

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

Summary of observations compiled from returns of official stations and voluntary observers.

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May 1970 — *Drier than average in most areas*

Low pressure centred to the west of the British Isles during the first week transferred to the south of the country and a mainly southerly airflow at first became easterly during the second week. Except for a strong north-westerly airstream over all districts on the 21st, anticyclonic weather predominated in the south for the remainder of the month but weak troughs of low pressure often crossed northern districts.

Weather — Mainly changeable weather in northern areas led to a dull month but it was also warmer and, in most places, drier than average. Snow showers fell on mountain peaks in north Scotland on the 21st. Farther south, apart from an unsettled second week, the weather was mostly dry.

Wind — Except in a few exposed places in west Scotland and Northern Ireland the frequency of gales was about average. Excluding the more exposed areas gales, which were seldom widespread, occurred on 5 days in Scotland, on 2 days in Northern Ireland and on 1 day in England and in Wales. Gusts over 50 kt were reported in north Scotland on the 20th and 21st. The 21st was, in fact, very windy everywhere; gales occurred in north and east Scotland and also along the east coast of England and many gusts over 40 kt were reported over wide areas of the United Kingdom.

Temperature — In most parts of the country monthly mean temperature was 1-2 degC above average. The excess was slightly greater in a few places in Wales and the West Country but it was rather smaller over Scotland. Near the east coast of England and in Cornwall mean temperature was only just above average.

Inland areas were often warmer than average both by day and by night. Temperatures rose to over 20°C at times in Scotland during the first week and temperatures exceeded 25°C in a few places in England on the 5th. London Weather Centre had its warmest first week in May since comparable records began in 1940. Among the highest temperatures recorded during the month were the following: 26.1°C at Wisley (Surrey) and Oxford on the 5th; 24.4°C at Llandrinod Wells (Radnorshire) and 23.9°C at Banchory (Kincardineshire) on the 27th; 21.7°C at Murlough (Co. Down) on the 31st.

From the 7th to 17th easterly winds and sea fog kept day-time temperatures persistently low on the east coast of Britain, in sharp contrast to temperatures in other areas. During the last 10 days or so of the month there were some cold nights and slight ground frost occurred at times, mainly in southern England. Excluding upland stations, minima during the month included: -1.1°C at Trawscoed (Cardiganshire) on the 25th and Achentoul (Sutherland) on the 29th. -0.6°C at Kielder Castle (Northumberland) on the 13th; 1.4°C at Loughermore Forest (Co. Londonderry) on the 14th.

Rainfall — Most places had below average rainfall except in north-west Scotland where a small area in Ross and Cromarty had twice its average amount. However, rainfall over large parts of England, southern Scotland, Northern Ireland and west Wales was less than half the average amount and wide areas in the Midlands and parts of south-east Scotland and Co. Down recorded under a quarter of average rainfall. Rainfall was under 10 per cent of average in places in Lancashire and Lincolnshire.

In general it was the driest May since 1959 but some places recorded their lowest May rainfall for a considerably longer period. For example, it was the driest May at Stonyhurst (Lancashire) since 1895, at Seaforde (Co. Down) since 1896, at Bidston (Cheshire) since 1905 and at Foffany Reservoir (Co. Down) since records began in 1906. Monthly rainfall totals of less than 10 mm occurred in areas as widely separated as Co. Down, Pembrokeshire and the Essex coast, and at Bardney near Lincoln, only 3.0 mm were recorded during the month.

Much of the rainfall, such as it was, occurred in thundery outbreaks associated either with troughs of low pressure or heat thunderstorms and a number of intense local falls were recorded. Among these were the following, both in Oxfordshire: over 41 mm of rain in 2 hours at Heythrop College, near Chipping Norton, on the 11th and more than 28 mm of rain in 45 minutes at Cuxham on the 28th. There was very little rainfall in south-west England during the last fortnight.

Thunder occurred on about twice the average number of days for May in many areas. It was reported locally on 14 days in England, 12 days in Scotland, 10 days in Wales and 3 days in Northern Ireland. From the 5th to 17th thunder occurred every day somewhere in the country and damage to property and electric power installations was often reported. A number of people were injured during lightning strikes and on the 10th a boy was killed in Blackpool. Thunderstorms developed in southern and eastern England on the 28th and local flooding occurred in East Anglia.

Sunshine — Sunshine amounts were below average in Scotland and Northern Ireland and substantially so in some of these areas. In and around Glasgow it was the dulllest May since 1925. It was duller than average also in most of Wales and in parts of north-west and south-west England. On the other hand, large areas of England away from the coasts recorded above average amounts of sunshine but excesses were small. The first week was mainly sunny in much of England and Wales especially in the south; the total sunshine during the first seven days of the month meant the sunniest start to May at London Weather Centre since records commenced in 1929. Despite the dull month in the north, places in west Scotland had some sunny days during the period 9th to 15th. The last fortnight brought a good deal of sunshine at times to many southern districts of Britain.

Fog — Sea fog drifted over parts of south-west England during the first few days. Fog was persistent on most eastern coasts of England and Scotland from the 10th to 18th. Hill fog was extensive in many areas on the 10th and 11th, and on the 15th/16th very low cloud from the North Sea extended well inland overnight and covered the hills.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES, May 1970

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE °C					EARTH TEMP. °C		RAIN DAYS	RAIN-FALL	SUN-SHINE
	*Highest Max.	*Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 30 cm.	Mean 122 cm			
0 SCOTLAND, N.	21.1	0.7	+0.3	+0.8	+0.8	-0.3	-0.7	0	89	64
1 SCOTLAND, E.	22.2	2.2	+0.4	+1.1	+0.8	+0.2	-0.4	-2	61	72
2 ENGLAND,N.E.	24.4	2.8	+1.1	+0.9	+1.0	+0.8	+0.1	-5	27	100
3 ENGLAND, E.	23.9	3.3	+1.5	+1.3	+1.4	+0.5	-0.2	-4	46	101
4 MIDLANDS	26.1	1.7	+1.9	+1.5	+1.7	+1.2	+0.2	-6	35	111
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	23.0	1.4	+1.4	+1.1	+1.3	+0.4	0.0	-2	55	104
6 SCOTLAND, W.	20.4	0.2	-0.1	+1.3	+0.6	+0.1	-0.4	0	63	65
7 ENGLAND, N.W and N.Wales	26.1	2.2	+1.6	+1.6	+1.6	+0.3	-0.1	-4	25	95
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S.Wales	24.4	4.4	+1.0	+1.1	+1.1	+0.1	-0.2	-6	59	94
N.IRELAND	20.6	2.8	+1.0	+2.0	+1.4	--	--	-3	49	64
SCOTLAND	22.2	0.2	+0.2	+1.1	+0.7	--	--	-1	87	67
ENG. and WALES	26.1	1.4	+1.4	+1.3	+1.3	--	--	-5	42	101

*Highest Max. and Lowest Min. of the District Value Stations.