

# Monthly Weather Report

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

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### May, 1948—Changeable, with a notably fine spell around the middle of the month; unusually sunny.

The month was notably sunny; there were cool, unsettled spells at the beginning and from the 22nd onwards, but the intervening period was mainly warm.

On the opening days a shallow depression off the west of Ireland moved south-east to south-west England and then north-east to Denmark. Thunderstorms were rather widely reported in England and locally in Scotland on the 1st and there were scattered showers on the 2nd. From the 3rd-5th an Atlantic depression moved east-north-east across north Ireland and central Scotland to the North Sea and filled; rain fell generally on the 3rd and 4th and was rather heavy locally. A gale was reported at one or two exposed places on the 4th.

Subsequently a belt of high pressure extended from south-westward of Ireland to Scandinavia and fair weather prevailed for the most part over the British Isles from the 6th-9th. On the 9th a depression over France moved irregularly northward and thereafter passed away east-north-east; thunderstorms were reported in the south on the 10th and over a wider area on the 11th. On the 12th and 13th shallow troughs moved east over the British Isles giving local rain, but there were also long periods of bright sunshine.

Thereafter an anticyclone off our south-west coasts moved north-east to the North Sea and, on the 19th, a new anticyclone moved south-east to the Faeroes and subsequently south over the British Isles; fair weather prevailed until the 21st. This was a notable spell of warm fine weather, with abundant sunshine. There were, however, thunderstorms in the Channel Islands on the 16th and 17th.

By the 22nd pressure was highest over Greenland with a wedge extending south to the Bay of Biscay and cool, polar air caused a pronounced fall of temperature in the northern districts of the British Isles on the 22nd and in southern districts also on the 23rd. A spell of cool, unsettled, thundery weather ensued; on the 23rd a secondary depression moved east over southern England and on the 25th another disturbance approached south-west England and subsequently moved east-north-east and then turned north across the North Sea to Scandinavia. Heavy rain occurred in the south-east on the 23rd and in southern England on the 25th, while local thunderstorms were reported on the 24th-26th. On the 28th a depression off south-west Ireland moved first south-east and later north-east along the north coast of France giving considerable rain in southern England on the 29th. During the closing days a depression north-westward of Scotland moved south-east over the British Isles causing general rain. Widespread thunderstorms occurred on the 31st.

**Pressure and Wind.**—Mean pressure was about average in the south of England and somewhat exceeded the average elsewhere; at 9h. the deviation ranged from  $-0.2$  mb. at Tunbridge Wells to  $+3.1$  mb. at Tiree. In consequence mean pressure over the British Isles was very uniform (See Chart I). Wind reached gale force at times at a few exposed stations. Among the highest speeds registered in gusts were 55 m.p.h. at Croydon on the 16th and 54 m.p.h. at Mildenhall on the 26th.

**Temperature.**—Mean temperature was not very different from the average, the deviations for the districts ranging from  $-0.2^{\circ}\text{F}$ . in England, NE. and Northern Ireland to  $+0.7^{\circ}\text{F}$ . in England, NW. and Scotland, W. The first four or five days and the period from the 23rd onwards were cold, particularly the week ending the 29th, but the intervening period was mainly warm, notably so from the 16th-19th. Temperature rose to  $80^{\circ}\text{F}$ . or above at numerous stations on

the 17th, 18th and 19th. Some low screen minima were registered, especially on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 24th and 25th.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales)  $82^{\circ}\text{F}$ . at Bournemouth and Southampton on the 17th,  $22^{\circ}\text{F}$ . at Houghall on the 24th; (Scotland)  $84^{\circ}\text{F}$ . at Kilmarnock on the 18th,  $21^{\circ}\text{F}$ . at Glenlivet on the 3rd; (Northern Ireland)  $78^{\circ}\text{F}$ . at Castlerock on the 18th and Castle Archdale on the 19th,  $26^{\circ}\text{F}$ . at Ballykelly on the 25th.

**Precipitation.**—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881-1915 was 116 over England and Wales, 77 over Scotland and 80 over Northern Ireland. In Scotland more than the average occurred in eastern districts from the Moray Firth to the Firth of Forth, while more than twice the average occurred locally in Angus and at Inverness. On the other hand less than 50 per cent. was registered over much of the western half of the country. In England and Wales, broadly speaking, more than the average occurred south-east of a line from the Humber to Carmarthenshire and more than twice the average over much of a belt extending south-west from Norfolk across the Cotswolds to west Dorset. Less than the average occurred north-west of this line and also locally in Devon and Cornwall, on the south coast of East Anglia and locally in the London area. In Northern Ireland percentages of the average ranged from less than 50 per cent. over part of northern Antrim to 130 per cent. at Seaforde, County Down.

Days with 1 inch or more of rain included the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 11th, 23rd, 25th, 28th, 29th, 30th and 31st.

Among the heavier falls in 24 hours were:—

1st 1.75 in. at Cromer.

11th 2.27 in. at Temple Sowerby, Westmorland.

25th 2.39 in. at West Howtown, Somerset, and 2.07 in. at Wiveliscombe, Somerset.

Thunderstorms occurred frequently in the unsettled periods; for example, on the 1st, 2nd, 9th-12th and 24th-31st. They were reported in the Channel Islands also on the 16th and 17th. After a hailstorm at White Waltham (Berkshire) on the 1st there were 6 inches of hail on parts of the airfield. On the 29th a man was killed by lightning on Lobden golf course, near Rochdale, during a severe thunderstorm.

Snow or sleet showers occurred locally at times, chiefly from the 1st-3rd and 22nd-26th. Falls of snow were not heavy but it lay for a short time to a depth of several inches on high ground in some districts of Scotland.

**Sunshine.**—The general and substantial excess of bright sunshine was a notable feature of the weather of the month. The percentage of the average was 129 over England and Wales, 135 over Scotland and 132 over Northern Ireland. Generally speaking the excess increased from east to west, the percentages for the districts ranging from 112 in England, E. to 145 in England, SW. and NW. At numerous places it was the sunniest May in their records; for example, at Ross-on-Wye, Holyhead, Wakefield, West Kirby, Newquay and Teignmouth. In the Shetlands, too, it was the sunniest May for at least 25 years. The mean daily sunshine exceeded 10 hours at a number of places in south-west England.

**Fog.**—Fog developed at times chiefly on the 3rd, 5th and 7th-19th.

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