

a little CRC...

by Graham Evans

Rainy Daze

As the rain kept falling I decided: Enough is enough - this can't be normal; Surely the end of the world is upon us. I turned to the internet for answers...

It was the wettest September on the record for Northcliffe with 316.4mm of rain. The nearest comparisons were 251.4mm in 1996 and 251.5mm in 1927.

The official Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) records for Northcliffe begin in 1926. The only item the BOM measures in Northcliffe is rainfall. The measurements are taken at the Post Office.

You can get all the data here:

www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/index.shtml

Annual Northcliffe rainfall has declined by about 20% over the past 80 years. The decline in rainfall has not happened gradually. Instead we seem to have experienced a sudden shift in the 1970s. An organisation called the Indian Ocean Climate Initiative (IOCI) has been studying these changes in our local climate.

www.ioci.org.au/about-ioci.html?start=2

IOCI is a collaboration between the WA Government, CSIRO and BOM. This IOCI suggests the following explanation for our 1970s rainfall shift:

"The rainfall decline was accompanied by and apparently associated with changes in the large scale atmospheric circulation that are most likely due to a combination of natural variability and the enhanced greenhouse effect."

Another mystery I uncovered is that in general our Septembers are getting wetter while overall rainfall is declining.

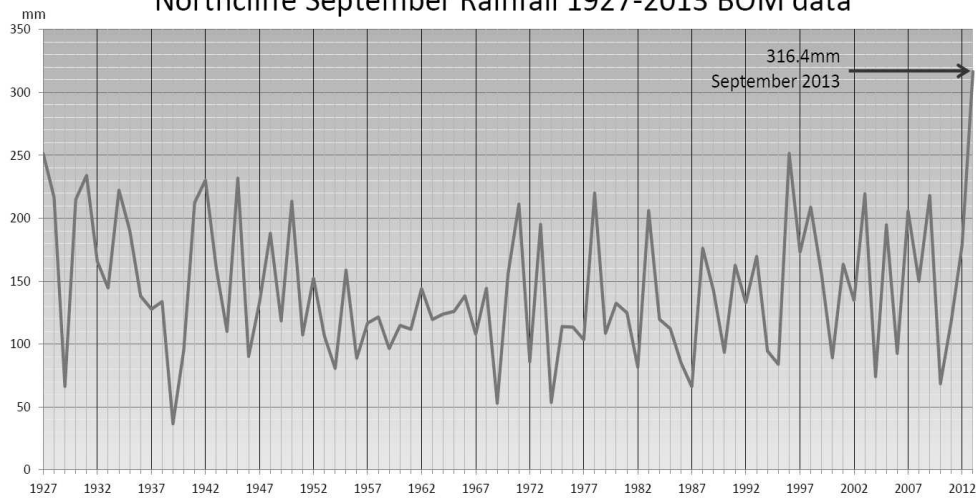
On Facebook someone suggested to me that this could be our local version of 'season creep'. A visit to en.wikipedia.org and a search for 'season creep' revealed this is a climate change phenomena. In the Northern Hemisphere it has been associated with Spring arriving earlier and the need for gardeners to plant sooner. In Northcliffe it seems we are getting Winter rainfall in September and Spring is arriving later...



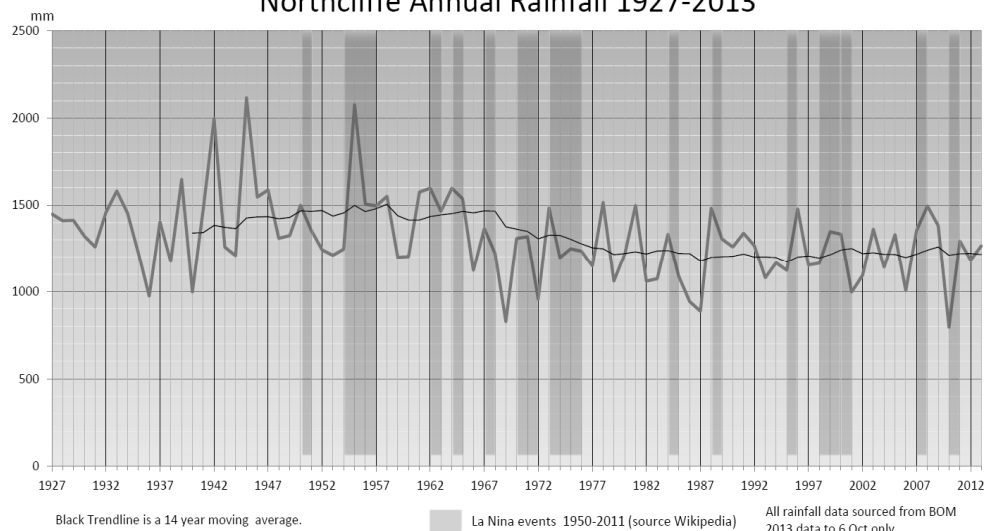
Northcliffe
Community
Resource
Centre

Tel: 9776 7330
Fax: 9776 7338
PO Box 133, Northcliffe
nrc@northcliffe.org.au

Northcliffe September Rainfall 1927-2013 BOM data



Northcliffe Annual Rainfall 1927-2013



Analysing the Data

BOM allows you to download the official weather data from their website. The best way to do this is to download the 'csv' files (csv = comma separated values). These files can then be opened with a spreadsheet program. Eg Microsoft Excel.

Excel has lots of tools to help you look at your numbers. Spreadsheet programs replace those handwritten columns and pages full of numbers and the need for hard labour and tap-tap-tapping away at your pocket calculator. Excel also produced the charts above.

A Weather Station for Northcliffe?

Northcliffe BOM weather station does not record temp, humidity, wind etc.

Many weather websites claim to tell you the temperature or weather forecast for Northcliffe. They deceive! They are using BOM data from Pemberton, Windy Harbour or, sometimes, Manjimup (Shannon weather station has now closed). They re-label this info 'Northcliffe.' While some websites make this clear others don't.

It would be great to have the real information for Northcliffe. If anyone has relevant information or views, or would like to help us lobby BOM for a full weather station, please contact us.

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