

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

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

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MAY, 1929. Considerable bright periods. First half of the month cool and unsettled, second half mainly dry with warm spell 22nd to 28th.

The weather during the first half of May was mainly cool and unsettled, with heavy rain from the 4th to the 8th and occasional thunderstorms but with considerable sunny periods. After the 15th most days were rainless over the greater part of the country, with much sunshine and warm weather from the 22nd to the 28th. Thunderstorms accompanied locally by heavy rain and hail occurred over wide areas on the 24th, 26th and 27th.

The weather during the first three days of the month was quiet and generally fair with low temperatures both by day and night. Sleet showers fell at Kirkwall on the 1st, at Glenbranter on the 2nd and at West Linton on the 2nd and 4th. The morning of May 1st was decidedly cold, amongst the lowest minimum temperatures in the screen recorded on that morning being 20° F. at Braemar, 21° F. at West Witton, 22° F. at Eskdalemuir and Houghall, 24° F. at Durham, 26° F. at Cambridge and 27° F. at Rothamsted. From the 4th to the 15th, cool unsettled weather with frequent rain at times and considerable bright periods prevailed generally. Strong winds were recorded in exposed places on the 5th, 6th, 13th and 14th and in a few places attained gale force on the 6th and 13th. Thunderstorms occurred over wide areas on the 4th, 7th, 8th, 14th and 15th.

On the 16th anticyclonic conditions became established and practically no rain fell throughout the country until the 21st when a depression on the Atlantic spread eastwards causing heavy rain in the west and north on the 22nd and 23rd. In the central and eastern districts of England, fine and sunny weather continued to prevail and day temperatures rose well above the normal and on the 23rd exceeded 80° F. in several districts, a day maximum of 81° F. being recorded as far north as York on that date. In the west and north the highest temperatures were attained later, generally on the 27th and 28th. Thunderstorms accompanied locally by heavy rain or hail occurred in several districts on the 24th, 26th and 27th.

During the last few days of the month an anticyclone off the north-west coasts gave north-easterly winds over most of the country and dry cool weather. In the extreme south-west of England, however, much rain was experienced from the 27th to the 30th.

Pressure and Winds.—Apart from anticyclonic conditions from the 16th to about the 20th and again during the last few days of the month, pressure was relatively low during the greater part of the month, several depressions passing north-eastwards across Ireland and Scotland. Monthly means of atmospheric pressure were below the normal except in the east and south-east where they were about normal. Winds were most frequently from the south-western quadrant, but during the first three days, and from the 17th to the 21st, and during the last four days, the wind in most districts had an easterly component. Strong winds were experienced in exposed places on the 5th, 6th, 13th, 14th, 29th and 30th and in some places gale force was attained. Gusts of 60 mi/hr and over were recorded at a few places in the east and south-east of England on the 6th and in the south of Ireland on the 13th; the highest recorded gust was 68 mi/hr at St. Mary's (Scilly) on the 6th.

Temperature.—The mean temperature for the month was above the normal in Ireland and the northern districts of Great Britain, and about normal in the southern districts. On most days during the first half of the month and on the last few days, day temperatures were below the normal in most districts, while at the beginning of the month the nights were decidedly cold. The warmest period of the month extended from about the 22nd to the 28th; in the eastern and south-eastern districts of England the temperature on the 23rd reached or exceeded 80° F. locally. In western and northern districts the highest temperatures were recorded about the 27th. Ground frost occurred fairly frequently, mostly during the first half of the month. Severe ground frost occurred in many districts on the morning of the 1st, amongst the lowest temperatures recorded on the grass being 17° F. at Durham, 18° F. at Richmond (Kew Observatory) and 19° F. at Cambridge and Rothamsted.

The extreme temperatures of the month were:—(England and Wales) 84° F. at Wisbech, London (Camden Square) and Canterbury on the 23rd and 21° F. at West Witton on the 1st. (Scotland) 77° F. at Ruthwell on the 26th and 27th, and 20° F. at Braemar on the 1st. (Ireland) 75° F. at Markree Castle (Co. Sligo), Kilkenny, Cahirciveen and Cork on the 28th and 25° F. at Hazelhatch (Co. Dublin) on the 1st.

Precipitation.—Apart from an excess of precipitation around the Firths of Forth and Tay and locally in the east of England, monthly totals of precipitation were below the normal in the north and east of Scotland, the eastern, central and parts of the north-western districts of England and in the west of Ireland. In the south and south-west of England, the greater part of Wales, the west of Scotland and in north-eastern, south-eastern and southern Ireland there was a considerable excess. Precipitation occurred most frequently during the first half of the month and was both widespread and heavy during the period 4th to 8th. Apart from heavy local falls associated with thunderstorms around the 24th and 26th the weather after the 15th was almost rainless except in the south-west of England, southern Ireland and western Scotland. Heavy falls were recorded widely on the 5th and 6th, in western districts on the 22nd and 23rd and in several places in association with thunderstorms on the 24th and 26th. Amongst the largest daily measurements were 37 mm. at Eskdalemuir on the 4th, 56 mm. at Dean Prior (Devonshire) and 52 mm. at Princetown (Devonshire) on the 5th, 56 mm. at Glencroe, 41 mm. at Ardtornish, 30 mm. at Colmonell and 39 mm. at Newtownbarry on the 22nd, and 44 mm. at Cambridge on the 24th. At Cambridge and Rothamsted where the month's rainfall exceeded the normal, the fall on the 24th contributed 62 per cent. and 35 per cent. respectively of the month's total.

Thunderstorms, accompanied by heavy rain or hail showers locally, occurred in many districts on the 7th, 8th, 14th, 15th, 24th, 26th and 27th.

Hail showers of unusual severity accompanied the thunderstorms in many places. At Ross-on-Wye heavy hail accompanied a thunderstorm on the 7th, some of the stones measuring three-eighths to half an inch in length. A heavy fall of hail associated with a severe thunderstorm occurred at Lewisham in the south-east of London on the 24th.

In many parts of the country the total precipitation for the first five months of the year is without parallel for its smallness. At Belper (Derbyshire) where observations of rainfall have been made continuously since 1877, the total rainfall for the first five months of 1929 is the lowest on record and only 53 per cent. of the normal amount for those five months. At Richmond (Kew Observatory) the total for the first five months of 1929, viz., 92 mm. is 19 per cent. less than the total for the corresponding period since 1874. At Greenwich the total for the first five months of 1929 was slightly greater than in 1874 but with this exception is the lowest total for a corresponding period since 1815.

The general precipitation of the British Isles expressed as a percentage of the normal for the period 1881–1915 was 105: the values for the constituent countries were:—England and Wales 103, Scotland 107, Ireland 109.

Sunshine.—Monthly totals of bright sunshine were in general above the normal, notably in the north-western, central and eastern districts of England and in the west of Scotland. Representative totals for districts, expressed as a percentage of the normal for the period 1881–1915, varied from 97 in the Channel Isles to 126 in England N.W. and N. Wales. Good sunshine records were obtained in many districts during the first three days of the month, from the 7th to the 10th in England and Wales, in the north and west on the 12th, widely on the 16th and 17th and from the 19th to the 21st, on the 22nd and 23rd in eastern England, on the 24th in Ireland and south-west England, and in several districts from the 25th to the 28th and on the 30th and 31st. During the week 19th to 25th, Gorleston recorded 93 hours, an average of 13·3 hours per day.

Fog.—Fog occurred locally in several districts on the 2nd and 3rd, in southern districts on the 10th and 11th and in many districts on the 21st, and between the 25th and 28th.

Miscellaneous Phenomena.—Solar halo phenomena were observed at a few stations on various dates.