

## May 2019

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1981-2010.

May began with shallow low pressure and weak fronts, bringing rather cloudy and showery weather to most parts. A northerly outbreak on the 3rd/4th brought widespread frosts, and wintry showers penetrated locally to low levels in some northern and eastern regions. Cloudy and unsettled weather persisted until the 9th, but then high pressure built close to the country bringing generally warm, dry and sunny weather around mid-month. The weather remained fairly quiet until the 24th, but generally cooler, with more in the way of rain or showers. It turned changeable from the 25th onwards but the last two days were very warm in the south and east.

The provisional UK mean temperature was 10.0 °C, which is 0.3 °C below the 1981-2010 long-term average, but it was not as cool as May 2015. Mean maximum temperatures were mostly close to normal but were more than 0.5 °C below in some western areas and in northern Scotland. Mean minimum temperatures were mostly about 0.5 °C below normal. Rainfall was 93% of average overall, and it was a dry month in Wales and southern England, but there was more than twice the normal rainfall in parts of north-east Scotland. Sunshine was 101% of average, and it was a rather cloudy month over much of Scotland and Northern Ireland but over much of England and south Wales it was a little sunnier than average.

The UK monthly extremes were as follows: A maximum temperature of 25.8 °C was recorded at Kinlochewe (Ross & Cromarty) on the 15th. A minimum temperature of -6.2 °C was recorded at Kinbrace (Sutherland) on the 7th. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 GMT on the 10th, 38.6 mm of rain fell at Trassey (County Down). A wind gust of 48 knots (55 mph) was recorded at Needles (Isle of Wight) on the 8th.

### Weather impacts

May was a benign month with few significant impacts. Dry sunny weather mid-month may have contributed to a wildfire near Melvich (Highland) between the 14th and 17th, which affected electricity supplies to 800 homes. On the 19th and 20th heavy showers caused some travel disruption in the West Country, notably on the A35.

### England diary of highlights

**May started off generally cool, with a cold northerly outbreak on the 3rd/4th, and often cloudy. The second week began wet but then high pressure slowly built across the country, and between the 12th and 24th the weather was often quite settled, dry and sunny though with some interruptions. It turned more changeable from the 25th onwards, but the month ended very warm in the south and south-east.**

The mean temperature for May was provisionally 0.2 °C below the 1981-2010 long-term average, making it the coolest May for four years. Rainfall was below normal over much of the west and south and generally near normal elsewhere, with 75% of average overall, making it the driest May since 2010. Sunshine totals were 106% of average, with most regions near or slightly above average.

#### 1st to 9th

The start of May was mostly on the cool side. Some outbreaks of light rain spread slowly eastwards across the country on the 1st, with brighter weather to either side, and the east was relatively warm before the rain belt arrived. Most parts had sunshine and showers on the 2nd, the showers locally heavy and thundery, but the south-west stayed mainly dry. A front moved southwards on the 3rd bringing showers and longer spells of rain and introducing somewhat colder northerlies. Showers, locally wintry and/or thundery, affected mainly eastern counties on the 4th. The northerly flow slackened on the 5th leading to a frost in places, with a minimum of -3.5 °C at Benson (Oxfordshire), and a dry but quite cloudy day for most. On the 6th a weak cold front brought showers and longer spells of rain to the north and east, spreading as far south as Norfolk. After a cloudy and showery day for most on the 7th, though with some sunshine in certain areas, rain moved into the south-west and then spread across the whole country on the 8th, and rain persisted in many areas on the 9th also but turned lighter. The 8th also turned windy in the south with a gust to 48 knots (55 mph) at the Needles (Isle of Wight). There was 31.2 mm of rain at Fylingdales (North Yorkshire) on the 8th, and at Malham Tarn (also North Yorkshire) the maximum temperature was only 5.7 °C. Southern areas were brighter at times on both the 8th and 9th but with some thundery showers.

### **10th to 16th**

Pressure slowly built across the country between the 10th and 12th, and the 10th was a day of sunshine and showers for most, the showers heavy and thundery in some places although other places stayed dry. Showers were generally fewer on the 11th, though a few were still heavy especially in the east. The 12th saw some patchy cloud bubble up but for most of the country it stayed dry with sunny spells. Much of the country was sunny on the 13th and 14th, and warm especially in the north, and the 14th had a high of 23.0 °C at Levens Hall (Cumbria) and 15.4 hours of sunshine at East Malling (Kent). The dry, settled weather continued on the 15th and 16th but with more in the way of high cloud, and cooler in the east. With mostly clear skies and light winds, there were frosts in some rural areas overnight during this period.

### **17th to 24th**

The weather was less settled during this period but with mainly light winds. Most places were cloudy on the 17th with some rain mainly for the south and west clearing away, but parts of the north were brighter and warmer. The 18th and 19th were generally cloudy and showery, and late on the 19th some persistent rain spread into the south-east. Rain died out in the east on the 20th, while many other areas were brighter with generally fewer showers. Between the 21st and 24th a weak ridge of high pressure brought mostly dry sunny weather and it turned increasingly warm, especially in the south-east. There was 15.4 hours of sunshine at Whitby (North Yorkshire) on the 22nd and at Boulmer (Northumberland) on the 23rd, and at Heathrow (London) the temperature reached 22.5 °C on the 22nd and 24.7 °C on the 23rd. However, banks of cloud and a little light rain affected some areas during this period.

### **25th to 31st**

This period turned more changeable and windy, but ended very warm in the south-east. Most areas started dry and sunny on the 25th but cloud and rain spread from the north-west, mainly affecting the north. The rain spread south-eastwards on the 26th, after a notably warm night for some with a minimum of 16.0 °C at East Bergholt (Suffolk). Brighter weather followed, and then the 27th and 28th had a mix of sunshine and showers, with the south-west generally seeing the driest and sunniest weather, and the showers merged into longer spells of rain in parts of the north-east on the 28th. Rain in the south-west spread north-eastwards across the country on the

29th. The 30th and 31st were both cloudy with persistent rain and drizzle in the north, but mainly dry elsewhere, with some sunny breaks especially in southern areas, and in any sunshine it turned very warm, with a high of 24.8 °C at Heathrow (London) on the 30th.

## **Wales diary of highlights**

**The first nine days were cool and changeable with a northerly outbreak and some widespread frost early on the 5th. It became warm and sunny mid-month, and stayed fairly settled until the 24th, but the last week was more changeable with westerly winds.**

The mean temperature for May was provisionally 0.4 °C below the 1981-2010 average. It was a dry month, especially in the south-west, with sunshine above normal in the south but below normal in the far north. Overall Wales had just 55% of average rainfall and 107% of average sunshine.

### **1st to 9th**

A slow-moving front brought a mainly cloudy start to the 1st with some patchy rain, but it turned drier and brighter from the west, then the 2nd started off mostly cloudy with some rain in the north-west but turned brighter and more showery, driest and sunniest in the south-west. A frontal system moved southwards on the 3rd giving another cloudy and showery day, followed by cold northerlies. High pressure built from the west which meant that the 4th was a cold dry day with sunny spells, giving 14.5 hours of sunshine at Dale Fort (Dyfed). The temperature fell to -4.8 °C early on the 5th at St Harmon (Powys), followed by an increasingly cloudy day with a few isolated showers. A slow-moving frontal system maintained cloudy and cool weather on the 6th with isolated showers. The 7th was another showery day but with some sunshine in between, and then rain spread from the south-west during the following night, giving 20.0 mm at Cardiff Bute Park (South Glamorgan). The rain persisted for most of the 8th and 9th, and Lake Vyrnwy (Powys) only reached 7.0 °C on the 9th, but it turned drier and brighter in the south-west on the afternoon of the 9th.

### **10th to 16th**

High pressure built from the west between the 10th and 12th, and so the 10th was a day of sunshine and scattered showers, and on the 11th the showers were more isolated, with the west generally having the driest and sunniest weather. There was some frost inland early on the 11th and 12th, and the minimum temperature on the 12th was again -4.8 °C at St Harmon (Powys). It then became dry, warm and sunny, with 14.5 hours of sunshine at Hawarden (Clwyd) on the 12th, and more sunshine on the 13th and 14th, with 21.5 °C reached at Gogerddan (Ceredigion) on the 14th. Betws-y-Coed (Clwyd) reached 22.0 °C on the 15th, though the 15th and 16th had more in the way of high cloud, and the 16th was a little cooler.

### **17th to 24th**

A shallow low pressure system brought more unsettled weather between the 17th and 20th. Rain spread from the east on the morning of the 17th, but this cleared westwards by mid-afternoon leaving dry but still fairly cloudy weather. The 18th and 19th were generally cloudy with isolated showers but some western parts had sunny spells, then the 20th was generally sunnier but with more in the way of showers, especially for central and eastern areas. A weak ridge of high pressure then brought relatively settled weather, and the 21st was a generally sunny day with 14.5 hours of sunshine at St Athan (South Glamorgan) and a high of 20.4 °C at Cardiff Bute Park. Cardiff Bute Park also reached 20.9 °C on the 22nd and 21.0 °C on the 24th. There were

some banks of cloud around on the 23rd and 24th with a little rain in places but some sunshine tended to break through on both days especially in the south.

### **25th to 31st**

It turned more changeable from the west, and on the 25th, rain spread from the west after a dry bright start, though the south and south-west stayed mostly dry with some sunshine. Under cloudy skies and rain the temperature did not fall below 14.8 °C at Hawarden (Clwyd) overnight 25th/26th. The persistent rain cleared eastwards on the 26th leaving drier but still mostly cloudy weather. The 27th and 28th brought sunshine and showers but a fair amount of cloud generally in many areas. Some of the showers on the 27th were heavy and thundery, but there were fewer showers on the 28th. The 29th was cloudy and wet generally, and the 30th started wet for most places but turned dry, brighter and warmer during the afternoon. The 31st was windy with gusts to 46 knots (53 mph) at Capel Curig (Gwynedd), with a little rain mainly for the north, but it brightened up from the south and again became warm.

### **Scotland diary of highlights**

**May began on the cool side, with some wintry showers even to low levels on the 3rd and 4th, and in the north on the 6th, and some night frosts. It turned sunny and warm for most parts mid-month, but from the 18th onwards it was cooler at times and wetter, with frequent westerly winds from the 25th onwards.**

The mean temperature for May was provisionally 0.5 °C below the long-term average, but it was not as cool as May 2015. It was a wet month in northern and eastern parts, but rather drier in the south-west which was also the brightest area, while the north was a little cloudier than average. Overall Scotland had 125% of average rainfall and 95% of average sunshine.

### **1st to 9th**

The month began unsettled and cool, and on the 1st an area of rain moved north-eastwards through the day, becoming persistent and heavy in north-eastern counties. A belt of showery rain headed southwards on the 2nd, followed by colder conditions and northerly winds. These brought a mix of sunshine and showers on the 3rd, with sleet and snow in some of the showers and they became widespread and locally heavy by mid-afternoon. There were gusts to 44 knots (51 mph) at Baltasound, Sella Ness and Lerwick (Shetland). Showers were generally lighter on the 4th but again wintry in places. The 5th was cloudier generally, with further showers in the north, and the north had sunshine and wintry showers on the 6th while a slow-moving front brought showers and longer spells of rain further south. The temperature fell to -6.2 °C at Kinbrace (Sutherland) early on the 7th, followed by a generally cloudy showery day with longer spells of rain in places. The 8th was a dull, wet and cold day with a maximum of only 5.0 °C at Braemar (Aberdeenshire). The rain became confined to western and southern areas on the 9th, with showers following behind into the north-west, but the north-east was dry and quite sunny.

### **10th to 17th**

High pressure slowly built between the 10th and 12th. The 10th was a day of sunshine and showers, the showers heaviest in the north and north-east, where they merged into longer spells of rain, then the 11th had fewer showers as pressure continued to rise. High pressure brought mostly dry sunny weather on the 12th but cloud and some light rain spread into the far north and west. There was also some overnight frost in rural parts early on the 11th and 12th. It then turned very warm by day from the 13th to 15th. Cloud and a little light rain moved eastwards on the 13th,

followed by sunshine, and the 14th was generally sunny with a high of 24.0 °C at Aviemore (Highland), though cooler along windward coasts. The 15th was even warmer with 25.8 °C at Kinlochewe (Ross & Cromarty), and 15.6 hours of sunshine at Lerwick (Shetland), but cloud spread into the west during the afternoon. It continued mostly sunny on the 16th and 17th but less warm, and cloud and light rain affected the far west and north-west, and there was some rain in the far south early on the 17th.

### **18th to 24th**

It turned cooler and less settled, though with mainly light winds. The 18th was a generally wet day, the rain generally lightest and patchiest in the south. After a mostly cloudy and showery day on the 19th for most, showers merged into longer spells of rain on the 20th in northern and north-eastern counties, giving some large rainfall totals. Most places had sunshine and showers on the 21st but it was cool, dull and wet in the north-west and in the Northern Isles, and this dull cool wet weather persisted in the north on the 22nd, also with a belt of rain moving south-eastwards through eastern areas into the North Sea. The south-west remained mostly sunny and dry on both days. The 23rd and 24th were cool, cloudy and wet in the north-west but most other parts were dry with some sunny spells, except for a few showers in eastern areas on the 24th.

### **25th to 31st**

The weather turned windier and more changeable with frequent westerly winds. After a bright start in most parts on the 25th, rain spread from the west to most parts during the day, though Orkney and Shetland remained mostly dry. The 26th was generally wet, but turned brighter and more showery across the south, and then the 27th and 28th were days of sunshine and showers, and the showers on the 27th were locally heavy. Most places started off bright and chilly on the 29th, but rain spread from the south-west during the day. The 30th and 31st were generally dull and wet, with 36.4 mm of rainfall recorded at Dunstaffnage (Argyll) on the 31st. It was quite warm and muggy and the temperature did not fall below 13.5 °C at Culzean Castle (Ayrshire) on the night of the 30th/31st.

## **Northern Ireland diary of highlights**

**It was generally cool during the first nine days, with fairly widespread frosts on the 4th and 5th. It turned warm and sunny between the 10th and 15th, but the second half of the month was generally cloudy and unsettled, with temperatures close to or rather below the seasonal average.**

The mean temperature for May was provisionally 0.3 °C below the long-term average. Most of the country had a fairly dry but cloudy month, and Northern Ireland as a whole had 81% of average rainfall and 87% of average sunshine.

### **1st to 9th**

It started dry and sunny on the 1st but a trough brought showery rain in from the west during the afternoon, then after a cloudy showery start to the 2nd it turned dry with sunny spells. A northerly outbreak set in on the 3rd bringing some sunshine and occasional showers, and gusts to 40 knots (46 mph) at Orlock Head (County Down). With high pressure close to the west, the 4th was a cool sunny day with just isolated showers, and the night of the 4th/5th saw a moderate frost in places with a minimum of -4.0 °C at Katesbridge (County Down). The 5th was somewhat cloudier, but some breaks during the night of the 5th/6th allowed the temperature to again fall to -4.0 °C at Katesbridge. A slow-moving front brought a cloudy showery day on the 6th. Showers on the 7th

merged into longer spells of rain, and the 8th was a wet and chilly day with a high of only 6.9 °C at Trassey (County Down). There was further persistent rain on the 9th, particularly wet in some western areas late in the afternoon, with 38.6 mm at Trassey.

### **10th to 15th**

High pressure developed and brought mostly dry sunny weather. There were some scattered showers on the 10th, then showers were more isolated on the 11th, when 13.3 hours of sunshine was recorded at Aldergrove (County Antrim). Some rural parts had a frost early on the 12th, but the day was dry and sunny and warmer than of late. It was generally warm and sunny on the 13th and 14th, though with some high cloud in places, with a high of 20.8 °C at Castlederg (County Tyrone) on the 14th. The temperature reached 21.5 °C at Derrylin (County Fermanagh) on the 15th, which was another dry day with some sunshine but it generally turned much cloudier during the day.

### **16th to 24th**

The high pressure moved away and the 16th was somewhat cloudier and cooler than of late, with a little light rain at times. After a dry bright start on the 17th, cloud and rain spread from the east. The 18th and 19th were cloudy with further rain, heavy at times on the 18th but much lighter and more scattered on the 19th. The 20th was brighter and a little warmer with only scattered showers. A ridge of high pressure brought mostly dry bright weather on the 21st and 22nd, but rain spread into the south-west late on the 22nd. The 23rd was dry and sunny in the north but cloudier in the south, and a weak front brought a little light rain on the 24th but many areas saw brighter weather late in the day.

### **25th to 31st**

Westerlies set in during this period bringing more changeable weather. Rain cleared early on the 25th but it remained cloudy with a little light rain and drizzle. Another rain belt cleared early on the 26th followed by brighter weather with showers, and the 27th had a mix of sunshine and frequent showers, some of which were heavy and thundery. The 28th had fewer showers and a fair amount of sunshine for many. Dull wet weather persisted from the 29th to 31st, and it was rather muggy with the temperature not falling below 14.4 °C at Stormont (County Down), Magilligan (Londonderry) and Castlederg (County Tyrone) overnight 30th/31st. The rain became lighter and patchier on the afternoon of the 31st.