

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

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

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MAY, 1928: Relatively dry. Sunny and warm at commencement and end of month; intervening period cool and mainly dull in central and eastern Great Britain.

A prominent feature of the weather of May, 1928, was its relative dryness, rainfall amounts being decidedly below the normal except around the upper Moray Firth, East Anglia, south-east England and in the neighbourhood of Cork where they were about or above the normal. Warm sunny weather prevailed generally during the first week of the month, and at the end of the month, with cool northerly winds from the 7th to about the 22nd and much cloud in the eastern and central districts of Great Britain from the 11th to the 23rd.

During the first two days of the month, winds were easterly and the weather dull and cool in eastern districts, and mainly quiet and fair elsewhere with occasional light rain or showers and coastal fog. From the 3rd to the 6th the weather was generally fine and warm, day temperatures exceeding 70° F. in most districts on each of the four days 3rd to 6th, while over 13 hr. bright sunshine were reported from several stations (15.0 hr. at Deerness and 14.5 hr. at Lerwick on the 3rd and 13.9 hr. at Portsmouth and Calshot on the 6th). Thunderstorms occurred at many places in the south and south-west on the 3rd, 4th and 5th, and were associated in a few places with heavy rain.

Meanwhile, pressure had become high to the westwards and low to the eastwards of the British Isles, this distribution continuing unchanged in its main features from the 7th to the 22nd. Northerly winds prevailed and temperature on the whole was low, notably about the 9th and from the 16th to the 23rd, while severe ground frost occurred in inland districts from the 7th to the 10th and about the 19th. Good sunshine records continued to be experienced in several districts up to the 11th, including 13.4 hr. at Southend on the 7th, 14.8 hr. at Tiree on the 9th, 14.1 hr. at Aberystwyth on the 10th, and 13.8 hr. at Deal on the 11th. Precipitation, which so far had been light and scattered, occurred widely from the 14th to the 23rd, with heavy falls locally on the 17th, 18th and 19th. Thunder occurred in many places, especially in the south, from the 18th to the 21st.

With the development of a depression to the south-west of the British Isles about the 24th, light to moderate southerly winds gradually spread over the western districts, and by the 26th had extended to the whole of the British Isles. Temperature rose, and from the 27th to 30th day temperatures exceeding 70° F. were recorded in many parts of England, and on the 28th and 29th approached or slightly exceeded 80° F. in a few places in the south of England. Heavy rain occurred in Scotland, Ireland, and some western districts of England and Wales on the 26th, 27th and 28th. Good sunshine records were obtained in many districts on the 24th and 25th, in the south and east of England during the period 24th to 28th, in the west of Scotland and south-west of Ireland on the 29th, and widely on the 30th.

Meanwhile, a large anticyclone to the north of the British Isles was extending southwards and winds became easterly. The weather continued mainly fine with only slight precipitation, but on the 31st had become generally cooler.

Pressure and Winds.—The mean pressure for the month was relatively high to the north-west and low to the south-east of the British Isles. A few depressions passed across England and Wales from north to south, but in general the tracks of depressions which affected the weather of the month lay to the south and east of the British Isles; at stations in Scotland and Ireland monthly means of pressure were above the normal and at most stations in England and Wales below the normal. Winds were mostly between north and east and light to moderate in force. Strong winds occurred however in most districts on the 15th (when gale force was reached at some exposed stations in the west), 16th, 17th, 18th and in the south-east of England on the 30th.

The highest wind velocity recorded in a gust during the month was 59 miles per hour at Weaver Point during the afternoon of the 17th. The observer at Southport states that the duration of easterly winds has only twice been even slightly exceeded in May during 57 years, viz., in May, 1915 and 1917.

Temperature.—The mean temperature for the month was somewhat below the normal in the eastern districts of Great Britain and slightly above the normal in the western districts and in Ireland.

Temperature was moderate to fairly high during the first week and the last few days of the month and decidedly low around the 9th and the 23rd. Day temperatures of 70° F. and above were recorded in the south-east of England on the 3rd and 4th, and in several English districts on the 5th and 6th. As northerly winds spread over the British Isles, temperature fell to a low level about the 9th, day temperatures varying from about 45° F. to 55° F. (43° F. at Lerwick, 45° F.

at Tynemouth, 52° F. at Richmond, Kew Observatory), while night temperature fell below freezing point at many stations (29° F. at Leafeld and Renfrew during the night of 8th–9th and 24° F. at Eskdalemuir, 29° F. at Winchester and S. Farnborough during the night of 9th to 10th). Severe ground frost occurred in many places during the nights of the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th, a minimum temperature on the grass of 19° F. being recorded, at Renfrew on the morning of the 9th and at Eskdalemuir on the morning of the 10th, and one of 18° F. at Winchester on the morning of the 10th. Decidedly low day temperatures were recorded again on the 22nd and 23rd, the day maximum temperature of 47° F. at Richmond (Kew Observatory) on the 23rd being the lowest value recorded there for the last ten days of May since 1891. After the 24th a decided recovery in temperature took place and on the 28th and 29th temperatures in the neighbourhood of 80° F. occurred in a few places in the south of England.

The extreme temperatures for the month were:—(England and Wales) 81° F. at Camden Square on the 28th and at Over Court, near Bristol, on the 30th, and 24° F. at Chelmsford (Good Easter) on the 10th. (Scotland) 76° F. at Ardtornish on the 31st and 24° F. at Eskdalemuir on the 10th. (Ireland) 79° F. at Killarney on the 31st and 28° F. at Markree Castle on the 22nd.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the normal for the period 1881–1915 was 69; the values for the constituent countries were:—England and Wales 74, Scotland 66, Ireland 60.

In England and Wales rainfall totals approximated to or exceeded the normal in East Anglia, the south-east of England, the Channel Isles and parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire, monthly rainfall amounting to 185 per cent. of the normal at St. Leonards and to 276 per cent. of the normal at St. Heliers, Jersey. Elsewhere there was a deficiency which was most pronounced in central and western districts; thus the month's total at Birmingham amounted to only 22 per cent. of the normal, at Buxton to 23 per cent., at Rhayader to 27 per cent., and at Oxford to 31 per cent.

In Scotland rainfall was fully equal to the normal at some places around the upper Moray Firth, but in general was decidedly deficient. Considerable areas had only two-thirds or less of the normal; at Fort William the total for the month was only 21 per cent. of the normal and the lowest recorded in May for at least 40 years. Amounts were slight until the 12th and moderate in various districts until 20th or 21st, precipitation occurring generally on 18th and 19th. Thereafter dry conditions were interrupted only on 26th and 27th when rain was almost continuous in some districts and accounted for a large part of the months' total.

In Ireland monthly totals were decidedly below the normal except in the neighbourhood of Cork, where the month's rainfall was normal. Little rain occurred during the first half of the month, most of the month's rainfall being accounted for by heavy falls on the 17th, 26th and 27th.

Thunderstorms occurred locally in several districts on various dates.

Sunshine.—Sunshine aggregates were mostly below the normal except in Ireland and the west of Scotland, where they slightly exceeded the normal. Representative totals for Districts relative to the normal varied from 71 per cent. in the Midland Counties to 106 per cent. in Ireland N. There were some very sunny periods, particularly between the 3rd and the 11th, during the week ending 26th May and at the end of the month. In the west of Scotland the monthly aggregate of 249 hours at Tiree and of 218 hours at Oban contrasted with 124 hours at Aberdeen in the east. The observer at Totland Bay states that the sunshine amount recorded on 6th May, viz., 13.8, has been exceeded only once in 27 years so early in the year, viz., on 5th May, 1909, when 13.9 hours were recorded.

Fog.—Fog occurred in many districts during the first four or five days of the month and from the 25th to the 29th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—Halo phenomena were observed at several stations during the month. A solar halo was observed at Oxford with upper and lower contact arcs and at Stonyhurst with upper contact arc on the 8th. The observer at Stonyhurst reports having seen a solar halo on the 10th, with particularly vivid colours in its top portion. The Zodiacal Light was observed at Deerness on the 16th. Aurora was observed at Aberdeen on the 10th, at Gordon Castle on the 19th and as far south as Waterford on the 20th.