

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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MAY, 1939.—Dry; warm and sunny 23rd - 31st.

The weather of May was markedly dry and the last nine days were warm and unusually sunny in most parts.

During the early days of the month an anticyclone was situated northward of the British Isles while pressure was relatively low over France and Germany. Cool weather prevailed generally and rain was widespread in southern England on the 1st; good sunshine records were obtained locally in the north and west on the 1st and 2nd. On the 4th a depression on the Atlantic spread eastward and from the 5th-7th an associated trough of low pressure extending to the Bay of Biscay moved slowly east; rain fell in western districts on the 4th and in most districts on the 5th, while local showers, accompanied in some instances by thunder, occurred on the 6th and 7th. Anticyclones, situated to the south-west and north-east of the British Isles, maintained fair weather in many parts from the 8th-10th, though feeble troughs of low pressure moving north-east over the country caused occasional rain, chiefly in the north and west, on the 8th and 9th. By the 11th, the highest pressure was centred east of Iceland and during the following days the anticyclone moved southward to the west of Ireland; a spell of cool, northerly winds ensued. On the 13th a trough of low pressure moved south-east across Scotland, from the 14th-16th depressions moved south-east over the North Sea and on the 17th a disturbance over Holland drifted south-west; rain fell at times and was heavy locally, particularly on the 15th and 16th. For a while pressure was very uniform over the British Isles and cool, somewhat variable, weather prevailed. From the 21st-23rd, pressure was low south-west of Iceland and shallow troughs crossed the British Isles.

Subsequently, the anticyclone off our south-west coasts spread north-east and anticyclonic conditions, with warm and mainly sunny weather persisted until the end of the month; it was less warm in east and south-east England owing to cool northerly or north-easterly winds.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure exceeded the average, the excess being least in the south-east; the deviation at 7h. ranged from +2.2 mb. at Kew Observatory to +5.8 mb. at Malin Head. Gales were infrequent but occurred locally on a few occasions; they were reported in south Scotland and north-east England on the night of the 16th-17th and on the west coast of Scotland on the 23rd and 26th. A gale was reported at isolated stations on one or two other days. Among the highest speeds recorded in gusts were 61 m.p.h. at Eskdalemuir on the 16th, 55 m.p.h. at South Shields and 54 m.p.h. at Manchester (Barton) on the 17th and 54 m.p.h. at Stornoway on the 23rd.

Temperature.—Broadly speaking, mean temperature exceeded the average except in east and south-east England, the excess being greatest in Scotland. The deviation from the average for the districts ranged from -1.3°F. in England, E. to +1.9°F. in Scotland, N. and Scotland E.

The opening days were cool and it was cool again in most parts from the 12th-20th. Warm spells occurred from the 7th-11th and from the 22nd-31st. The last few days were particularly warm in the west and north, but cool northerly or north-easterly winds brought lower temperatures to exposed places in east and south-east England. An unusual feature was that the highest temperature of the month was recorded in Scotland.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 79°F. at Poole on the 27th, 24°F. at Thetford on the 4th; (Scotland) 81°F. at Logie Coldstone on the 30th, 26°F. at Logie Coldstone and Glenlee on the 3rd; (Ireland) 78°F. at Markree Castle on the 31st and 27°F. at Phoenix Park, Dublin, on the 3rd.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881-1915 was 52, the values for the constituent countries being England and Wales 56, Scotland 44 and Ireland 49.

The deficiency was almost general, an excess being practically confined to parts of east and south-east England. Locally in Cumberland the deficiency was exceptional; at Braystones House, Cumberland, the total was the lowest for May in 76 years. The latter part of the month was particularly dry; at a large number of places in east and south-east England and the Midlands there was no measurable rain after the 17th.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hours were:—

1st 1.38 in. at Farringdon (Berkshire).

4th 1.34 in. at Kenmare (Co. Kerry) and 1.31 in. at Gruline (Mull).

15th 1.79 in. at Goudhurst (Kent).

16th 1.70 in. at Castleton, 1.71 in. at Kildale Hall (Yorkshire) and 1.40 in. at Bridlington.

Local thunderstorms occurred at times mainly from the 6th-8th, 14th-16th and 21st. A man was killed by lightning during the storm in Edinburgh on the 7th.

Sunshine.—Broadly speaking sunshine exceeded the average, the percentage for districts 1-10 being 106. The percentages for the various districts ranged from 92 in Scotland, N. and England, E. to 119 in Ireland, S. The week ending the 20th was generally dull, while the last ten days were sunny in most districts, the total duration for the last four days being especially large.

Fog.—Fog occurred fairly frequently, chiefly on the 3rd, 5th-11th, 13th-14th, 18th, 22nd-24th, and between the 26th and 31st.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed locally in Scotland on the 10th and 25th. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on seven days.