

# Monthly Weather Report

## OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

M.O. 625

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

Volume 74 Number 5

Published by HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

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### May 1957—Generally dry, sunny in western districts

The weather during May was divided into three distinct phases. The first six days, which were dry and dominated by a large anticyclone to the west of Ireland, constituted a continuation of the settled spell during the latter part of April. Most of the month's rain fell during the second phase, an unsettled cyclonic period which extended from the 7th to the 20th. The last eleven days were again anticyclonic and dry.

At the beginning of the month the upper air flow over the Atlantic was dominated by a deep trough near the Canadian seaboard and a high in the eastern Atlantic. Weather over the British Isles during the first two or three days was warm and sunny; on the 2nd temperatures exceeded 70°F. in Western Scotland, and on the 3rd, although colder air had reached Scotland from the north, afternoon temperatures in the south of England rose well into the sixties and reached 70°F. locally on the south coast. With the spread of arctic air southward over the country the temperature at most places on the 4th was 10°F. lower than the previous day and with a temporary freshening of the northerly winds on the 5th snow showers in eastern England occurred as far south as the Channel coast on the 5th and 6th. The lowest temperatures of the month occurred around the 6th when there was widespread ground, and local air, frost. Winds backed toward south on the 7th as pressure fell over the British Isles and a blocking high over the Norwegian Sea moved away eastwards; milder air spread over the whole country from the Atlantic and fronts moved eastward into Ireland and western England bringing widespread rain and a marked change in the weather on the 7th and 8th. On the 9th a front became slow-moving giving heavy and prolonged rain in some districts, but in the extreme west weather was fine with more than 10 hr. of sunshine at some places. The following day extensive early morning fog persisted until mid-day in many parts of central and southern England, but an eastward extension of the deep upper trough off Canada resulted, on the 11th and 12th, in the intensification of the low latitude zonal flow across the Atlantic, and one centre of a large complex depression was swept into our south-west approaches and carried north-east over the country giving outbreaks of thundery rain and scattered thunderstorms. Pressure remained low to the west of Ireland during the next few days and there were further such outbreaks during this time especially on the 16th, which at many places was the wettest day of the month, when a small secondary depression, accompanied by strong winds and heavy showers, moved from the Irish Sea to the northern North Sea. On the 17th a depression formed off south-west England on a trailing cold front and continued to deepen as it moved up the Irish Sea and thence to north-east Scotland; rain was widespread, and was heavy in places near the centre of the depression, both Valley and Ronaldsway recording nearly an inch in 12 hr. As the depression moved away northward pressure over the British Isles rose to a higher level on the 19th than had been reached on any day since the 6th, and after the passage of a further rain-belt on the 20th, high pressure became established over the whole country and brought to an end the rather wet spell of the previous two weeks. For most of the remainder of the month the highest pressure was to the north or north-west of Scotland with easterly winds in the south, which were strong at times in the English Channel. By the 24th a deep upper trough had formed in central Atlantic with considerable meridional flow to the east and a weak blocking pattern in the region of the British Isles. The 26th and 27th were particularly sunny, with more than 14 hr. of sunshine at some places, and together with the 31st, were the warmest days of the month, but on the 28th dull weather reached Scotland and spread slowly south. During the last three days of the month a ridge of high pressure extended over the British Isles from an anticyclone centred near the Azores, and although there was a good deal of cloud in the east and Midlands the west of England had long sunny periods.

**Pressure and wind.** Pressure was everywhere above the average, the excess at 9 h. ranging from 2.5 mb. at Southampton and Aldergrove to

4.1 mb. at Stornoway. Surface winds were mainly from a northerly direction until the 6th and a southerly direction from 7th to 18th, becoming predominantly north-westerly on the 19th and 20th. Winds were south-easterly in the western part of the country on the 21st and 22nd, otherwise they were generally from between east and north-east from 21st until the end of the month. Gales occurred in Scotland locally on the 3rd, 5th and 19th, and in England and Wales on the 5th, 6th, 17th, 18th and 24th–27th; they were fairly widespread in the Midlands and south-east England on the 24th and in the west of England on the 18th when gusts of 54 kt. and 56 kt. were recorded at Fleetwood and Bidston Observatory respectively.

**Temperature.** Mean temperature was generally below the 1921–50 average, the deficit being 1.1°F. in England and Wales, 0.4°F. in Scotland and 0.4°F. in Northern Ireland. Lowest temperatures occurred on the 6th and 7th, on the former date 11°F. was recorded on the ground and 20°F. in the screen at Leadhills, and on the latter, screen temperature fell to 26°F. at Dyce, the lowest recorded there during May for 15 yr. The last week of the month was the warmest, in Scotland 70°F. was exceeded at several places on the 26th and 27th while in England temperature was highest on the 31st.

Extreme temperatures for the month included:—(England and Wales) 76°F. at Wakefield on the 31st, 23°F. at Lincoln and Moor House on the 6th and 7th respectively; (Scotland) 74°F. at Colonsay on the 27th, 19°F. at Kincairnie on the 7th; (Northern Ireland) 69°F. at Armagh on the 27th, 27°F. at Aldergrove on the 6th.

**Precipitation.** The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the 1881–1915 average was 83 over England and Wales, 74 over Scotland and 80 over Northern Ireland. Less than half the average occurred in Cambridgeshire and locally in adjacent counties, in parts of Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and in west and north-east Scotland. More than the average occurred locally in Wiltshire and Dorsetshire, in the southern part of Devonshire and Cornwall, in parts of west Wales, north-west England, south-west Scotland and the south-eastern part of Northern Ireland.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hr. were:—

8th 4.40 in. at Annalong (Belfast Waterworks), Co. Down, and 1.07 in. at Hartland Point, Devonshire.

17th 0.91 in. at Princetown, Devonshire.

18th 1.08 in. at Huntly, Aberdeenshire.

Thunderstorms occurred over a wide area in Scotland from 11th to 16th and were also recorded on the 4th and 17th. In England and Wales they were reported widely on the 11th and 12th, moderately widely on the 15th, 16th and 19th and also occurred on 8 other days between the 8th and 23rd.

Snow and sleet showers were frequent in Scotland from 3rd to 7th and occurred in eastern England and the Midlands on the 5th and 6th. On the 5th they were reported as far south as East Anglia and Thanet and the following day in the London area and at Hastings.

**Sunshine.** The general sunshine expressed as a percentage of the 1921–50 average was 110 over England and Wales, 107 over Scotland and 108 over Northern Ireland. The western part of the country was generally sunnier than the east; Tenby recorded 140 per cent. of its usual amount of sunshine for May.

**Fog.** Early morning fog was reported locally on 10 days in Scotland and 12 days in England and Wales. Fog was fairly extensive on the 10th and 11th when it persisted locally until about mid-day. Patches of sea and coast fog occurred in the extreme south-west from 17th to 20th.

**Miscellaneous Phenomena.** The aurora was visible on 13 nights in Scotland.