

# Monthly Weather Report

M.O. 722

## OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

*Summary of observations compiled from returns of official stations and voluntary observers*

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### May 1962 — *Cool; rather dull in the South-east*

There were two cyclonic periods during May—the 3rd-11th and the 16th-22nd; otherwise weather was mainly anticyclonic in character with pressure high to the north and west of the country.

The month began with a ridge of high pressure extending southwards over the British Isles giving two generally dry and sunny days. Afternoon temperatures rose to around 17°C in parts of the West and Midlands, but with light winds off the North Sea many eastern districts were 5°C cooler. At night ground frost was fairly widespread and there was air frost locally.

Slow moving troughs from the Atlantic brought thundery outbreaks late on the 3rd and the next day many central and eastern districts of England had thunderstorms with heavy rain at times. Rain was widespread on the 5th, as the warm front of a depression to the west of the British Isles moved slowly north-east across the country, and continued intermittently the next day in the warm air behind the front. A wave development on the cold front of the depression gave over an inch of rain in many places in Northern Ireland, but with freshening south-westerly winds, the frontal system cleared the British Isles during the morning of the 7th, and behind it weather became brighter but showery with local thunderstorms. Thundery showers continued for another four days, as, with rising pressure in mid-Atlantic, the depression off western Scotland declined and low pressure was transferred eastwards towards Denmark.

By the 12th an anticyclone had become established off the south-west of Ireland, and for the next few days weak troughs and ridges moved south-east across Britain on its eastern flank. Winds were generally northerly and weather cool, with slight rain—mainly in the east and south-east—alternating with sunny periods.

A small depression to the south of Iceland moving towards Scotland with rapid deepening brought a marked change on the 16th. Winds reached gale force over much of Scotland and northern England, gales being severe in northern and western Scotland; a gust of 87 kt, exceptionally high for May, was recorded at Benbecula. Rain was heavy in northern Scotland, many places in Sutherland and in Ross and Cromarty recording more than 2 in. in 24 hours. Weather remained very unsettled for about a week; depressions from the Atlantic brought widespread rain on the 18th and 20th, and there were thundery showers or thunderstorms with heavy rain on the 19th and 21st. Flood damage was reported from the Midlands.

On the 23rd a ridge of high pressure extended northwards from the Azores anticyclone, and from the 24th until the end of the month an anticyclone was situated to the west or north-west of the British Isles with a ridge extending to Greenland. Cool, mainly northerly winds persisted over the country throughout the period, with thundery showers chiefly in the east. Thunderstorms were heavy over the southern part of the country on the 27th as a trough, associated with a depression over France, moved westwards across southern England. In many districts rain was continuous, but mainly slight, on the 28th and 29th as frontal systems moved slowly south over the British Isles.

**Pressure and Wind** — Mean pressure was below the average except in southern England, the deviation at 9 hr ranging from -4.1 mb at Lerwick to +2.1 mb at Scilly. Surface winds were light, variable or easterly until the 4th, becoming mainly south-westerly until the 9th, veering to westerly on the 10th and to northerly on the 11th-13th. Thereafter, apart from a period of south-westerly winds on the 18th-21st, winds were mainly between west and north-west until the 23rd and then mainly northerly until the end of the month. Winds reached gale force in Scotland on 14 days mainly during the second half of the month, and in England and Wales on the 16th-21st, 23rd-25th, 30th and 31st (11 days). Gales were widespread in the north on the 16th and in the south on the 19th.

**Temperature** — Mean temperature was below the 1921-50 average, the deficit being 1.0°C in England and Wales, 0.3°C in Scotland and 0.6°C in Northern Ireland. A feature of the month was the persistent lowness of the daily maximum temperature, especially in south-east England. Air frost occurred locally on the 1st and 2nd and towards the end of the month.

**Extremes included:** (England and Wales) 21.1°C at Herne Bay on the 7th, -5.6°C at Santon Downham on the 1st; (Scotland) 21.1°C at Paisley on the 1st, -6.1°C at Glenmore Lodge on the 19th; (Northern Ireland) 20.0°C at Baronscourt Forest on the 2nd, -1.7°C at Pubble Forest on the 31st.

**Precipitation** — The general rainfall expressed as a percentage of the 1916-50 average was 104 over England and Wales, 98 over Scotland and 95 over Northern Ireland. Rainfall was less than 75 per cent of the average in widely scattered areas which included coastal districts of west and east Scotland and the Solway Firth, parts of the east Midlands and southern England and the eastern districts of Northern Ireland. There was more than 150 per cent of the average over parts of Dartmoor, South Wales, the Pennines, the East Riding of Yorkshire, the Grampians and the north-west Highlands, and more than 250 per cent of the average in parts of Ross-shire.

Thunder was heard locally in Scotland on 8 days and in England and Wales on the 3rd, 4th, 7th-12th, 21st and 23rd-28th (15 days).

Snow or sleet occurred at one place or another in Scotland on 19 days; in England and Wales it was reported at Writtle and High Mowthorpe on the 10th and 31st respectively.

**Sunshine** — The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the 1921-50 average was 89 over England and Wales, 97 over Scotland and 111 over Northern Ireland. Sunshine was generally below the average over eastern England but above the average in parts of the west.

**Fog** — In Scotland fog was reported on 18 days mainly during the cyclonic periods, in England and Wales it occurred on 11 days; it was fairly widespread on the 5th.

**Miscellaneous Phenomena** — The aurora was visible in Scotland on five nights.