

Monthly Weather Report

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May 1947—Warm; frequent thunderstorms.

The weather of the month was unusually warm, particularly in England and Wales. It was dry in north Scotland and the eastern half of England and wet on the whole elsewhere; thunderstorms occurred frequently. Conditions were quieter than usual.

During the opening days pressure was high from the Azores to Scandinavia; meanwhile a depression over Denmark moved away east and another disturbance over the south of Spain moved first north and then north-west to the west of Ireland. Occasional rain or showers occurred and a gale was reported at times at one or two places on the 1st–4th. This period was mainly rather cool.

Subsequently high pressure became established over Scandinavia and west Russia and secondary depressions moved north over or near the British Isles from the neighbourhood of Portugal. Weather was unsettled and rather warm, with local thunderstorms. On the 12th a trough of low pressure over France moved north-west across England giving fairly heavy rain in the west. From the 14th–18th a complex low pressure area covered the north Atlantic, while troughs of low pressure moved slowly east over the British Isles causing rain or showers; thunderstorms occurred from the 14th–16th and were widespread on the 14th. From the 19th–21st a belt of high pressure extending from north-west of Spain across the British Isles to Scandinavia was associated with a spell of fair weather. The wedge moved slowly east and on the 22nd a shallow depression approached our south-west coasts and subsequently moved east along the western English Channel to northern France. Rain fell fairly generally on the 22nd and in the south-east on the 23rd and there were local thunderstorms. Subsequently complex depressions were situated on the Atlantic westward of Ireland while associated troughs moved slowly east over the British Isles: rather unsettled weather prevailed with occasional rain or showers.

On the 27th an anticyclone over the Bay of Biscay and France moving north-east to north-west Germany gave a fair day. Thereafter a shallow trough moved east towards Ireland and Portugal and later moved in over the British Isles. Temperature rose considerably and the closing days of the month were very warm with local thunderstorms, the latter occurring chiefly in the west and north.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure exceeded the average in the northern half of the country and was somewhat below the average in the south-west; the deviation from the average at 9h. ranged from +5.9 mb. at Lerwick to –1.9 mb. at the Scilly Isles. Winds from some easterly point were more frequent than usual and the total run of the wind was considerably below the average. Gales occurred locally from the 1st–4th and among the highest speeds registered in gusts were 60 m.p.h. at Lizard and Cranwell on the 2nd and 65 m.p.h. at Renfrew and 68 m.p.h. at Stornoway on the 3rd.

Temperature.—Mean temperature exceeded the average by 3.1°F. in England and Wales, 2.3°F. in Scotland and 2.2°F. in Northern Ireland. As far as can be estimated it was the warmest May over England and Wales as a whole since before 1901. At Southport and Sheffield the mean temperature was the highest for May since records were started in 1871 and 1883 respectively. The period 28th–31st

was exceptionally warm; temperature rose to 85°F. or above at numerous stations in England on each of the last three days. The first three or four days were cool and a relatively cool spell occurred in southern England during the week 18th–24th.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 90°F. in London (Camden Square) on the 31st, 32°F. at West Kirby on the 2nd and Santon Downham on the 17th; (Scotland) 81°F. at Wolfelee on the 29th, 27°F. at Dalwhinnie on the 3rd; (Northern Ireland) 75°F. at Lisburn on the 31st, 33°F. at Hillsborough on the 4th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915 was 103 over England and Wales, 124 over Scotland and 156 over Northern Ireland. Broadly speaking less than the average occurred over the north of Scotland and the eastern half of England and more than the average elsewhere. More than twice the average was received in parts of Angus and Fife, the extreme south-west of Scotland, locally on the west coast of Lancashire, in the neighbourhood of Bradford and Huddersfield and at Seaford, County Down. Less than 50 per cent. occurred over part of the mainland of north-west Scotland and in eastern England from north of Flamborough Head to north of the Thames Estuary and less than 25 per cent. in an area extending south-south-east from the Humber across the Fens and the neighbouring part of Norfolk. In Shetland and Orkney, where it was the driest May since 1919, the rainfall amounted to little more than 25 per cent. of the average. In some areas the percentages of the average were irregular owing to heavy local falls during thunderstorms.

Among heavy falls in 24 hours were:—

3rd 2.26 in. at Bridge of Dye (Kincardineshire.)
30th 2.86 in. at Rishworth Lodge (Yorkshire), 2.54 in. at Oakes, Huddersfield, and 2.41 in. at Skipton, Chelker Reservoir.

Thunderstorms occurred frequently; they were reported on 9 days at Dumfries, Bellingham and Wakefield. They occurred on the 1st–3rd, 5th–16th, 22nd–24th, and 28th–31st.

Snow or sleet occurred locally from the 1st–5th. Snow to a depth of 6–8 in. was reported on the Ballater Road.

Sunshine.—Except in England, E. and NE. and in Orkney and Shetland the duration of bright sunshine was, on the whole, generally below the average. In Orkney and Shetland it was the sunniest May for at least 25 years; at Lerwick no less than 106 hours were enjoyed during the first 11 days. The last week was very sunny over much of England, particularly the eastern districts and the Midlands. The mean daily duration in hours for the month ranged from more than 7 in the Shetlands and a coastal belt extending from Spurn Head to Worthing (8.2 at Gorleston) to less than 4 in a small central area in Scotland (see chart 4).

Fog.—Fog occurred at times chiefly from the 5th–7th, 11th–14th, 16th–18th, 22nd–26th and 29th–31st. It developed fairly frequently in coastal districts of east Scotland.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on two nights. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on 15 days.