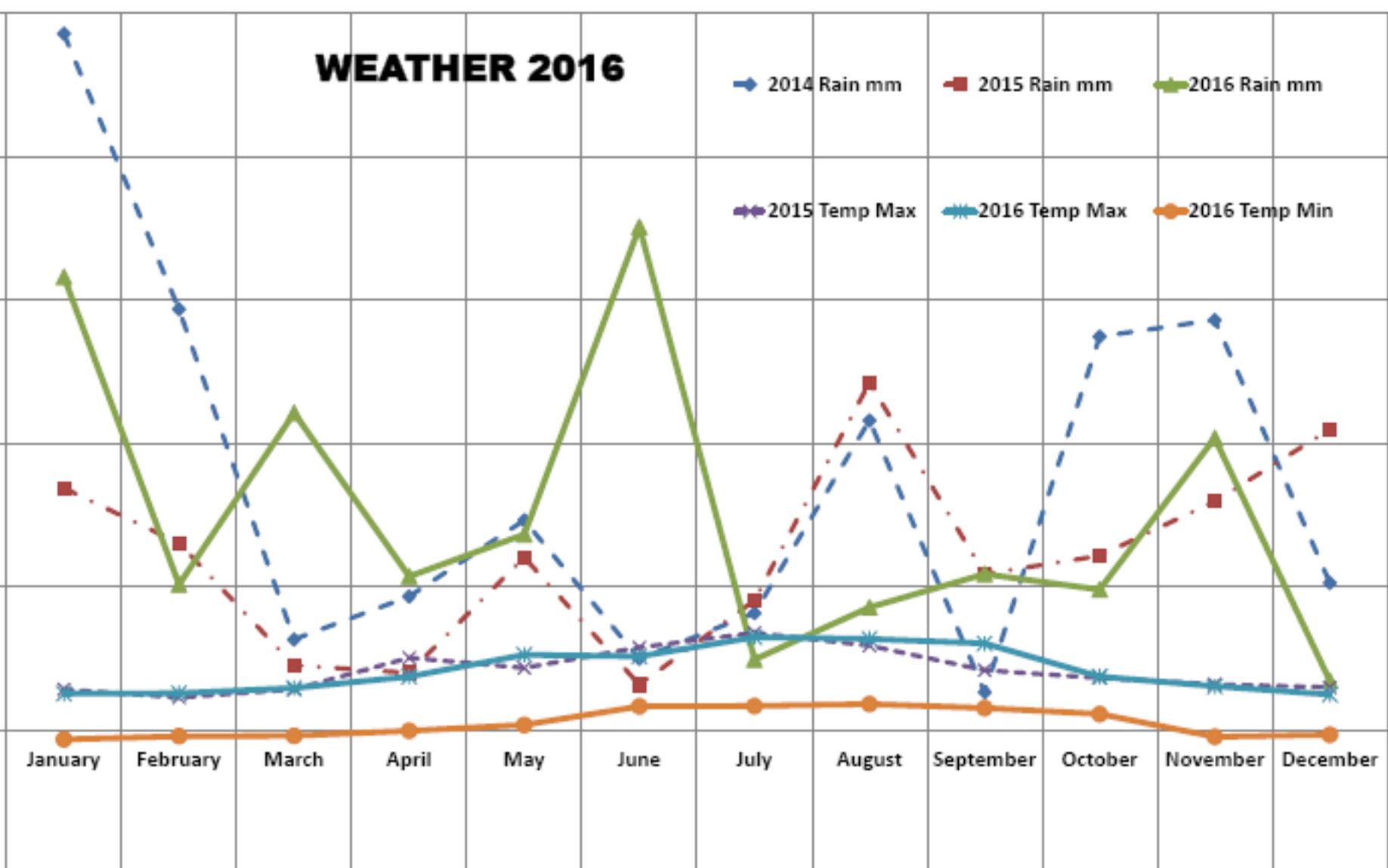
So we will just have to see how things turn out!

David Cullen

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- 2014 Rain mm
- 2015 Rain mm
- 2016 Rain mm
- 2015 Temp Max
- 2016 Temp Max
- 2016 Temp Min

TEMP. DEG C & RAIN mm



MONTH

