

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

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

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MAY, 1927: COOL IN THE NORTH; WARM AND SUNNY IN THE SOUTH. RELATIVELY DRY MOST DISTRICTS.

General.—Fine weather with moderate day temperatures prevailed generally on the first day of the month; from the 2nd to the 4th conditions were unsettled with much rain in the northern and western districts and widespread thunderstorms on the 4th. In the eastern and southern districts fairer, warmer weather prevailed and by the 7th had extended to the northern districts; day temperatures between 70°F. and 80°F. occurred in many parts, 80°F. being recorded at Mountmellick on the 7th and at Colmonell on the 8th. Thunderstorms occurred locally on several days and amongst the larger rainfall measurements were 66mm. (2.58 in.) at Aasleagh (Mayo) on the 1st and 31mm. (1.23 in.) at Edinburgh on the 4th.

On the 10th the wind temporarily became more northerly and a sharp fall in temperature ensued; thus at Sheffield the maximum temperature on the 9th was 69°F. and on the 10th did not exceed 48°F. Some sleet was experienced on the north-east coast on the morning of the 13th. A moderate recovery in temperature associated with south-westerly winds occurred about the 15th, while rain was fairly general from the 14th to the 16th.

A belt of high pressure subsequently extended across the British Isles giving for a few days fine sunny weather with temperature rising to nearly 70°F. in some cases, but there was a renewal of unsettled conditions, with rain locally, by the 20th. Heavy rain again occurred on the 23rd when 41mm. (1.61 in.) were measured at Ford (Argyllshire) and 38mm. (1.50 in.) at Dungeon Ghyll (Westmorland) on the 23rd. After this the weather was mainly fair until the end of the month, with local showers and cool northerly winds, a sharp brief fall in temperature occurring in most districts on the 27th or 28th. In the south temperature varied a good deal, some high maxima being experienced on a few days, e.g., 77°F. at London (Camden Square and Greenwich) on the 24th, 74°F. at Southampton on the 25th and 71°F. at London (Camden Square) and South Farnborough on the 30th.

The character of the month is illustrated by the following remarks taken from observer's notes:—Southport—Generally dry weather predominated during May with an unusual prevalence of easterly and north-westerly winds. Huddersfield (Oakes)—Cool and rather dry. Copdock—Brilliant weather with three or four warm days prevailed during the first week after which, though the month remained dry, there were many days which were dull and cold. Winds were light and largely from a northerly quarter. Littlehampton (Sussex)—The outstanding features of the weather of the month were the abundant sunshine and the low rainfall. Newport (Isle of Wight)—A very dry and fine month. Falmouth—May has had less rainfall only twice, 3.3mm. in 1876 and 0.5mm. in 1896. Cork—Light variable winds. Rainfall confined almost entirely to first half of month.

Pressure and Winds.—Pressure on the whole was relatively high over the British Isles, the mean monthly pressure being above the normal at all stations. Winds were mainly moderate to light, there being an almost complete absence of gales; only two stations amongst those equipped with anemographs recorded a gale, viz., Fleetwood and Southport on the 21st; during the gale the highest velocity attained by the wind in a gust was 51 mi/hr. at the former station and 50 mi/hr. at the latter station. There was a considerable frequency of winds between north-west and north-east.

Temperature.—May, on the whole, was cool in the northern districts and warm in the southern districts. The largest excess relative to the normal, viz., 2.1°F., occurred in the Channel Isles (mean temperature 55.1°F.) and the largest deficit, 2.5°F. in Scotland E. (mean temperature 45.7°F.). For the British Isles as a whole the mean temperature for the month was 50.7°F. and was 0.1°F. above the normal. The warmest days of the month occurred generally during the period May 4th to the 9th during which unusually high maximum temperatures were recorded. Low day temperatures occurred generally on the 10th and 11th and on the 27th or 28th. There were frequent occurrences of ground frost, the frost which occurred during the night of April 30th to May 1st

being notable for its unusual severity so late in the season; at Braemar the temperature in the screen during the night of April 30th to May 1st fell to 16°F. A minimum temperature of 14°F. on the grass was recorded at Greenwich and Eskdalemuir during the night of April 30th to May 1st.

The extreme temperatures for the month were:—(England and Wales) 79°F. at Wye on the 4th, 79°F. at Colwyn Bay, 79°F. at Aberystwyth and 79°F. at Killerton on the 7th, 21°F. at Houghall on the 1st. (Scotland) 80°F. at Colmonell on the 8th, 16°F. at Braemar on the 1st. (Ireland) 80°F. at Mountmellick on the 7th, 26°F. at Dublin (Glasnevin) on the 1st.

Precipitation.—May was relatively dry over the British Isles regarded as a whole. In all districts of England and Wales and Ireland monthly totals were much below the normal, the deficiency being most pronounced in some eastern and south-western districts of England; at Plymouth Hoe rain of measurable amount fell on 8 days during May, the total for the month amounting to only 19 per cent. of the normal. There were only five days with precipitation amounting to 0.2mm. or more at Portland Bill, Exmouth and Cambridge.

In Scotland areas of moderate excess of precipitation occurred in the Spey Valley and in the Loch Fyne and Firth of Clyde region; in most other districts there was a well-defined deficiency. Some central and southern districts were practically rainless after the 16th. At Edinburgh more than half the month's total was accounted for by a fall of 31mm. (1.23 in.) on the 4th.

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 56, Scotland 100, Ireland 65.

Thunderstorms occurred locally on various dates, those which occurred on the 4th affecting a very large area of the country and in some parts the lightning and heavy rain which accompanied the storm were responsible for damage to buildings and to farm and garden crops. The observer at Keswick reported the occurrence of a thunderstorm there on the 7th which he states was very violent between 18h. 30m. and 19h. 30m. with almost continuous thunder and lightning but only slight rain.

Some snow or sleet occurred at a few stations. Melting of the snow which had accumulated in the hills at the end of April and the rains of the early days of May caused flooding of the Perthshire rivers.

Sunshine.—Many bright periods occurred during the month notably in the east and south-east of England and in the west of Scotland, where sunshine aggregates exceeded the normal. In Scotland N. and E., England N.E., the Midland Counties and Ireland S. sunshine aggregates were below the normal; in the remaining districts they were about normal. The deviation of the mean daily duration of sunshine from the normal varied from +1.20 hr. in England S.E. (mean daily duration, 8.10 hr.) to -1.45 hr. in Scotland E. (mean daily duration, 4.31 hr.). More than 10 hours sunshine was recorded on 16 days at Lympne and Southend and on 15 days at Margate. At Aberdeen the month was the cloudiest May for at least forty years and its sunshine aggregate of 105 hours was in striking contrast with 270 hours at Tiree and 237 hours at Turnberry.

Fog.—Coastal fog occurred on various dates, mostly between the 4th and 9th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—Halos of 22° were observed at several places on various dates. Parhelia were observed at Armagh and Oxford on the 19th. Aurora was observed at Edinburgh on the 4th and 5th, at Gordon Castle on the 9th, at Baltasound on the 1st and 8th and at Tenbury on the 19th. At Lerwick a diffuse auroral glow was observed on the 3rd and a bright auroral glow on the night of the 5th to 6th.