

Monthly Weather Report

OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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May 1953—Warm; sunny in most areas; variable rainfall.

In the British Isles the weather was warm generally and sunny in most places; it was mainly dry until the 12th, apart from rain on the 1st in the south-east. The warmest days occurred around the 5th and 25th. Thunderstorms occurred rather frequently during the latter half of the month.

An occlusion over the southern North Sea gave rain in the south-east on the 1st. Meanwhile an anticyclone built up off our south-west coasts and moved north-east, becoming more intense. This system maintained fine weather almost everywhere until the 12th. There were fairly widespread ground frosts up to the morning of the 4th and day temperatures reached or exceeded 70°F. in places from the 3rd to the 6th. On the 5th and 6th the anticyclone moved north to the Norwegian sea but pressure continued high in a wedge across the British Isles; fine weather persisted although it became cooler. Ground frost was again rather widespread in the early morning from the 9th to the 13th. A spell of unsettled weather ensued. Between the 12th and 14th a deep Atlantic depression approached the west of Ireland and an associated trough of low pressure moved slowly north-east over the British Isles bringing rain to the south-west on the 13th and to all districts on the 14th. Subsequently the main depression moved north-east and further secondary disturbances crossed the country giving rain or showers and rather widespread thunderstorms. On the 18th and 19th a small depression moved north-north-east from the Bay of Biscay to east Scotland; rain fell generally and there were local thunderstorms. Thereafter pressure was relatively high over France, while Atlantic depressions moved north-north-east along our western seaboard and associated troughs gave rain in most areas but it was only slight in the south-east. By the 23rd a warm moist air stream of tropical origin covered most of the country with some fog on our south and west coasts. Subsequently an anticyclone built up over France and moved north-east; south-easterly winds set in over most of the British Isles and very warm weather prevailed, with maximum temperatures of 85°F. or above locally in the south-east on the 25th. On the 24th a cold front, associated with a small depression which developed off north-west Scotland, approached west Ireland and subsequently moved east giving widespread, severe thunderstorms in many northern and central districts; the storms were accompanied by heavy rain and floods and caused much damage in places, particularly in west Scotland. A cold front extending across north Ireland and north England moved south-east and gave widespread thunderstorms in eastern districts of England on the 27th. During the rest of the month the weather was mainly dominated by a large anticyclone centred to the south-west of Ireland and rather cool, changeable weather prevailed, though rainfall amounts were mainly small.

Pressure and Wind.—Mean pressure exceeded the average by about 2.5 to 3.5 mb.; the deviation at 9h. ranged from +2.3 mb. at Lerwick to +3.5 mb. at Tynemouth. The total run of the wind was below the average in the northern half of the country. Winds reached gale force locally on the 2nd, 14th–16th and 29th–31st. Among the highest speeds registered in gusts were 49 kt. at Stornoway on the 2nd, 48 kt. at Eskdalemuir and Valley on the 16th, 55 kt. at South Farnborough on the 27th and 49 kt. at Bidston and 48 kt. at Southport on the 30th.

Temperature.—Mean temperature exceeded the average for 1921–50 by 2.6°F. in England and Wales and in Scotland and 3.3°F. in Northern Ireland. Screen temperatures of 32°F. or below were

registered locally at times during the first half of the month mainly on the 1st–3rd and 7th–13th. Warm spells occurred on the 3rd–6th and 24th–25th, the latter period being very warm inland, particularly in England.

Extreme temperatures for the month included:—(England and Wales) 89°F. at London Airport and at Farnham on the 25th, 26°F. at Kielder Castle and Moor House, Dufton on the 9th; (Scotland) 79°F. at Stirling on the 5th, 24°F. at Glenmore Lodge on the 7th; (Northern Ireland) 75°F. at Armagh on the 5th and at Castle Archdale on the 6th, 31°F. at Garvagh on the 11th.

Precipitation.—The general precipitation expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881–1915 was 109 over England and Wales, 108 over Scotland and 90 over Northern Ireland. In Scotland, rainfall exceeded the average in a broad belt extending from Caithness across the Moray Firth to the Island of Mull; it was more than 175 per cent. of the average at some places within this area and more than twice the average at Inverness; at most places elsewhere it was less than average. In England and Wales, it was less than average over most of north-west England, Yorkshire and south of County Durham, over much of central and north Wales and over most of an area stretching across East Anglia to north Somerset, with a small extension southward over east Sussex; elsewhere it exceeded the average, the excess being greatest on or near the south-west coast of England, for example 212 per cent. of average at Newton Abbott. In Northern Ireland rainfall was less than average except in the west and extreme south-east of the Province.

Among heavy falls in 24 hours or less were:—

22nd 2.20 in. at Maesteg, Glamorganshire.

24th 2.56 in. at Kingairloch, Argyllshire, 2.52 in. at Fort William and 2.34 in. at Ballykelly, County Londonderry.

25th 2.12 in. at Barnard Castle and 1.75 in. in 2 hours at Chopwellwood, both in County Durham.

Thunderstorms occurred on the 14th–19th, 21st and 23rd–28th; they were most widespread on the 15th–16th and 24th–26th. The storms which spread over Ireland and Scotland during the night of the 24th–25th and thence to northern and Midland districts of England on the 25th were very severe and accompanied by heavy rain and floods, particularly in western Scotland, where there was much damage; two people were killed by lightning near Grindelford, Derbyshire and another at Llanfairfechan, Carnarvonshire.

Sunshine.—The duration of bright sunshine expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1921–50 was 113 in England and Wales, 98 in Scotland and 107 in Northern Ireland. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland there was an excess almost everywhere, though somewhat less than the average was registered in west Cornwall. In Scotland percentages of the average were more variable; in the extreme north and at most places in the east there was a deficit but in Ayrshire, the Clyde area and in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh there was an appreciable excess.

Fog.—Fog occurred locally at times, chiefly at night or in the early morning, mainly on the 2nd–6th, 8th, 13th, 15th, 18th–25th and 27th. It was rather persistent at some places on the south-west and west coasts on the 23rd and locally on the south-west coast on the 25th and 27th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—The aurora was observed in Scotland on three nights. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on 13 days.