

## MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

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

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## MAY, 1923: MAINLY COLD AND DULL.

**General.**—Apart from a few exceptionally warm days soon after the beginning of the month the weather was decidedly cool and dull, almost wintry. During the first week pressure was high over the southern part of the British Isles so that warm sunny weather with light winds prevailed over England, Ireland and the greater part of Scotland. Temperature rose locally in the south to 75°–80° F., and even slightly higher between the 3rd and the 5th, but fell 10°–20° F. within a few days. From the 9th onward readings seldom exceeded 60° F., and in some instances remained below 50° F. throughout the day. These conditions were associated with a series of depressions in the North Sea neighbourhood, pressure remaining high to the westward of the British Isles. The resulting northerly winds over the country, often strong in force, were accompanied by showers of rain, hail and sleet or even snow at times. A trough of low pressure, secondary to a depression over the North Sea, lay across southern England on the 23rd and caused much rain in London, but the heaviest falls of the month in the metropolitan area were due to a depression which developed over Flanders on the night of the 28th and moved on the next day westward along the Channel (Track O). Local thunderstorms occurred repeatedly.

The general character of the month is illustrated by the following remarks taken from observers' notes and returns:—Belper (Derbyshire).—The coldest May since 1902. Blundellsands (Lancs.).—The coldest May for the past 10 years. Cheltenham.—The coldest May on record, but sunshine has been registered on every day. Hodsock Priory (Nottingham).—Coldest May since 1902, the deficiency being mainly in the daytime with no readings as high as 60° F. after the 8th. Vegetation has made little progress. Ipswich.—A very remarkable month. Rainfall much below the average and sunshine not more than half the normal, the lowest in 20 years. Meltham (Yorkshire).—The coldest May since 1902 and the wettest since 1886. Newquay.—A very cold month on account of prevalent high northerly winds; mean maximum temperature lowest since 1902. Torquay.—Generally unsettled and exceptionally cool with a deficiency of sunshine and unusually cold northerly winds. Walton-on-Naze.—An unusually cloudy month. Wistanstow (Shropshire).—Miserable, cold, unseasonable weather; all vegetation checked and much discoloured. Cargen (Kirkcubright).—Farm crops have suffered seriously and vegetation generally is very backward. Dublin.—The coldest May experienced since 1869; a dreary and dismal prolongation of winter.

**Pressure and Winds.**—The mean pressure of the month was below normal everywhere save in the extreme south-west of Ireland. The departure of the monthly means of pressure at fixed hours varied from –5.2 mb. at Aberdeen to +2.4 mb. at Valencia. The isobars of mean pressure trended roughly north-west and south-east, the Shetland Isles having the lowest mean pressure and south-west Ireland the highest. The map shows a reversal of the distribution for April.

Two primary depressions traversed Scotland, the first on the 10th–11th (Track D) and the second on the 14th–15th (Track G). In addition two secondaries crossed the British Isles. The northern part of the North Sea was a region of much activity during the month. The lowest pressures occurred about the 11th.

The strongest winds occurred generally between the 10th and 17th. Southport had three and Lerwick two days on which the wind had a mean strength of more than 38 m.p.h. for a period of not less than an hour. Several gusts of 50 m.p.h. and over were registered, the strongest being one of 69 m.p.h. at Edinburgh on the 10th.

**Temperature.**—The mean temperature of Districts 1 to 10 was 47.9° F. The mean temperature of each District was below the normal, the deficiencies ranging from –4.0° F. in Scotland-east (mean temperature 44° F.) to –1.2° F. in England-east (mean temperature 50° F.). The first week of the month was the warmest. Subsequently the daily maxima were low, thus the temperature did not rise above 42° F. at Aberdeen and Eskdalemuir on the 11th or above 45° F. at Cranwell on the 23rd. Considerable damage was done to crops by frost on the 24th, especially in the midland and eastern counties.

The extreme temperatures for the month were:—(England and Wales) 82° F. at three stations on the 4th and at Canterbury on the 5th, 27° F. at Benson on the 12th and Belvoir Castle and Raunds on the 24th; (Scotland) 70° F. at Crathes on the 4th, 23° F. at Braemar on the 9th and at Leadhills on the 10th. (Ireland) 66° at Kilkenny Castle on the 1st, Lisburn and Newtownforbes on the 29th, 30° at Newtownforbes on the 7th, Clongowes Wood on the 13th and at the Phoenix Park on the 24th. Ground frosts occurred repeatedly; the lowest reading of.

a thermometer exposed over grass being 18° F. at Durham on the 9th. At the end of the month a reading of 22° F. was obtained at Balmoral.

**Precipitation.**—The general precipitation in the British Isles, expressed as a percentage of the normal, was 115; the values for the several countries were:—England and Wales 121, Scotland 130, Ireland 77.

The distribution of precipitation considered in relation to the normal was very irregular. England as far south as the Wash and nearly the whole of Wales had an excess, in most places of considerable degree. In parts of Cardiganshire and Merionethshire nearly twice the normal amount was recorded. Other wet areas were the London neighbourhood and lower Thames Valley, Surrey, Kent, Sussex and Cornwall. The remainder of the country had precipitation below the normal; in some cases the deficiency was very marked, as, for example, Pitsford (Northamptonshire), which had only 49 per cent. The line of normal precipitation cut Scotland roughly into halves, the northern part being wet and the southern generally dry. Of the northern area parts of Morayshire, Banffshire and Sutherlandshire had the greatest excess; Grantown-on-Spey (Morayshire) receiving over three times and Keith (Banffshire) about four times the normal fall. On the other hand stretches of the western coasts had appreciably less than the normal precipitation. In Ireland, with the exception of the north-west coastal region, the precipitation was almost everywhere below normal and parts of Cork had less than 40 per cent. of the normal.

At Keith and Grantown-on-Spey the month was the wettest May for at least 40 years; the fall at Keith amounted to 280mm. Grantown had a fall of 47mm. on the 25th and Llyn Llydaw (Snowdon) one of 38mm., on the 13th. A considerable number of falls of 25mm. or over occurred during the month. The irregularity of distribution produced many contrasts, thus Aberdeen had 119mm. while Edinburgh (Inchkeith) had only 21mm.

Snow occurred frequently in Scotland between the 9th and the 17th, and on high ground in the north the falls were quite abnormal, with much drifting. At the end of the month rivers in the north-eastern area were in flood. Snowfalls, usually slight, occurred in England during the same period; on the 16th snow lay to the depth of one inch at Buxton. Hail showers were also very general and frequent. Falmouth reported hail every day between the 11th and 16th, and Markree between the 9th and 17th.

Thunderstorms were fairly general in London and south-east England on the 12th and 16th; they occurred locally in Scotland on various dates, mostly in the south-eastern part, also in Shetland on the 21st.

**Sunshine.**—Without exception the duration of sunshine was below normal in the various Districts, the largest mean daily deficiencies being 1.53hr. in the Channel Isles and Scilly and 1.52hr. in England east, and the smallest 0.41 hr. in England south-west. The Channel Isles and Scilly had 41 per cent of the possible duration, while Scotland north had only 26 per cent. The week May 6th to 12th was the sunniest, the majority of Districts having duration above the normal for the week; the remaining weeks showed deficiencies in almost all Districts. A number of records of 14 hrs. and over were, however, obtained during the month, and Rothesay (Bute) had a duration of 15.2 hrs. on the 28th. It is also interesting to note that on only one day, the 29th, was no sunshine whatever recorded at Greenwich. The actual deficit of sunshine was 35–40 hours in London, Falmouth and Aberdeen and 60 hours at Nottingham.

**Fog.**—Fog was infrequent during the month: of the telegraphic reporting stations Croydon had the greatest number of occasions (twice at 7 hr.) with visibility not reaching 1,100 yards.

**Miscellaneous Phenomena.**—Solar and lunar halos were again frequently observed. On the evening of the 11th two parhelia were seen at South Farnborough and one at Oxford, and a brilliant one at Wadhurst (near Tunbridge Wells). On the same evening a fine example of mammato-cumulus cloud was observed at Edgbaston and an observation of crepuscular rays after sunset, lasting for half an hour, was made at Armagh. These phenomena were associated with the south-west quadrant of a large depression centred off the east coast of Scotland on the 11th. Parhelia were also observed at Oxford on the 6th and 10th. Four observations of sun pillars were recorded, viz., at Ross-on-Wye on the 3rd, Oxford on the 9th and Lincoln on the 17th and 27th. Some observations of the zodiacal light were made during the first half of the month. The light was seen at Oxford on the 3rd, at Deerness on the 3rd and 5th and at Wadhurst (near Tunbridge Wells) on the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 11th, 13th, 16th and 17th.