

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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MAY, 1942.—Sunny and wet on the whole.

The weather of the month was distinguished by excessive sunshine, except locally in the south. The general rainfall was also above the average, notably so in south-west England and south Wales.

Mainly anticyclonic conditions prevailed at first; during the opening days pressure was relatively high over the British Isles and mainly fair weather occurred apart from local rain in the extreme north of Scotland on the 4th and 5th. By the 6th the highest pressure lay over France and was moving away south-east, while a depression northward of Scotland moved east and an associated trough south of Iceland swung south: some rain fell in north Scotland and the extreme north of Ireland and strong winds, with a gale locally, were reported in Scotland but elsewhere weather continued fair with abundant sunshine. Exceptionally dry air was experienced at this time in England; at 16h. on the 6th, the relative humidity at Nottingham was only 9 per cent. On the 7th the trough of low pressure over southern Scotland moved south-west causing rain in west and south Ireland and very slight rain locally in north-east England. In the rear of the trough an anticyclone south of Iceland extended south-east and became almost stationary. Meanwhile, on the 9th, a depression approached our south-west coasts and was associated with considerable rain at the mouth of the English Channel. This depression and an associated trough over northern France moved slightly northward during the next few days; rain fell at most places in England and Ireland on the 10th and there was scattered rain in the same two countries on the 11th; local thunderstorms occurred on the 10th and 11th. Subsequently a deeper depression off our south-west coasts moved somewhat east-north-east and then south-east; almost general rain was experienced in the southern half of England and south Ireland on the 12th and slight local rain in southern England on the 13th. On the 14th a ridge of high pressure moved eastward over the British Isles giving a fair day in most districts but further rain later in Ireland and extreme south-west England was associated with a depression approaching from the Atlantic. Meanwhile over much of Scotland the dry weather of the latter part of April persisted until after May 14th.

The latter half of the month was unsettled with frequent rain and local thunderstorms on almost every day. From the 15th-18th an Atlantic depression moved slowly north-east to a position off north-west Ireland and filled up; on the 15th an associated trough moved north-east over the British Isles and on the 16th-18th an active secondary moved quickly north-east from the Azores region to Scotland. General rain, heavy locally, occurred on the 15th, 17th and 18th and scattered showers on the 16th. Between the 19th and 21st relatively high pressure moved over the country from the Bay of Biscay to the North Sea; a short spell of less unsettled weather occurred with some good sunshine records, but there was scattered rain and a few local thunderstorms. There followed a spell of very unsettled conditions; on the 23rd a depression off the west of Ireland moved quickly north-north-east and on the 25th a new deep depression off north-west Ireland moved north-east; rainfall was general and heavy locally and local gales were reported on the 25th and 26th. From the 27th-30th a deep depression off north Ireland moved slowly east and then north-east and became less deep and on the 31st a wedge of high pressure moved in over the British Isles. Gales occurred in the south-west on the 28th. Rain occurred at times from the 27th-29th and there was scattered rain on the 30th and 31st. Sunshine records were fairly good on the whole and there were local thunderstorms on each day.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure was below the average, the deviation at 7h. ranging from approximately -1.3 mb. at Lympne and -1.5 mb. at Yarmouth to -3.8 mb. at Renfrew. Local gales

occurred on the 5th-7th, 10th, 11th, 17th and 25th-29th. Among the highest speeds recorded in gusts were 83 m.p.h. at St. Mary's, Scilly and 69 m.p.h. at Pendennis Castle on the 27th, and 78 m.p.h. at the Lizard, 69 m.p.h. at St. Anne's Head and 68 m.p.h. at Larkhill on the 28th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature was not very different from the average, the deviation for the districts ranging from 0°F. in Scotland, N. and England, NW. to -1.3°F. in England, SE. The daily range of temperature was appreciably greater than the average in some parts; for example, over Scotland as a whole the range was 2.1°F. above the average. The highest day temperatures occurred in Scotland from the 1st-4th and 14th-17th and in England on the 6th and 7th. Low minimum temperatures were registered at times during the first ten days; particularly the 1st-4th and 8th-9th. A grass minimum temperature of 12°F. was registered at Balmoral on the 9th.

The extremes for the month were (England and Wales) 77°F. at Farnham on the 6th and at Bromley and Canterbury on the 7th, 21°F. at Castleton on the 9th; (Scotland) 71°F. at Liberton on the 15th, 20°F. at Braemar on the 8th and 9th; (Northern Ireland) 70°F. at Garvagh, Donaghadee and Armagh on the 6th, 29°F. at Garvagh on the 1st and 4th and at Aldergrove on the 4th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881-1915 was 178 over England and Wales, 111 over Scotland and 148 over Northern Ireland. In Scotland rainfall was below the average northward of the Caledonian canal and in some small coastal areas elsewhere; more than 150 per cent. of the average occurred over parts of a central area extending from the Dornoch Firth to Dumfriesshire and more than 175 per cent. in a small area stretching from north-east Perthshire to the Firth of Tay. In England and Wales less than 75 per cent. was received over most of Durham and the neighbouring part of Northumberland as well as that part of East Anglia in the neighbourhood of Yarmouth and Lowestoft increasing to more than 300 per cent. locally in south Devon and south Cornwall; at Falmouth it was the wettest May in a record back to 1871. In Northern Ireland the excess was general, percentages ranging from 131 at Omagh and Armagh to 200 at Seaford. The dry weather which began over a large part of the country on April 10th continued in many places in England until May 9th and over much of Scotland until May 14th.

Daily falls of 1 inch or more were reported in the extreme north of Scotland on the 5th, in south-west England from the 10th-12th and on most days from the 15th onwards, particularly in the western half of England and Wales. Falls exceeding 2 inches were recorded in south Wales on the 17th.

Sunshine.—On the whole sunshine appreciably exceeded the average: in Scotland, the excess was very marked except in the Shetlands where the duration was below the average. In parts of southern and eastern England there was a deficiency. The mean daily duration ranged from slightly more than 9 hours at Tiree, in the Hebrides, to less than 6 hours over most of Devon and Cornwall, a small area in Yorkshire, locally on the north-east coast of England, at Banff and the Orkneys and to less than 5 hours in the Shetlands.

Fog.—Local fog (chiefly morning) occurred at times mainly on the 1st, 4th-5th, 11th, 14th-23rd. Fog was fairly persistent locally on the south-west coasts on the 15th, 18th, and 19th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed locally in Scotland on the 6th and 11th. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on 13 days. In a severe hailstorm at Norwich on the 30th hailstones were nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter.