

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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Mostly very dull, wet and cold with frequent thunder

Pressure was low over or near the British Isles for much of the month. During the first three days a depression moved slowly north-eastwards across southern Britain and the North Sea while a shallow low came eastwards over central areas on the 7th and 8th. Deep, but filling depressions became slow moving to the west on the 9th and to the south-west on the 16th. The first remained until the 15th, when a small thundery low moved northwards over south-east England and East Anglia, while the second gradually drifted in over south-west England before being absorbed by low pressure over the Continent on the 21st. During the 27th and 28th a shallow low came south-westwards across the North Sea to east England, but returned next day, and the month ended with a thundery depression moving northwards over Brittany.

Fronts affected all areas from time to time, in particular on the 5th and 6th when an active cold front edged slowly eastwards. Pressure was relatively high, however, between the 23rd and 26th as ridges developed, first over the North Sea and then to the west of the British Isles.

Weather

Unsettled, mostly dull and often cold weather continued throughout the month although much of the rainfall was slight in the far north. Thunderstorms, often accompanied by hail, were reported on all but four days of the month, being particularly frequent and widespread during the second and third weeks while severe storms reached southern districts late on the 31st. On the 21st hail, reported to be up to 10 cm deep, made part of the M40 between Beaconsfield and Denham, Buckinghamshire, impassable until cleared by snow-ploughs.

Wind

Winds were fresh or strong at times during the first half of the month, particularly between the 9th and 16th. Subsequently, except in the far north of Scotland, they were lighter generally, especially from the 18th to the 25th. Gales occurred on some occasions in exposed areas, mainly in south-west England and over high ground in the north-west of Britain. Winds were mostly from an easterly direction in the north and from a southerly one in the south, but between the 24th and 29th they were mainly from a northerly point.

Temperature

Monthly mean temperatures were below normal in all parts of the United Kingdom. Values ranged from rather more than 1.5 °C below average locally in east Scotland and north-east England to less than 0.5 °C below in Shetland.

Throughout the month the weather was often cold, especially by day; as late as the 28th temperatures failed to exceed 10 °C in many areas. However, most parts were briefly rather warm at the end of the first week and also on the 16th when the temperature reached 19.4 °C at Inverailort, Highland Region. Only on the 31st was it warm generally with temperatures exceeding 20 °C over much of the southern half of England and reaching 23.3 °C at Kew Gardens, Greater London. Despite the overall coldness of the month there was little frost and most of this occurred in sheltered northern areas.

Rainfall

Over much of the United Kingdom this was a wet month with more than twice the average rainfall being recorded at many places in the eastern half of England, particularly in East Anglia, and here and there in the Midlands, south-west England, Wales, east Scotland and Jersey. Over much of north Scotland, parts of Northern Ireland and west Scotland, and locally on the coast of Tayside Region, however, there was below-average rainfall with less than half the average falling in the west of Highland Region and in parts of Western Isles.

Thundery showers, heavy in places, occurred frequently; on the 18th, for example, 62.9 mm fell in storms at Woodhouse, near Bawtry, South Yorkshire, while nearby at Finningley 53.7 mm fell in two hours from 1405 GMT out of a total of 55.9 mm. There were also some longer periods of rain, which were particularly heavy in south-western and central parts of Britain, on the 1st, in western districts on the 5th and over north-east England and east Scotland on the 27th and 28th, with totals of 94.0 mm at Low Bleakhope, Northumberland, in the Cheviot Hills, and 91.8 mm at Hungry Snout, Lothian Region, in the Lammermuir Hills on the 27th; at the latter a further 45.3 mm fell on the 28th. Finally, heavy thundery rain was widespread over southern and central districts during the night of 31 May/1 June with 47.2 mm falling in two hours from 2000 GMT, including 25 mm in six minutes, at Jersey Airport. However, much of the rainfall was slight in the far north of Scotland. Waterlogged land caused considerable delays to crop planting, particularly of potatoes and sugar beet, while cricket and racing, especially the former, were badly disrupted. Flooding was reported in places.

Snow

Wintry showers occurred in places, mainly over higher ground in the west and north during the second week when snow lay briefly in the Highlands on the 9th and 10th and in Wales and on Dartmoor on the 11th.

Sunshine

This was the dullest May in much of England and Wales since 1932 and the second dullest at Oxford since records began there in 1881, while several places in north-eastern and central Scotland from Baltasound, Shetland, to Paisley, Strathclyde Region, and also Bradford, West Yorkshire, with half or even less of their average sunshine, had their dullest since records began early this century. Northern Ireland, however, was slightly duller in 1970 and 1976. Only in the far west of Scotland, the Channel Islands and at some places along the coast from Essex to Cornwall, and in the Isle of Man did sunshine totals exceed 80 per cent of average.

Generally, the dullest parts of the month were the first week and between the 27th and 30th. The few, mostly sunny days occurred mainly in the Channel Islands and in coastal areas in the north-west and south-east.

Fog

Fog occurred frequently, particularly over hills and coasts in the north-east of Britain where it was rather widespread from the 6th to the 9th, on the 17th and 18th, and between the 27th and 29th. Patches of fog also developed overnight at times, especially in northern and eastern districts during the first week and more generally during the second half of the month.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

Tornadoes caused local damage to property and uprooted trees at Romsey, Hampshire, and Hucclecote, Gloucester on the 16th, wrecked a partly built barn at Kirkheaton, West Yorkshire, on the 17th and caused slight damage at Oakham, Leicestershire, on the 20th. Funnel clouds were also observed from Guernsey Airport on the 5th, Monk's Wood, Cambridgeshire, on the 18th, Cambridge Airport on the 19th, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, on the 20th, near Yeovil, Somerset, and over the South Downs to the north-east of Brighton on the 21st, while a possible waterspout was sighted off Dungeness, Kent on the 30th.

Table 1 District values

| District | air temperature °C | | | | | mean 30-cm soil temp °C | rain- days | rainfall | sun- shine |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------|------|------|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| | Highest Max* | Lowest Min* | max. | min. | mean | | | | |
| | | | difference from average | | | | | % of average | |
| 0 Scotland | 18.2 | -0.4 | -1.2 | -0.2 | -0.7 | +0.2 | -1 | 65 | 70 |
| 1 Scotland E | 17.6 | -2.0 | -2.4 | +0.1 | -1.2 | -0.2 | +5 | 149 | 54 |
| 2 England E & NE | 19.8 | 1.7 | -2.2 | -0.1 | -1.1 | -0.5 | +9 | 170 | 65 |
| 3 East Anglia | 21.9 | 1.0 | -1.9 | -0.1 | -1.0 | -0.6 | +10 | 206 | 75 |
| 4 Midland Counties | 20.4 | 0.8 | -2.0 | -0.2 | -1.1 | -0.5 | +9 | 179 | 58 |
| 5 England SE & Central S | 22.8 | 2.0 | -1.6 | -0.1 | -0.9 | -0.6 | +9 | 172 | 78 |
| 6 Scotland W | 18.2 | -2.0 | -1.5 | -0.3 | -0.9 | -0.3 | +3 | 113 | 68 |
| 7 England NW & Wales N | 19.6 | -0.2 | -1.8 | -0.1 | -1.0 | -0.7 | +8 | 140 | 64 |
| 8 England SW & Wales S | 20.6 | 2.5 | -1.9 | -0.6 | -1.1 | -0.3 | +9 | 159 | 72 |
| N Ireland | 18.3 | -1.1 | -1.6 | -0.4 | -1.0 | -0.2 | +3 | 114 | 67 |
| Scotland | 18.2 | -2.0 | -1.7 | -0.1 | -0.9 | -0.1 | +2 | 109 | 64 |
| England & Wales | 22.8 | -0.2 | -1.9 | -0.2 | -1.0 | -0.5 | +9 | 171 | 69 |

* Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations