

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE. To be purchased directly from H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses: YORK HOUSE, KINGSWAY, LONDON W.C.2; 13A CASTLE STREET, EDINBURGH 2; 39-41 KING STREET, MANCHESTER 2; 1 ST. ANDREW'S CRESCENT, CARDIFF; 80 CHICHESTER STREET, BELFAST; or through any bookseller.

VOL. 61. No. 5.

ISSUED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE METEOROLOGICAL COMMITTEE

Price 1s. 0d. net, Post-free 1s. 1d.

Annual Subscription, including
Annual Summary and Introduction,
15s. 0d. post-free.

MAY, 1944.—Large fluctuations of temperature; severe thunderstorms in England from 29th—31st.

The month was dry and sunny over much of England and dull and wet on the whole in Scotland.

During the opening days of the month a depression moved quickly east from south of Greenland to the south of Norway: meanwhile a trough of low pressure moved south-east over the British Isles. Rain fell in the west and north of the country and was very heavy in the west and north of Scotland on the 1st. In the rear of the depression polar air brought an appreciable fall of temperature. On the 4th and 5th a depression west of Scotland moved east-south-east to the Netherlands; almost general rain, heavy in places, occurred and local thunderstorms were reported. Gales were reported at some exposed stations on the 2nd, 3rd and 5th. A spell of fair weather which followed was associated with a ridge of high pressure which moved south-east over the British Isles between the 6th and 8th. On the 8th and 9th a trough of low pressure moved slowly south-east across our north-west districts and rain fell in the north-west and north. Meanwhile weather continued fair over most of England, but with cold nights. During the following days a ridge of high pressure lay over southern England while a depression moved east across Iceland: there was practically no rain from the 10th-12th and temperature was higher.

Subsequently an anticyclone to the westward of Ireland moved north-east and then north to a position south of Iceland where it remained until the 16th and then moved slowly westward: a period of cold weather ensued over the British Isles, with showers and bright periods. On the 16th and 17th a depression over the North Sea moved south-south-west and caused rain, which was rather heavy in England: on the 18th a weak trough moving westward over the North Sea was associated with heavy rain locally in east Scotland. On the 19th and 20th weak troughs moved slowly southward over the British Isles: rain fell in a belt across south Scotland, extreme north England and most of Ireland on the 19th. Thereafter the anticyclone south-west of Iceland moved south-south-east and there was practically no rain over the British Isles from the 20th-23rd but cool conditions persisted.

A change to a milder type occurred when an Atlantic depression approached Iceland from the south-west and remained almost stationary there: meanwhile troughs of low pressure moved east over the British Isles. Rain fell in Scotland, Ireland and the extreme north of England on the 24th and more general rain occurred on the 25th. On the 27th a feeble trough of low pressure over Ireland and north England moved north-east and on the 28th another feeble trough moved north over Scotland; some rain occurred in the west and north but fair, sunny weather prevailed over most of England. On the 29th and 30th a ridge of high pressure moved north over the British Isles and a shallow trough over France extended north. Very warm weather occurred from the 28th-30th and widespread thunderstorms, accompanied locally by heavy rain and hail, were reported in England between the 29th and 31st.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure exceeded the average, the excess at 7 h. ranging from 4.1 mb. at Sumburgh in the Shetland Isles to 7.4 mb. at Scilly. Except in the extreme north of Scotland the month was less windy than usual on the whole. Local gales occurred on the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 15th, 16th, 26th and 27th. Among the highest speeds registered in gusts were 62 m.p.h. at Scorton on the 2nd, 66 m.p.h. at St. Ann's Head on the 5th and 63 m.p.h. at Lerwick on the 16th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature for the month was not very different from the average (see Table I) but the month was notable for large fluctuations of temperature. Cold spells occurred from about the 4th-9th and 14th-23rd. Low screen minima were registered in Scotland from the 4th-6th and in England from the 7th-9th. Severe frost for the season was also experienced locally

at times during the second cold spell, for example, on the 15th, 19th, 21st and 22nd. These heavy frosts caused much damage to fruit and early vegetable crops in parts of England. The hot spell at the end of the month was exceptional for May: temperature approached 90°F. at numerous inland stations in the southern half of England on the 29th and slightly exceeded 90°F. locally in south-east England. The monthly range of temperature was very great in some parts; for example 67°F. at Milford, Surrey.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 91°F. at London (Camden Square and Regent's Park), Horsham and Tunbridge Wells on the 29th and at Long Sutton on the 30th, 22°F. at Santon Downham on the 8th; (Scotland) 80°F. at Dunoon (Benmore) on the 29th and at Ruthwell on the 29th and 30th, 22°F. at Dalwhinnie on the 22nd; (Northern Ireland) 78°F. at Lisburn on the 29th and 28°F. at Lisburn on the 6th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881-1915 was 63 over England and Wales, 123 over Scotland and 86 over Northern Ireland. More than the average rainfall occurred over most of Scotland but in the neighbourhood of the Firths of Tay and Forth, near the Solway Firth and in small areas around Nairn, Wolfelee, Ullapool and Stornoway there was rather less rain than usual. Over part of the Western Highlands more than twice the average was registered. In England and Wales more than the average was received over an area covering most of Lancashire and the borders of the adjacent counties of Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Cheshire and in the Snowdon area: locally within these areas more than 150 per cent. of the average was registered. More than the average occurred also locally in the extreme north-east and at a few isolated places elsewhere. Less than 25 per cent. of the average was reported at a number of places in south-east and south-west England and locally in Hereford and Monmouth. In Northern Ireland percentages ranged from 65 at Seaforde, County Down to 155 at Londonderry.

Thunder was reported locally at times, mainly on the 4th-5th, 13th-14th, 17th-18th, 22nd-27th and 29th-31st. Thunderstorms were widespread in England from the 29th-31st and were accompanied in some parts by very heavy rain and hail. Locally in Lancashire, Cheshire, North Derbyshire and West Yorkshire the floods were particularly severe.

Among the heaviest falls in 24 hours or less were:—

- 1st 4.50 in. at Kinlochquoich (Inverness-shire) and 3.46 in. at Ardgour.
- 29th 3.10 in. at Rhodes Wood Reservoir (Cheshire), of which 3.05 in. fell in 2 hours.
- 30th 2.85 in. at East Quantoxhead (Somerset) and 2.56 in. at St. Athan (Glamorgan).

In Scotland, snow or sleet showers fell widely during the cold spell in the first week and there were local falls again around the middle of the month.

Sunshine.—Sunshine was deficient in the northern half of the country, notably so in the north of Scotland. In the southern half of England, on the other hand, there was a substantial excess. (See Table I.) At Stornoway in the Northern Hebrides and at Nairn it was the dullest May in records going back to 1881 and September 1906 respectively.

Fog.—Fog developed locally at times, mainly on the 9th, 11th, 19th-20th and 26th-31st.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was seen from Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire, on the 13th. Solar haloes were noted at Oxford on 12 days. On the 29th hailstones $\frac{1}{2}$ in. to 1 in. in diameter damaged fruit near Sheffield and hailstones the size of marbles were observed at Bermondsey and on the 30th, stones approximately 1.2 in. in diameter fell at Leyland.