

## MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

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

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**MAY, 1938.—Wet on the whole; rather cool, particularly in the south-east.**

In contrast to the exceptional drought experienced in the three months February to April, the general rainfall of the British Isles exceeded the average in May. Sunshine was deficient in Ireland, most of England and the north-east of Scotland; an excess was recorded, however, at numerous places elsewhere in Scotland and in parts of northern England. The month was cool on the whole, especially in the south and east of England.

During the opening days an anticyclone moved slowly westward from the north-east of Scotland to the south of Iceland. Meanwhile pressure was relatively low over France and a depression off south-west Ireland moved south-east to Spain. Weather was fair and sunny in the north but rain fell locally at times in England and the extreme south of Ireland. Thereafter pressure was low over Scandinavia and high westward of the British Isles. Polar air caused a considerable fall of temperature on the 7th, and showers occurred, mainly in northern Scotland and on the east coast of Great Britain. On the 8th and 9th a depression south of Iceland moved east-south-east to southern Norway causing some precipitation, chiefly in Scotland, the north of Ireland and north-east England. On the 10th a wedge of high pressure passed east over Great Britain. Subsequently pressure was high over central Europe, while Atlantic depressions moved north-east; rain fell, chiefly in the west and north, and was somewhat heavy in places on the 11th and 13th. A period of unsettled weather ensued with depressions moving directly over the British Isles; scattered thunderstorms occurred daily from the 14th-18th and fairly heavy rain was recorded locally. It was warm in east and south-east England on the 14th and temperature rose to 79°F. at Norwich, Canterbury and Herne Bay. On the 19th and 20th a belt of high pressure moved eastward over the country and on the 21st a trough of low pressure moving north-east over the north-western districts gave rain in Scotland and Ireland. Subsequently from the 23rd-31st, Atlantic depressions passed over the British Isles and unsettled weather prevailed; rain fell frequently and local thunderstorms were recorded on the 23rd, 24th, 27th, 28th and 30th. Gales occurred locally in England from the 29th-31st.

**Pressure and Wind.**—Mean pressure was slightly below the average throughout the country, the deficiency at 7h. ranging from 0.1 mb. at Stornoway to 1.9 mb. at Holyhead. Winds from some northerly point were fairly frequent. Local gales were reported in Scotland between the 11th and 13th, in north-west Ireland on the 15th and in England from the 29th-31st. Among the highest speeds recorded in gusts were 58 m.p.h. at Lerwick on the 7th, 56 m.p.h. at Edinburgh on the 12th and at Spurn Head on the 30th and 58 m.p.h. at Southport and 59 m.p.h. at Bidston Observatory on the 31st.

**Temperature.**—Mean temperature was below the average on the whole, particularly in south and east England. The deviation from the average for the districts ranged from -0.1°F. in England, N.E. and -0.2°F. in Scotland, E. to -1.9°F. in England, E. and -2.4°F. in England, S.E. At individual stations in south-east England the deficiency was considerable; it amounted to 3.3°F. at Greenwich, 3.2°F. at Tunbridge Wells and 3.0°F. at Southampton. Moderately warm spells occurred from the 5th-6th, 11th-15th and 21st-23rd; the highest temperatures were experienced in east and south-east England on the 14th, when 79°F. was reached at Norwich, Canterbury and Herne Bay. The lowest temperatures were registered as a rule on one or other of the first ten days, though the 20th was also a cold morning in some parts. At Totland Bay, Isle of Wight, a screen minimum of 30°F. was registered on the 8th; this is the latest spring screen frost recorded there in 53 years' records.

The extremes for the month were:—(England and Wales) 79°F. at Norwich and Canterbury on the 14th, 18°F. at Thetford on the 8th; (Scotland) 71°F. at Arbroath on the 6th, 18°F. at Braemar on the 2nd; (Ireland) 66°F. at Glasnevin, Dublin, on the 11th, at Birr Castle and Rathfarnham on the 12th and at Phoenix Park, Dublin, and Rathfarnham on the 21st and 26°F. at Markree Castle, Aldergrove, Phoenix Park, Hazelhatch and Birr Castle on the 8th.

**Precipitation.**—The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the average for the period 1881-1915 was 130, the values for the constituent countries being England and Wales 124, Scotland 136 and Ireland 139. In Scotland slightly less than the average occurred at some stations north-west of the Caledonian Canal and at isolated stations in Argyllshire and Ayrshire; on the other hand more than twice the average was registered locally in the south-east and at Lerwick in the Shetland Isles. In Ireland the excess was almost general, a deficiency occurring only at a few places in the eastern half of the country; more than twice the average was registered at Galway. In England and Wales the distribution was more variable; less than the average occurred over large areas in the Midlands and the central portion of the south of England as well as at a few isolated stations elsewhere. In other parts there was an appreciable excess and more than 200 per cent of the average occurred at Cranwell, Lincs., and Lympne, Kent.

Among the heavier daily falls of rain were:—

13th 1.70 in. at Dalry (Kirkcudbright).  
15th 1.78 in. at Uphall (West Lothian).  
17th 1.78 in. at Cranwell, of which 0.95 in. fell in 48 minutes.  
26th 1.80 in. at Glenbrannier (Argyllshire).  
28th 1.73 in. at Oxenfoord (Midlothian).  
29th 1.74 in. at Buxton and 1.72 in. at Bolton.

Local thunderstorms occurred fairly frequently; for example, on the 7th, 11th-18th, 23rd-24th, 27th-28th and 30th.

In Scotland snow fell locally from the 6th-10th and on the 28th and 29th. The fall was widespread, though nowhere heavy, on the 7th, while the fall on the 29th was confined to high level stations in central and western districts.

**Sunshine.**—Sunshine was deficient in Ireland, the north-east of Scotland and over most of England and Wales. An excess occurred on the whole in other parts of Scotland and locally in northern England. During the first week some remarkable sunshine totals were registered in Scotland, northern Ireland and northern England; the mean daily duration for the week was 12.01 hours at Rothesay, 11.84 hours at Eskdalemuir Observatory, 11.80 hours at Dumfries and 11.71 hours at Dundee. At Tiree the total for the four days 2nd-5th was 57.8 hours or a daily mean of 14.45 hours.

**Fog.**—There was not a great deal of fog during the month. It occurred locally at times, mainly on the 12th, 14th, 15th, 21st-23rd, 26th and 29th. It was thick locally on the south-west coasts of England and Wales on the 22nd and during the early hours of the 23rd.

**Miscellaneous Phenomena.**—The aurora was observed locally in Scotland on the 4th, 7th and 9th. It was also seen on the night of the 11th-12th at Gorleston, Hucknall, Abinger Hill School near Dorking and at Canterbury. Solar halos were noted at Oxford on ten days.