

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

MAY

1977

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Cool and changeable until mid-month, then mainly warm and sunny.

A large area of low pressure covered most of western Europe during the first eight days and associated depressions moved across the British Isles from time to time, often approaching from the east or south. A ridge of high pressure crossed southern England on the 9th, and this was quickly followed by a series of fronts and depressions which moved across all areas, mainly from south-west to north-east. A weak high cell developed over the British Isles on the 14th, and on the 15th a small depression moved from south-west Ireland to Brittany. A strong ridge to the north-west then moved south-eastwards and a belt of high pressure became established from Scandinavia, across the British Isles, to the Azores. Pressure remained high for much of the remainder of the month, although troughs of low pressure, associated with depressions over the Continent, occasionally affected southern England. A weak cold front reached northern Scotland on the 28th and moved southwards across all districts on the 29th. An anticyclone centred to the north of Britain then drifted to Scotland.

Weather

The first two weeks were rather cold, with frequent outbreaks of rain, thunderstorms, and scattered wintry showers. Winds occasionally reached gale force in southern England. Night frosts occurred at times and were also reported during the third week, although the days were becoming progressively warmer. Local gales occurred over the southern half of England and Wales. The second part of May was generally sunny and dry, although there were some thunderstorms. It became very warm in the last week, particularly in Scotland, but cooler weather spread to most districts towards the end of the month.

Wind

Winds were fresh or strong in exposed places during the first half of the month and occasionally reached gale force. Strong to gale force winds affected southern areas at times between the 17th and the 22nd, but during the last two weeks winds were often light over Scotland, Northern Ireland and the north of England. Directions were variable for much of the month, but were mostly east to north-east over England and Wales during the latter part of May. Sea-breezes developed around many coasts on the afternoon of the 28th.

Temperature

In spite of a warm spell in the second half of May, mean temperatures for the month were below normal almost everywhere, mostly by not more than 1 °C, but by 1.0 °C to 1.5 °C in parts of East Anglia and the Midlands. Mean temperatures were nearest to the average over parts of northern and north-eastern Scotland and along some western and southern coasts of England and Wales. The first half of the month was often rather cold, with frost at times, and there were some cold nights in the third week. Daytime temperatures began to rise, however, and Tummel Bridge (Tayside Region) had a diurnal range of 25 °C on the 22nd. Most areas, except along eastern coasts of England, enjoyed a warm spell until the 29th, when cooler weather spread to all districts. The highest temperatures for the month occurred in the north of Scotland, and on the 27th

Craigdarroch and Fort Augustus, both in the Highland Region, recorded maxima of 27.9 °C and 27.0 °C respectively: such high temperatures are extremely unusual anywhere in Scotland in May.

Rainfall (including melted snow)

Rainfall was above average over much of northern Scotland (except in Shetland), in parts of north-eastern England, in scattered places in East Anglia and along southern coasts of England, and in the Channel Islands. Monthly totals were below average elsewhere. Less than half the usual amount of rain for the month fell in a band across Scotland from Fife to the Inner Hebrides, in parts of north-west England and North Wales, and also in Northern Ireland, where only in 1975 has May been drier this century. Rainfall in the Isle of Man was also well below average. Outbreaks of rain occurred in most districts during the first half of the month, however, and there were thunderstorms and scattered hail showers. The last two weeks were mostly very dry, although southern districts had occasional rain, which was thundery at times.

Snow

Scattered falls of snow or sleet were occasionally reported during the first half of the month in northern areas, over high ground in Wales and on Dartmoor. In Scotland falls mostly occurred between the 12th and the 14th. Depths were minimal and the snow did not lie. Only the upper slopes of the higher Scottish mountains remained snow covered throughout May, and the snow receded during the latter part of the month.

Sunshine

Monthly sunshine totals were generally between 125 and 140 per cent of average over Wales and the west Midlands, in areas bordering the Irish Sea, and in south-west Scotland and Shetland. Totals exceeded 300 hours in the Isle of Man and in Anglesey, where Valley recorded 306.1 hours, making this the sunniest May in the area since records began in 1913. Values were mostly between 100 and 125 per cent of average elsewhere and were nearest to the normal in the Isles of Scilly, the Channel Islands and parts of south-east England. There were some sunny spells, mostly on western coasts, during the first two weeks, but the second half of the month was very sunny. Days of unbroken sunshine occurred frequently in many districts between the 18th and the 28th.

Fog

Overnight fog patches occasionally developed in inland areas, but soon cleared. Coastal fog occurred slightly more frequently, mainly affecting English Channel coasts between the 9th and the 11th and the coasts of northern Scotland and north-eastern England in the last week. Hill fog was also reported from time to time and as with fog on coasts was sometimes accompanied by precipitation.

Miscellaneous Phenomena

On the 11th there were several reports of ball lightning in the area between Rothesay, on the Isle of Bute, and Glasgow. Some structural damage occurred in the suburbs of the city. The aurora was not seen by observers in Scotland in May.

Table 1 District values

District	air temperature °C					mean 30-cm earth temp °C	rain-days	rainfall	sun-shine
	Highest Max *	Lowest Min. *	max.	min.	mean				
	difference from average								
0 Scotland N	26.5	-2.2	+0.2	-0.6	-0.2	-0.3	-5	95	118
1 Scotland E	24.6	-4.7	-0.5	-0.8	-0.6	0.0	-3	80	115
2 England E & NE	23.5	-1.3	-1.5	-0.4	-0.9	-0.1	-4	98	117
3 East Anglia	23.6	-1.5	-1.6	-0.5	-1.1	-0.7	-1	88	112
4 Midland Counties	24.9	-1.5	-1.0	-1.1	-1.1	-0.5	-3	75	121
5 England SE & Central S	24.3	-1.2	-1.0	-0.5	-0.8	-0.9	0	92	105
6 Scotland W	26.5	-4.7	+0.2	-1.2	-0.5	-0.2	-5	68	118
7 England NW & Wales N	24.6	-1.7	-0.1	-0.8	-0.5	-0.9	-4	56	133
8 England SW & Wales S	23.5	-0.6	-0.1	-0.8	-0.5	-0.1	-1	74	118
N Ireland	22.2	-1.9	-0.1	-1.6	-0.8	0.0	-8	42	124
Scotland	26.5	-4.7	0.0	-0.9	-0.4	-0.2	-4	81	117
England & Wales	24.9	-1.7	-0.9	-0.7	-0.8	-0.5	-2	81	118

*Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations.