

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

MAY

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Cool at first, then dry, sunny and warm. Thundery finish.

The month began with a depression to the north of Scotland and an anticyclone to the south-west of the British Isles giving a north-westerly airstream. A warm front crossed Scotland and Northern Ireland on the 3rd and the cold front crossed all areas during the 4th, clearing Kent the following afternoon. A further warm front crossed Scotland and Northern Ireland overnight on the 5th/6th before moving away over the North Sea, while a ridge extended north-eastwards to cover the British Isles. Further fronts crossed all areas during the 7th, clearing south-east England early on the 8th. On the 9th a shallow depression moved quickly across the British Isles, leaving all areas in a slack gradient by the 10th. Fronts moved over western areas of the United Kingdom on the 11th. The warm front cleared eastern England during the morning of the 12th, while the cold front trailed back across northern England and Scotland before moving away northwards early on the 13th, finally leaving all parts in a south-easterly airstream. A weak front crossed all areas during the 14th, becoming slow moving over the English Channel and the North Sea on the 15th, while pressure rose over most of the United Kingdom. Pressure remained high over the country for the next few days, but during the 20th, as the high drifted slowly away eastwards, a weak cold front crossed Scotland, returning as a warm front on the following day. During the 22nd a ridge extended southwards to all parts of the United Kingdom. On the 23rd low pressure to the south of the British Isles moved slowly northwards, bringing unstable air to southern areas during the evening, which extended as far north as southern and western Scotland late on the 25th before dying out, as a further ridge built southwards from the Scandinavian anticyclone. Low pressure to the south of Great Britain moved northwards on the 27th, bringing further instability to many parts of southern and eastern England, Wales and parts of the Midlands on the 28th. Pressure remained low over the United Kingdom for the rest of the month.

Weather

May was changeable with some rain or showers, wintry at first in the north, and sometimes with hail and thunder. The frequency of thunder during the month (13 days) was greatly in excess of the two or three days of an average May. Thunder occurred somewhere in the United Kingdom on most days between the 8th and 15th and became widespread over the last few days of the month. Severe thunderstorms occurred in many parts of Wales on 29th, with widespread lightning damage.

Wind

Winds were strong with gusts exceeding 50 kn over the Western Isles on the 1st, and over Shetland and Orkney on the 7th. Several places reported gusts to over 50 kn as far south as the Midlands on the 8th, and over southern England and Wales on the 9th. Widespread gusts in excess of 50 kn occurred over northern Scotland on the 15th, with one to 60 kn at Duirinish, Highland Region. Gusts exceeded 50 kn in west Cornwall on the 16th and 17th. Directions were mainly westerly or south-westerly for the first half of the month, then easterly or north-easterly for the rest of the month.

Temperature

Mean monthly temperatures were above normal over most areas of the United Kingdom, ranging from 3.1 °C above normal at Heathrow Airport to 1.1 °C above normal at Leuchars, Fife Region.

May began as a cool month everywhere, remaining cool in most areas apart from the 6th and 7th, when temperatures reached 20 °C over a large area of the Midlands, East Anglia and southern and south-east England. During the next few days there was widespread frost in Scotland. Temperatures exceeded 20 °C over most parts on the 13th, reaching 28.9 °C at Edinburgh on the 14th. Temperatures remained high for the rest of the month and the provisional Central England Temperature of 14.1 °C suggests that it was the warmest May since 1833. The highest temperature during the month was 29.5 °C at Barbourne, Hereford and Worcester on the 20th whilst the lowest was -4.0 °C at Kindrogan, Tayside Region on the 10th.

Rainfall

Monthly totals were generally below normal, although the 9th was a rather wet day, especially in East Anglia and the East Midlands, and the period from the 28th to 30th produced widespread very heavy rain. Some places experienced their normal monthly total in this period. Amounts ranged from 198% of average at Heathrow Airport to only 16% of average at Tynemouth.

Heavy rain on the 11th gave a fall of 71 mm at Machynlleth, Powys. Observers reported falls of more than 70 mm at Gayton, Northamptonshire and Chorleywood, Hertfordshire in 2 hours 10 minutes and 2 hours, respectively, on the 29th. Among other heavy falls during May (all on 29th) were 73 mm at Grendon Underwood, Buckinghamshire, 70 mm at Northolt, Greater London, 62 mm at Heathrow Airport and 45 mm at Wattisham, Suffolk.

Snow

Snow was reported lying on the Pennines on the 7th and sleet was reported at Fair Isle and Kirkwall.

On the 8th there was widespread sleet and snow as far south as the north Midlands, and on the 9th and 10th scattered sleet and snow showers occurred over Scotland.

Sunshine

Monthly sunshine amounts were generally above average, ranging from 166% of average at Aviemore, Highland Region to 110% of average at Abbotsinch, Strathclyde Region. The most sunshine in a day was 15.4 hours at Stonehaven, Grampian Region on the 17th and the highest monthly sunshine total was 303 hours at Bognor Regis, West Sussex.

Fog

On the 4th patchy fog formed over southern counties of England. Fog patches occurred over south-east England on the 6th, over South Wales and south-west England on the 7th, and in eastern areas on the 11th. Further patches formed over Scotland and south-west England on the 20th, over parts of northern and central England on the 22nd, over the Midlands and south-east England on the 25th, over eastern Scotland and north-east England on the 26th and 27th, and over southern England on the 31st. Patches occurred on the south coast on the 12th, southern England and South Wales on the 13th, persisting in some places until midday. Extensive fog occurred on western coasts on the 20th, and patches formed over north-east England and eastern Scotland on the 21st. Fog affected many eastern parts of England and Scotland on the 23rd, and the northern Isles and east-coastal areas, with patchy coastal fog over England and Wales on the 30th and 31st. Hill fog occurred in western areas on the 6th, in eastern areas on the 11th, in central and northern areas on the 17th, and in parts of eastern England on the 18th and 19th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

None reported.

Table 1 District values

District	Air temperature °C					Mean 30 cm soil temp °C	Rain- days	Rainfall	Sun- shine
	Highest Max*	Lowest Min*	Max.	Min.	Mean				
			Difference from average					% of average	
0 Scotland N	28.1	-2.0	+2.5	+1.1	+1.8	+1.4	-2	102	136
1 Scotland E	29.0	-2.7	+2.0	+1.3	+1.6	+1.4	-3	69	131
2 England E & NE	27.3	-1.7	+2.2	+1.3	+1.8	+1.8	-4	56	126
3 East Anglia	27.0	0.5	+3.0	+1.7	+2.3	+1.8	-2	116	131
4 Midland Counties	28.1	-1.4	+3.2	+1.5	+2.4	+1.8	-3	100	135
5 England SE & Central S	27.3	2.0	+3.2	+1.9	+2.5	+1.7	-5	62	133
6 Scotland W	26.8	-1.8	+2.3	+1.6	+2.0	+1.3	-2	90	121
7 England NW & Wales N	28.4	-0.1	+2.7	+1.6	+2.1	+1.7	-1	89	129
8 England SW & Wales S	26.1	0.3	+2.5	+1.9	+2.2	+1.7	-4	52	122
N Ireland	23.3	-0.6	+1.6	+1.6	+1.6	+0.9	-2	66	107
Scotland	29.0	-2.7	+2.3	+1.3	+1.8	+1.4	-2	93	129
England & Wales	28.4	-1.7	+2.8	+1.7	+2.2	+1.7	-3	77	129

* Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations