

Weather News 2004

The Weather in the Wychwoods

“Lovely day!”, “Isn’t it horrible!”, “Will it snow?”, “Hot enough for you?”

Yes the British are obsessed with the weather! Many of our readers will know John Miskin as MD of Sportif Suzuki in Long Hanborough, magazine and village supporter and ace golfer, but did you know John has another role as keeper of the weather records for Shipton? Apparently 1,681,920 accurate individual recordings are taken each year in Shipton, downloaded automatically onto a computer every 5 minutes (whoops, you just missed one!) Detailed month by month summaries are produced for the year, charting temperature, wind-speed, rainfall, number of air frosts and number of days that snow fell. This means that we can actually compare the data for Shipton year on year. Was 2004 the worst summer ever, or do we say that every year?



rainfall, compared with more hilly areas such as Chipping Norton and Leafield.

Fine Weather For Ducks!

Having said that, in August our rainfall was 114 mm; double the normal amount. Brize Norton recorded the wettest month since records began with 155 mm of rain. This was nothing compared with the devastation in Boscastle, Cornwall, due to severe flooding. At nearby Otterham 200.4 mm of rain fell in 24 hours, whilst Lesnewth, near Boscastle, had 64.8 mm of rain in an hour; that is more than double what Shipton had in the whole of August! (In fact our wettest month was October, when rainfall was 60% higher than usual). The up-side for Oxfordshire was that the wet weather meant a record number of ducks on Otmoor (3,900 Wigeon and 3,600 Teal).

Not A Hot Spot

Shipton lies in a minor valley in the Cotswolds and will therefore never achieve high temperatures. The highest temperature last year, recorded on August 8th, was 28.7 °C. Compared with 37.1 °C in Cheltenham in 1990; this is nothing to write home about. We might not be a hot spot, but we are noted for night-time lows, especially in the winter, as we lie in a ‘frost hollow’. The lowest temperature recorded in 2004 in Shipton was -5.9 °C this December; but that was nothing unusual.

The Wychwoods are protected in many ways from severe gales and extensive

So What’s The Verdict?

Believe it or not, most months in 2004 were slightly warmer than usual and the summer drier, with heavier than usual rainfall concentrated in January, April, August and October. This seems to back up the Oxford Radcliffe Observatory’s data on the unusual rainfall patterns and exceptionally mild temperatures of recent years. John summarises 2004 as: “a rather boring year with below average sunshine (less than 75% of normal), little snow and no great extremes of temperature”. Whatever 2005 brings to the Wychwoods, it won’t stop us talking about the weather!

Liz Clarke Watson, with thanks to John Miskin.