

# Monthly Weather Report

## OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

Volume 85 Number 5

Published by HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

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### May 1968 — Mostly cold and cloudy except during the last few days

Weather was generally cyclonic in character until the 15th but mainly anticyclonic thereafter apart from a cyclonic period on the 24th-27th.

During the first four days of the month a complex area of low pressure extended north-eastwards across the British Isles from the South-West Approaches to Scandinavia. (Weather was generally cold and unsettled with scattered thunderstorms. Rainfall was heavy at times, particularly in Scotland, but parts of southern England had 10 hours of sunshine each day.

On the 5th and 6th the main depression was over the northern North Sea, and the associated northerly airstream brought frequent thundery showers and thunderstorms to all parts of the United Kingdom. The 5th was the wettest day of the month in Scotland with rainfall exceeding 30 mm in many places. On the 7th and 8th there were snow showers with northerly winds over Scotland and parts of northern England, but over southern England heavy rain was recorded during the passage of a deep depression from the west of Ireland into the Bay of Biscay. The cold unsettled weather was maintained from the 9th until the 11th by a series of troughs and depressions moving eastwards across the country, but a ridge of high pressure subsequently crossed southern England and gave a fine sunny day on the 12th. The next day a warm moist airstream moving round the northern side of an anticyclone to the south and south-west of the British Isles brought rain and near normal temperatures to the southern half of England, although in Scotland temperatures remained below normal. Patches of sea fog formed off western coasts and in the English Channel, and this fog persisted for much of the 14th and 15th. Away from the coasts weather was mild in the south but continued rather cold in the north.

A ridge of high pressure extending southwards from an anticyclone near Iceland covered the western part of the British Isles from the 16th-18th. Western districts were generally dry and sunny, but northerly winds brought thundery showers and a return of cold weather to eastern districts. The 19th-23rd was a settled period as the anticyclone drifted eastwards from near Iceland to Scandinavia. Weather was mainly cloudy with a few scattered showers, except in the south-west where sunshine exceeded 14 hours on most days. Light northerly winds and temperatures well below average prevailed until the 22nd but on the 23rd winds backed to south-east and temperatures in most districts rose to about normal.

Unsettled weather returned on the 24th as a slow-moving frontal trough brought outbreaks of heavy thundery rain to south-west England, and these outbreaks continued on the 25th-27th as an intense depression off south-west England moved into the Bay of Biscay.

On the 28th a ridge of high pressure extended across the country from the South-West Approaches to Scandinavia, and the last few days of the month were generally sunny and warm with afternoon temperatures reaching 24°C locally on the 29th. Rain spread into Scotland and Northern Ireland on the 31st.

**Pressure and Wind** — Mean pressure was mainly below the 1931-60 average and rather uniform; at 0900 GMT the difference from this average ranged from +0.9 mb at Stornoway to -1.3 mb at Gorleston. Surface winds were predominantly from a northerly point during the first three weeks after which they were mainly south-easterly or variable. Gales were reported on three days in north and west Scotland and were severe on the 5th. Winds reached gale force almost daily from the 6th to the 13th off the south and west coasts of England and Wales. A gust of 59 kt was reported from Stornoway on the 5th and one of 56 kt from Portland Bill on the 10th.

**Temperature** — In spite of a warm spell during the last few days of the month, mean temperatures were everywhere below the average. In parts of eastern Scotland it was the coldest May of the century, and at Ross-on-Wye the coldest for 25 years.

Extremes included:— (England and Wales) 24.4°C at Southampton on the 28th and 29th, -5.6°C at Santon Downham on the 8th; (Scotland) 24.4°C at Kinlochewe on the 30th, -7.8°C at Cairngorm on the 8th; (Northern Ireland) 23.7°C at Strabane Convent on the 29th, -3.9°C at Loughermore Forest on the 4th.

**Rainfall** — In Scotland rainfall was above average except in the south-west and most western districts north of the Clyde. In England and Wales it was less than average in parts of Northumberland, Cumberland and south-west Wales, and also over much of Kent, East Anglia and Lincolnshire. In most other districts it exceeded the average and was 150 per cent of average in parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire and in Staffordshire.

Snow, or rain or drizzle and snow (sleet) fell on a few days, mainly during the first week, in Scotland and northern England, but it lay only over the higher ground.

Thunder was reported on 6 days in Scotland but was widespread only on the 4th. In England and Wales thunder was heard on 15 days, and thunderstorms were widespread on the 5th, 6th and 27th.

**Sunshine** — Sunshine amounts were below average almost everywhere, percentage of average ranging from 101 at Scilly, Southsea and Stornoway to 60 at Leuchars. It was the dullest May at Dumfries since records began in 1909.

**Fog** — Fog at 0900 GMT was reported from one place or another on 8 days in Scotland and on 13 days in England and Wales. Sea fog affected south and west coasts on the 14th and 15th and eastern coastal areas during the last week of the month.

**Miscellaneous Phenomena** — The aurora was visible in Scotland on 3 nights.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES, MAY, 1968

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE °C					EARTH TEMP. °C		RAIN DAYS	RAIN-FALL	SUNSHINE
	*Highest Max.	*Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 30 cm.	Mean 122 cm.			
	Difference from Average					% of Average				
0 SCOTLAND, N.	22.2	-3.3	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-0.5	-0.5	+1	118	89
1 SCOTLAND, E.	22.8	-1.7	-2.9	-1.5	-2.2	-1.0	-0.6	+2	207	73
2 ENGLAND, N.E.	21.1	-2.2	-2.1	-1.2	-1.6	-0.1	+0.2	+2	102	85
3 ENGLAND, E.	22.8	0.0	-1.7	-0.8	-1.3	-0.4	0.0	+3	95	78
4 MIDLANDS	22.8	-0.5	-2.1	-0.9	-1.4	-0.4	0.0	+4	120	75
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	24.4	-0.6	-1.6	-0.7	-1.1	-0.6	-0.1	+3	115	86
6 SCOTLAND, W.	22.3	-4.2	-2.4	-1.1	-1.8	-0.7	-0.5	0	117	79
7 ENGLAND, N.W. and N. Wales	22.6	-1.7	-2.0	-1.1	-1.5	-1.1	-0.5	+2	118	81
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S. Wales	23.9	-1.1	-1.7	-1.1	-1.4	-1.3	-0.5	+2	130	82
N. IRELAND	23.3	-2.0	-2.1	-1.7	-1.9	-	-	-1	108	84
SCOTLAND	22.8	-4.2	-2.4	-1.5	-1.9	-	-	+1	133	80
ENG. and WALES	24.4	-2.2	-1.9	-1.0	-1.4	-	-	+3	119	81

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