

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

MAY

1985

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Mainly dull and rather wet

The month began with an anticyclone to the south-west of the British Isles, low pressure over the Baltic and the United Kingdom lying in a northerly airstream. A depression formed over the Celtic Sea on the 3rd and, filling slowly, moved north-eastwards over south-west Wales by the 6th. The United Kingdom was crossed by a succession of fronts until high pressure built off western Scotland on the 10th and became established over northern areas for the next few days. On the 12th a thundery depression formed over the Continent and that evening affected south-east England. A depression tracked westwards across central England on the 14th and was over the Atlantic by the 15th, when high pressure built southwards down the North Sea. A depression crossed Scotland during the 17th and 18th, followed by a build up of high pressure on the 19th, while on the 20th and 21st southern England again came under the influence of low pressure drifting northwards from France. By the 22nd the high pressure had receded to Greenland and the British Isles came under the influence of complex low-pressure areas for a while. On the 28th an anticyclone extended from the south-west of the British Isles and continued north-eastwards, dominating the weather for the rest of the month.

Weather

The weather in May was generally unsettled, with most of the rain falling as showers, often accompanied by thunder. Thunderstorms occurred on 16 days during the month. On the 14th a depression brought widespread thundery rain. There were outbreaks of thundery rain, heavy at times, in eastern Scotland, especially around the Tay estuary on the 18th and flooding was reported in Dundee. On the evening of the 25th thunderstorms developed over south-west England and gradually extended northwards and eastwards during the next day. Over East Anglia on the 26th some of the thunderstorms were violent, accompanied by large hail, squally winds and a marked drop in temperature. Hail was reported on 11 days, mainly in northern and eastern areas. Hailstones between 10 mm and 20 mm in diameter were reported at Brodick Castle, Strathclyde on the 1st, Charing, Kent and Halstead, Essex on the 26th. On the 22nd lightning was reported to have caused damage to property in Camberley, Surrey, Windsor, Berkshire and Redhill, West Sussex.

Wind

Winds were generally light to moderate throughout the month with occasionally fresh winds in the west, especially near coasts. Between the 23rd and 26th winds were light or moderate with strong to gale force winds in some western areas. During the month only four low-level anemograph stations recorded hourly winds over 34 kn: Fraserburgh, Grampian Region, 35 kn on the 1st, Bell Rock, Tayside, 36 kn on the 14th and Valley, Gwynedd, 34 kn on the 24th, all three having maximum gusts of 45 kn, and Gwennap Head, Cornwall with 36 kn on the 5th. The maximum gust at Gwennap Head, 59 kn, occurred on the 9th, with a mean hourly wind of 30 kn. In the first half of the month winds were mainly northerly, between the 16th and 18th variable, from the 19th to 21st north-easterly, then southerly or westerly until the 29th, ending the month with easterly.

Temperature

Mean temperatures for May were near the long-term average everywhere in the United Kingdom. The differences ranged between 1 °C above normal on the Sussex coast and 1 °C below normal in coastal areas of East Anglia and south-east Scotland. In Northern Ireland temperatures were generally near normal, but the first six days were significantly colder. The lowest value, 1.5 °C, was on the 2nd at Mayola Waterworks, Co. Londonderry. The highest, 21.4 °C at Knockarevan, Co. Fermanagh, did not occur until the 31st. In Scotland the highest recorded temperature was 23.2 °C at Motherwell (Strathclyde Park), Strathclyde on the 31st, whilst the lowest, -4.7 °C, occurred at Lagganlia, Highland Region on the 12th. In England and Wales the highest temperature was 25.9 °C at Faversham, Kent on the 26th and the lowest was -4.6 °C at St Harmon, Powys (South) on the 3rd. The warmest day in England generally apart from the south-west was the 26th. In Wales and south-west England together the highest temperatures occurred on the two days 17th and 18th. The warmest day in Scotland was the 31st.

Rainfall

It was a wet month over the United Kingdom as a whole but, with much of the rain coming from thundery outbreaks, amounts varied greatly from place to place. Amounts ranged from only about 50 per cent here and there in western coastal areas to nearly twice the seasonal normal in parts of Oxfordshire, Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire and to the north of Aberdeen, Grampian Region.

The heaviest falls occurred on thundery days. On the 14th, 63 mm fell at Dalton Holme, Humberside; on the 20th over 50 mm fell in 2 hours out of a daily total of 58 mm at Brize Norton, Oxfordshire. On the same day Gatwick, West Sussex had a fall of 46 mm and 70 mm was measured at Chiddingfold, near Guildford, Surrey. On the 21st, 63 mm fell at Milton Damerel, Devon and on the 26th Glenderg Forest, Co. Tyrone measured 68 mm. On the 25th and 26th, 80 mm fell at Corgary, Co. Fermanagh in 48 hours. In

Northern Ireland it was the wettest May since 1981.

Snow

Wintry showers occurred in places, mainly in western or northern Scotland at the beginning of the month. Snow was lying for only about a day at low levels and up to seven days above the 750 m level. Snow or sleet showers were reported at Sledmere, Humberside on the 1st and 14th, Chelker, North Yorkshire on the 18th and Dalwhinnie, Highland Region on the 25th and 28th.

Sunshine

Sunshine amounts were below normal over the United Kingdom as a whole. Amounts were above normal in the Western Isles of Scotland, South Wales and the south-west peninsula except for the far west of Cornwall, near normal in northern Scotland and below normal everywhere else. The east coast from Suffolk to North Yorkshire was the dullest area with below 70 per cent of normal on the Norfolk Coast. The month ended with four days of sunshine. The 30th, with 15.5 hours of sunshine, was the sunniest May day in central London since records began in 1929. On the 30th and 31st most places in Great Britain had almost continuous sunshine.

Fog

There was widespread fog in East Anglia by late evening on the 4th and it remained until mid-morning on the 5th. From the 12th to 22nd there was fog nearly every day, mainly in southern and central areas. On the 14th mist and fog were fairly extensive over England and Wales overnight. Eastern and western coasts were foggy from the 7th to 9th. From the 16th to 22nd fog affected mainly southern and eastern coasts. Patchy sea fog affected some coasts in southern England again on the 27th. There was patchy fog in hilly districts from time to time during the month, mainly in central and south-western areas.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

A 3 m dust whirl was reported on the 17th at Towy Castle, Dyfed.

Table 1 District values

District	Air temperature °C					Mean 30 cm soil temp °C	Rain-days	Rainfall	Sunshine
	Highest Max*	Lowest Min*	Max.	Min.	Mean				
	Difference from average					% of average			
0 Scotland N	21.7	-4.7	-0.2	-0.3	-0.2	0.0	-2	75	101
1 Scotland E	21.2	-2.6	-0.4	-0.1	-0.2	+0.1	-1	100	86
2 England E & NE	23.5	-2.6	-1.3	+0.3	-0.5	-0.4	+1	128	77
3 East Anglia	23.8	0.5	-1.1	+0.1	-0.5	-0.9	+1	119	76
4 Midland Counties	23.1	-0.2	-0.8	-0.1	-0.4	-0.4	-1	119	94
5 England SE & Central S	24.3	1.2	-0.4	+0.3	-0.1	-0.4	-2	102	89
6 Scotland W	20.9	-4.1	-0.3	0.0	-0.1	-0.1	-4	71	94
7 England NW & Wales N	21.4	-0.4	-0.4	+0.5	0.0	0.0	-2	90	87
8 England SW & Wales S	22.5	-2.1	-0.1	+0.1	0.0	+0.3	-2	77	99
N Ireland	21.0	-0.8	-0.5	-0.3	-0.5	0.0	+4	103	86
Scotland	21.7	-4.7	-0.3	-0.1	-0.2	0.0	-2	83	94
England & Wales	24.3	-2.6	-0.7	+0.2	-0.3	-0.3	-1	102	87

*Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations