

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL STATIONS AND VOLUNTEER OBSERVERS.

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MAY, 1925: THUNDERY, WITH HEAVY RAINS AND BRIGHT PERIODS.

General.—The weather of May was, for the most part, changeable and showery with bright periods. Thunderstorms and hail showers were of frequent occurrence and the rainfall was everywhere above normal, the excess being greatest in Western Scotland, South Wales South-eastern Ireland and Southern England. The mean pressure for the month was abnormally low, ranging from 1005mb. in the West of Scotland to 1010mb. in the South-east of England, whereas the normal values range from 1014mb. to 1016mb.

The first of the month was a day of cold northerly winds with bright weather in the western districts. Over 13 hours of bright sunshine were recorded at Aberystwyth and Falmouth. From the 2nd to the 9th the weather was cool and cloudy with local thunderstorms and considerable rain at times as a depression moved slowly across the British Isles. Falls of hail were common over the country on the 5th, 6th and 7th. As much as 30mm. (1.18 in.) of rain were measured at Tiverton, Devon, on the 6th. Ground frosts were experienced generally during this period.

On the 10th a ridge of high pressure began to spread north-eastwards from the Azores anticyclone with a consequent improvement in the general weather. Temperature rose to between 70°F. and 80°F. in many parts of England (e.g., 80°F. was recorded at London, Norwich and Margate on the 16th), and the south-eastern and eastern districts enjoyed more than 13 hours of bright sunshine on several days. In the north of Scotland and in parts of Ireland, however, the skies continued cloudy and the temperature did not rise above 60°F. On the south-west coast of England sea fog was prevalent between the 14th and 16th.

After the 16th another depression approached from the Atlantic and there was a renewal of thundery conditions. Thunderstorms were numerous on the 18th and 19th and were associated with heavy rain; 45mm. (1.76 in.) were recorded at Derby and 37mm. (1.46 in.) at Calshot (Hants) on the 19th.

During the last ten days of the month pressure remained generally low over the British Isles and changeable weather with local heavy rain prevailed. Falls exceeding 50mm. were recorded locally in Wales and West Scotland. Falls amounting to between 30mm. and 40mm. were common during this period. Sunshine amounts of about 14 hours were also recorded during this period at many places. During the last two or three days strong to high south-westerly winds were experienced in many parts of the Kingdom, and a gale was recorded at Sealand (Flintshire) on the 30th.

The general character of the month is illustrated by the following remarks taken from Observers' notes:—Arrochar (Dumbartonshire).—A remarkably wet and cold May. Berkhamsted.—The month was rather cloudy, fairly warm; number of raindays excessive owing to showers. Cleethorpes (Lincoln).—Thunderstorm on the 16th was the worst for several years. Wind momentarily rose to gale force accompanied by large hail stones and torrential downpour of rain. Worksop.—A showery and rather dull month but mild with low pressure and a good deal of thunder. Mean pressure is the lowest we have ever had in May and for larger rainfall we have to go back to 1889. Morwenstow.—The worst May I can remember; very cold all the month, snow with rain and hail on the 5th; abnormally wet, rain being so frequent and most persistent; frequent heavy soaking fogs; land very badly waterlogged through the greater part of the month. Newquay.—Hail 5 days a record; May, 1923 had hail on 4 days but not nearly so severe as in this May. The least sunny and by far the wettest May in 33 years. Southport.—An exceptionally dull, wet and equable month with S.W. winds greatly in excess and N.E. and E. ones in defect. Mean air pressure the lowest for May since the record commenced. Tavistock.—A very wet month, the wettest May since 1878. Totland Bay.—During my 38 years of observations here I have only known one May with more rain, that occurred in 1898 with its fall of 3.59 inches. Ullapool (Ross-shire).—A varied month, some warm days of brilliant sunshine and on the whole moderate temperature.

Pressure and Winds.—The mean pressure was everywhere markedly below normal. The deviation of monthly means of pressure at fixed hours varied from 10.1mb. at Donaghadee to 4.9mb. at Dungeness. The prevailing winds were southerly in Scotland and south-westerly over the rest of the country. There were very few easterly winds over England and Ireland.

The chart of depression tracks for the month shows that centres of low pressure were over or in the vicinity of the British Isles throughout the month and that, on the whole, the depressions moved comparatively slowly. The highest recorded pressures were 1026mb. at Aberdeen on the 14th and at Guernsey on the 31st and the lowest 977mb. at Castlebay on the 28th.

Strong to high winds were recorded on several days, especially towards the end of the month. A gale occurred at Sealand (Flintshire) on the 30th, when a mean hourly velocity of 40 m.p.h. was recorded and a gust of 56 m.p.h. A gust of 59 m.p.h. was recorded at Southport on the same day.

Temperature.—The mean temperature in Districts 1–10 was 51.2°F. In England S.W., Ireland N., Ireland and the Channel Isles temperature was slightly below normal but in other districts was in excess, the largest excess being 2.7°F. in England E.

The extreme temperatures for the month were:—(England and Wales) 82°F. at London (Camden Square) on the 16th, 29°F. at Ilkley (Yorkshire), Tenbury and Burnley on the 1st and at Houghall (Durham) on the 2nd; (Scotland) 76°F. at Onich on the 19th and 25°F. at Balmoral and Braemar on the 2nd; (Ireland) 65°F. at Killarney on the 14th and at Dublin (Phoenix Park) on the 15th, and 31°F. at Dublin (Phoenix Park) on the 5th.

Ground frosts occurred in most parts of the country. Rounton (Yorkshire) had as many as 11 ground frosts and at Greenwich 9 were recorded. A grass minimum temperature of 23°F. was recorded at Houghall (Durham) on the morning of the 2nd.

Precipitation.—Precipitation was everywhere above normal, the amounts measured at some stations on the west of Scotland being three times the normal; the general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the normal was 185; the values for the several countries were:—England and Wales 178, Scotland 191, Ireland 194. The last two weeks were the wettest and some heavy falls were recorded, amounts between 30mm. and 40mm. being measured at many places. 74mm. (2.93 in.) were recorded at Lake Llydaw (Snowdon) on the 26th, 61mm. (2.41 in.) at Killin (Perthshire) on the 30th and 50mm. (1.98 in.) at Llyn Fawr (Glamorgan) on the 29th.

Thunderstorms and hail showers were widespread and numerous. On the 6th, 7th and 8th thunderstorms and hail showers were experienced over the greater part of the country. On the 18th and 19th severe thunderstorms were experienced in many parts of England and Scotland. Liverpool had as many as 10 days with thunderstorms and Birmingham, Leafield, Newquay, Dublin and Birr Castle had each 5 days with hail.

Sunshine.—Sunshine was slightly in excess in England E. and England S.E. but was deficient in all other districts, the mean daily deficiency amounting to 2.5 hours in Ireland S. England S.E. had 47 per cent. of the possible duration, while Ireland N. had only 24 per cent. There were a few days when sunshine amounts of about 14 hours were recorded at many stations. The largest total duration of sunshine was experienced on the north-east coast of Kent.

Fog.—Five days of fog were reported at Colmonell, Berwick-on-Tweed, St. Ann's Head and Balbriggan. Sea fogs were experienced on parts of the west and south coasts between the 14th and 18th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—Halos were of frequent occurrence and solar halos were observed at very many stations between the 21st and 23rd.