

Monthly Weather Report

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

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May, 1949—Sunny; wet in the southern half of the country and in the extreme north-west

The weather of the month was sunny over most of the country; it was wet in the extreme north-west of the British Isles and over most of England and Wales south of a line from Morecambe to the Wash.

During the first three days a belt of high pressure extending from the Azores across the British Isles to south Scandinavia maintained fair weather generally; screen frost occurred at numerous places in England on the 1st. On the 4th a depression south-west of Iceland moved to the north of Scotland, while an associated trough moved south-east over the British Isles; rain occurred on the 4th and showers and local thunderstorms on the 5th. On the 6th a small depression west-north-west of Scotland moved rather quickly east-south-east causing fairly general rain, with some snow in the north of Scotland. Subsequently an anticyclone developed to the west of Ireland and later moved in over the British Isles, where it remained until the 12th; throughout this period fair weather prevailed with abundant sunshine in most districts but with local screen frost at times in the early morning.

A change to unsettled thundery conditions occurred on the 14th and thereafter unsettled weather prevailed for the most part until the end of the month. On the 15th a complex area of low pressure over central Europe and France extended over the British Isles causing widespread thunderstorms in England and Wales. On the 16th a depression approached south-west England from the west and subsequently moved north-east and then north to a position off the north of Scotland by the morning of the 19th; rain and local thunderstorms occurred on the 16th and 17th and scattered rain and thunder on the 18th and 19th. Subsequently a ridge of high pressure developed over the British Isles and moved slowly east; it was associated with a short fair spell, with good sunshine records in the west on the 20th, over most of Britain on the 21st and in eastern districts on the 22nd. Local thunderstorms occurred, however, in front of the ridge in eastern England on the 20th and a trough over western districts was associated with rain in that area on the 22nd. Unsettled weather was renewed generally on the 23rd, when a depression off west Scotland moved slowly east, while a small secondary depression moved rather quickly east-north-east across southern England to Denmark giving moderately heavy rainfall in south and east England on the night of the 23rd-24th. On the 25th a trough of low pressure off the west of Scotland associated with an almost stationary depression to the north of Scotland moved south-east and later east across England to the Netherlands causing considerable rainfall in England and Wales. On the 27th a depression off north-west Ireland moved irregularly north-north-east, while an associated trough moved east over England and Wales; heavy rain fell in Wales and western districts of England, amounting to 2 in. or more at numerous stations. During the closing days of the month an almost stationary depression was situated off the west of Scotland; showery weather prevailed, with rather widespread thunderstorms but long bright periods.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure for the month was not very different from the average, the deviation from the average at 9h. ranging from -2.5 mb. at Lerwick to $+0.6$ mb. at Portland Bill. The most widespread strong winds and local gales occurred on the 27th, when gusts of 57 knots and 51 knots respectively were registered at Stornoway and Pendennis Castle.

Temperature.—Mean temperature over the country as a whole was not very different from the average, though it somewhat exceeded the average at most places in Scotland and was below the average in east and south-east England. Screen frost occurred at numerous

places in England on the 1st, over a wider area in the British Isles between the 6th and 10th and locally in Scotland on the 20th and 27th. Warm days included the 10th-13th, 21st and 22nd.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 79°F . at Northwich, Cheshire, on the 13th, 25°F . at Thetford on the 1st; (Scotland) 75°F . at Fort William on the 22nd, 24°F . at Glenlivet on the 27th; (Northern Ireland) 72°F . at Armagh on the 11th and Garvagh on the 13th, 32°F . at Hillsborough on the 7th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881-1915 was 112 over England and Wales, 90 over Scotland and 90 over Northern Ireland. In Scotland more than the average occurred in a rather narrow belt extending from west Sutherland across Skye and then south down the mainland to Loch Fyne, as well as in smaller, scattered areas elsewhere. More than 150 per cent. was received in the northern tip of Skye. On the other hand less than 75 per cent. occurred in the south-west, the Border counties and a narrow strip on the east coast, while less than 50 per cent. was measured locally in the extreme south-west. In England and Wales more than the average occurred over most of the country south of a line from Morecambe to the Wash and more than 150 per cent. in scattered areas within this part of the country. Less than the average occurred, however, in the south-east from Bournemouth to Hastings and extending north to south London, at one or two places in East Anglia and locally in the west Midlands. Less than 50 per cent. of the average was received in parts of Northumberland and Durham and the Isle of Man. In Northern Ireland the percentage ranged from less than 75 in County Down to more than 125 around Londonderry and Omagh, County Tyrone.

Apart from some precipitation from the 4th-6th the first 12 days were very dry.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hours were:—

16th	1.07 in. at Cranfield.
17th	1.22 in. at a station in south Edinburgh.
20th	1.64 in. at Finningley, Yorkshire.
27th	2.93 in. at Machynlleth, Montgomery, 2.77 in. at Rushworth Lodge, Yorkshire, 2.69 in. at Hafod Fawr, Merioneth, 2.64 in. at Rochdale, 2.41 in. at Swansea Water Works, Breconshire, and 2.05 in. at Princetown.

Local thunderstorms occurred rather frequently mainly on the 5th, 13th-20th, 22nd, 25th, 26th and 28th-31st.

Sleet or snow showers were reported locally in Scotland on the 5th-7th and 28th-30th.

Sunshine.—Sunshine exceeded the average almost everywhere except locally in the north-west and north of Scotland and at some places in east and south-east England. The percentage for the districts ranged from 93 in Scotland, N. and 95 in England E. to 130 in England, S.W. and S. Wales. Broadly speaking the mean daily duration in hours ranged from less than four in the north of Skye to more than eight at most places on the west and south coasts of England and Wales, over the whole of Cornwall and much of Devon and to more than nine at the Scilly Isles, Falmouth and the south-east coast of the Isle of Wight (see chart 4).

Fog.—Fog, mainly at night and in the early morning, occurred locally at times, chiefly on the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 7th and 10th-22nd; it was rather widely reported on the 4th, 10th, 13th, 14th and 21st.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed from stations in Scotland on three nights. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on 10 days.