

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

MAY**1973**

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Mostly wet and rather dull

Active depressions or troughs of low pressure frequently crossed the British Isles. Around mid-month there was a short anticyclonic spell but the few high-pressure systems which affected the country at other times were rather weak.

Weather

Except for one or two dry days around mid-month and during the last week, most districts had frequent showers or longer periods of rain and these were often heavy and thundery. Hail was reported occasionally and snow or sleet (snow mixed with rain or drizzle) fell on high ground in the north and north-west on a few days. Fog occurred frequently in many areas during the last ten days.

Wind

Winds were often fresh or strong until the 20th and although there were gales at times their frequency was generally near or below average except in a few coastal areas in the west and north. Throughout the rest of the month winds were mostly light or moderate. On the 4th during southerly gales in Wales and south-west England gusts of 55 kt or more were reported from a number of coastal stations. On the 10th when westerly gales were widespread in Northern Ireland and the northern half of Great Britain a gust of 65 kt occurred at Belfast Harbour. Strong to gale force easterly winds affected many areas of England and Wales on the 17th and at Great Dun Fell (Westmorland) an hourly mean wind-speed of 57 kt and a gust of 72 kt were recorded.

Temperature

Mean monthly temperatures ranged from about 0.7 deg C above to 0.7 deg C below average except in a few areas in Scotland where they were between 0.9 and 1.3 deg C below average. The first half of the month was mostly cool but during the second half temperatures were usually above average except in some coastal areas in the east and north. Some of the higher temperatures of the month were measured at inland stations during the last week. At Hampstead (Greater London) the temperature reached 25.8°C on the 27th. Most of the occurrences of night frost were reported from Scotland during the first three weeks. On the 1st the temperature fell to -7.6°C at Carnwath (Lanarkshire), the lowest May temperature there since records began in 1952.

Rainfall

It was wetter than average almost everywhere and in parts of northern Scotland, south-eastern Scotland and eastern England rainfall exceeded twice the average. Lochton

(Berwickshire) had its wettest May since 1945. In contrast a few scattered areas had less rain than usual and among these was a section of the eastern coast of Scotland where only about half the average amount of rain was recorded. Showers or outbreaks of rain occurred frequently and were often heavy. Hail and thunder were reported at times and occasional snow or sleet fell on high ground in the north and north-west during the first fortnight. Short drier spells interrupted this régime around mid-month and early in the last week. There were a number of press reports of flooding following intense falls of rain and of injury and damage caused by lightning. On the 3rd, rooms in both Houses of Parliament were flooded for a time. On the 28th a policeman was slightly injured when the motor-cycle he was riding along the Andover by-pass (Hampshire) was struck by lightning. The following are some of the heavier falls recorded in a 24-hour period beginning at 09 GMT: on the 3rd, 66.0 mm at Pubble Forest (Co Fermanagh), on the 9th, 76.2 mm at Honister Pass (Cumberland), on the 12th, 68.4 mm at Eredine (Argyllshire) and on the 21st, 52.1 mm at Woburn (Bedfordshire).

Snow

Snow or sleet showers occurred on a few days during the first two weeks mostly over the mountains of Northern Ireland, Scotland and northern England. Snowfall was usually slight but on the 1st in north-east Scotland undrifted depths of 4 to 8 cm were measured at lower levels and 15 to 23 cm of snow accumulated in places at higher altitudes. Although the snow did not lie

for long on lower ground a few of the higher peaks in the Grampians and the North-West Highlands retained continuous snow cover throughout the month.

Sunshine

In Northern Ireland, south-east England and parts of Wales and Scotland sunshine totals were about 60 to 80 per cent of average and at Dunbar (East Lothian) it was the dullest May since 1933. Elsewhere sunshine totals were between 80 and 100 per cent of average except in small areas of north-east England and the Midlands where the average was just exceeded. Many places had some sunny days but the only sustained spell of sunny weather occurred between the 14th and 17th mostly in central and northern districts of Great Britain.

Fog

During the first three weeks patches of overnight fog developed infrequently and were confined almost entirely to the Midlands, eastern and southern England but after the 20th they occurred more often and were more widespread. During the last 10 days hill fog was also reported at times and sea fog encroached on the Channel and North Sea coasts. Sea fog was particularly frequent and persistent on the coasts of eastern and north-eastern Scotland, Orkney and Shetland, and Irish Sea coasts were also affected on occasion.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

The aurora was reported by observers in Scotland on 2 nights.

Table 1 District values**May 1973**

District	air temperature °C					mean 30-cm earth temp °C	rain- days	rainfall	sun- shine
	Highest	Lowest	max.	min.	mean				
	Max. †	Min. †	difference from average						
0 Scotland N	21.0	—3.0	—0.4	—0.7	—0.5	—	+2	140	85
1 Scotland E	21.4	0.0	—0.6	+1.0	—0.3	—	+3	125	80
2 England N E	22.5	—2.5	—0.5	+0.3	—0.2	—0.1	+4	132	96
3 England E	22.9	0.0	—0.1	+0.8	+0.4	—0.1	+4	151	98
4 Midland Counties	23.4	—0.3	—0.4	+0.7	+0.1	+0.2	+3	131	97
5 England S E	24.5	—0.9	—0.7	+0.6	0.0	—0.3	+6	143	85
6 Scotland W	22.7	—3.6	—1.2	—0.1	—0.7	—0.7	+3	106	75
7 Eng N W & Wales N	23.3	—0.8	—0.2	+0.7	+0.3	—0.5	+4	114	83
8 Eng S W & Wales S	23.1	—1.5	—0.9	+0.5	—0.1	—0.5	+3	144	77
N Ireland	19.9	—2.5	—0.8	—0.1	—0.4	—	+2	113	69
Scotland	22.7	—3.6	—0.7	—0.2	—0.5	—	+3	123	80
England & Wales	24.5	—2.5	—0.5	+0.5	+0.1	—	+4	134	89

† Highest max. and lowest min. of the District Value Stations