



Weather Front

May 2019/1919

May 2019

Observers Notes.

Ely: A generally cold first half of the month, but warmer towards month's end. A pressure of 1038 hPa, on the 13th, is the highest recorded for May on the station record (1973).

Pitsford: A cool and unsettled start to the month, but conditions generally improved under the influence of high pressure. It is understood that, while a "grass minimum" temperature is recorded, no "days of ground frost" are included; this is due to instrumental problems. It is further understood that there were certainly 8 reportable days with a possibility that it might have been 9. Because of the doubt, no entry has been made for this item.

Derby: A small thunderstorm, to the south east on the 27th, gave 10.9 mm of the monthly total.

Middleton: A maximum temperature of 6.5 C on the 3rd, was the lowest for May since 1997. May 2019 was the fourth consecutive "drier than average" May. The air pressure of 1040.9 hPa, on the 13th, was the highest for May on the station record (1963).

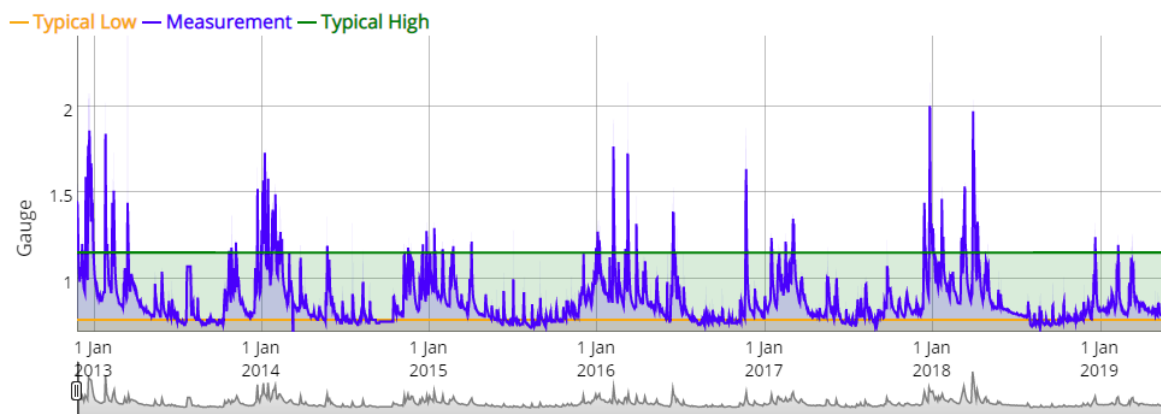
Mickleover: The driest May since 2012.

Lowdham: A maximum temperature of 8.8 C, on the 3rd, is the lowest maximum for May since 1997. The air pressure of 1040 hPa., on the 13th, is the highest for May on the station record (1994). Mountsorrel: May 2019 was drier than average with sunshine and temperatures close to normal. While the first ten days were wet and unsettled, the second half of the month was mainly dry, with just 5 mm falling between the 11th and the 31st.

Desford: The ongoing drought persists with a cool May. Only six days achieved a maximum of 20 C or greater and only three nights recorded a minimum greater than 10 C.

Below is a comparison of rainfall for the Rothley Brook from January 2013 to January 2019; the catchment of the Rothley Brook includes Desford and the local area.

Long Term



Local Rothley Brook with catchment in the Desford and local area. Source <https://riverlevels.uk/rothley-brook-glenfields-glenfield>. Current low flow levels following a very dry winter and extremely dry period last summer.

May 1919.

Abnormally Dry in South and East; Sunny and Warmⁱ.

Observers Notes.ⁱⁱ

Copdock, Suffolk: The finest and driest May I have recorded during eighteen years. The absolute drought from the 3rd to 24th is practically unique, but the countryside looks prosperous in spite of it.

Eye, Northampton: Lowest May rainfall (7 mm) since 1870. All summer work was very much in arrears owing to excessive wet, and now, for want of rain, all corn crops are backward and are short, yellow and dry.

Hodsock, Nottingham: The mean temperature was higher than in any previous May for at least 44 years. The excess in the day readings was especially large, and the mean daily range was about a record for May at this station.

Southport, Lancashire: The warmest May during 48 years. Daily range of temperature was as much as [2.2 C] above the normal. The 9h. mean relative humidity was no less than 7% below normal.

Dublin, Fitzwilliam Square: A favourable month after an unsettled opening. The mean temperature was [1.8 C] above the May normal. A thunderstorm, during the night of the 11th, was followed by unusual visibility lasting for two days [there is no other indication what was unusual about the visibility]. About five-sixths of the month's rainfall fell at night.

Derby/Burton on Trent areaⁱⁱⁱ: Similar rainfall to that in May 2019; about 30-35 mm or so. Mean temperature was about 13-14 C, a little above average. Temperature maxima were around 26-28 C on several dates during the month, and minima were around 0-2 C on the 3rd.

Survey of the month of May 1919^{iv}.

The main aspect of the weather during May 1919 was the lack of precipitation in the south and east of England. Many stations in these areas experienced prolonged drought, which commenced from about the 2nd and continued throughout the month into June. The dry spell saw the south-east of England recording 24% of average rainfall, eastern England 33% and northern Scotland only 31% of average. However, in Ireland, while the north recorded only 97%, the south received 121%, mainly due to the southerly track of a secondary low on the 14th, which passed to the south of Ireland and into northern France. Another low-pressure system, on the 5th and 6th, skirted the west coast of Ireland and eventually appears to have positioned itself in the vicinity of western Iceland.

Some individual rainfall totals are worth noting; Sevenoaks 2 mm (being the lowest for May in 36 years); Canterbury, South Farnborough and Wallington, 3 mm; Addington and Worthing (the lowest for 49 years), 4 mm; Dover and Margate (the lowest for 54 years), 5 mm; Cambridge (lowest for 54 years), Bennington (lowest for 39 years) and Southend, 6 mm. However, at Markree Castle, Seskin and Valencia Observatory the corresponding totals were 102 mm, 113 mm and 119 mm respectively. In Edinburgh, May 1919 was slightly drier in 1905 and at Fort William 1915 was also slightly drier. At Nairn however, May 1919 was the driest May on record, while at Glasgow, during the previous sixty years the May total was only slightly greater than in 1895^v. (The MWR for May 1895 noted that rainfall, particularly in western and southern parts “of the kingdom” amounted to a small fraction of the average “and less than a quarter of an inch [6 mm] in places, the smallest being 0.05 inches [1.3 mm]”. In direct contrast with 1919 however, snow showers were recorded, on the 16th and 17th May 1895, as far south as London and Bristol)^{vi}.

The mean temperature in May 1919 was above average in all areas and ranged from [+2.8 C] in north-west England to [+1.2 C] in the English Channel area. At Macclesfield the mean temperature was [+3.2 C] above average, at Cheltenham and Rounton [+2.9 C], and at Ampleforth [+2.8 C].

The highest temperatures appear to have been recorded on the 23rd, or during the last days of the month, many stations noting maxima of [27 C] and above. At Kensington Palace, on the 23rd, and at Ford (Argyll) on the 27th, a temperature of [28 C] was recorded. However, further south, at some coastal-stations temperatures were more relaxed, the highest for the month at Portland Bill was [17 C] and at Scilly, Dungness and Spurn Point the maximum was [18 C]. The MWR also noted that the temperature range at some inland stations, on the

23rd, was very large; at Cambridge, Raunds and Worksop the range was as high as [23 C] but, at Castlebay a range of only [1 C] was noted, and at Lerwick [4 C].

The MWR also mentions the low percentage of humidity at many stations, while at coastal stations reports of fog and mist were unusually frequent and reduced monthly sunshine totals. However, at inland stations “sunshine was abundant and there were many warm days”^{vii}.

Some East Midlands examples:

<u>Rainfall.</u>	<u>Temperature (all on the 23rd).</u>
Lincoln: 39%.	26.7 C.
Belper: 62%.	26.7 C.
Nottingham: 66%.	27.2 C.
Raunds: 42%.	27.8 C.
Brocklesby: ^{viii} -----	26.7 C.

To sum up then, a very dry, warm and sunny month.

Central England Data, May 1919, (Averaging period 1881-1910)^{ix}.

Mean Maximum Temperature: 18.6 C, Average: 15.3.

Mean Minimum Temperature: 8.4 C, Average: 6.4 C.

Mean Temperature: 13.5 C, Average: 10.9 C

England and Wales Rainfall: 25.4 mm, Average: 60.4 mm.

Midlands Mean Maximum Temperature: 18.5 C.

Midlands Mean Minimum Temperature: 6.9 C.

Midlands Mean Temperature: 12.7 C.

Midlands Rainfall: 28.8 mm.

ⁱ Monthly Weather Report, May 1919, HMSO, 1919, Summary Headline p. 49.

ⁱⁱ Monthly Weather Report, May 1919, HMSO, 1919, Summary, p. 49.

ⁱⁱⁱ D J Stanier, by email, 02/06/2019, 1439 BST.

^{iv} Taken mainly from The Monthly Weather Report, May 1919, HMSO, 1919, summary, p. 49.

^v Monthly Weather Report, May 1919, HMSO, 1919, Summary, p. 49.

^{vi} Monthly Weather Report, May 1895, HMSO, 1895, Summary.

^{vii} Monthly Weather Report, May 1919, HMSO, 1919, Summary, p. 49.

^{viii} Lincoln Archive Office, YARB 14/2, May 1919. Note also that no averages for rainfall are available for this station.

^{ix} www.metoffice.gov.uk/hadobs, 23 May 2019.