



Weather Front.

May 2022/1922

May 2022

Observers Notes.

Mountsorrel: May was warmer than average, with sunshine and rainfall just below. While it was the fifth warmest May in the Leicestershire record, there were no cold spells, and eleven of the nights had minima in double figures.

Mickleover: The “lowest maximum” temperature (14.2 C) was the highest for May on the station record.

Ely: A nondescript sort of May, slightly warmer and slightly drier than average., but little to get excited about. This was the first May with no ground frosts since 2009, but the highest number of days with south-westerly winds (15) on the station record (52 years).

Derby: This was the second warmest May since 1952, behind 2018. May 2022 was much closer to the warmth of 2018 until the cooler late month; the mid-month was about 3 C above average! There were thirteen minima above 10 C, and the lowest maximum of 14.5 C was the highest for May since 1952. It is interesting to note that the mean temperature in May was as high as 14 C, but without the inclusion of particularly remarkable temperatures at the daily level.

Middleton: The lowest minimum, and the lowest maximum temperatures were both the highest on a composite record beginning in 1963.

Desford: Dryer and warmer than average.

May 1922

Observers Notes.

Durham: Sunshine amount highest since 1885.

Tenbury: The hottest May ever remembered here.

Isleworth: The average maximum of 71 F [22 C] has never been exceeded in my 38 years records but was equalled in 1917.

Giggleswick: A minor tornado. The centre of the tornado passed Giggleswick School in the direction of Settle station. One barn was demolished by the wind, and several walls were blown down along its track. At [1923] a projection was seen hanging down from the cloud and moving in the direction of the tornado centre.

Louth (Westgate): Rainfall for the month was 0.61 ins. [15.5 mm].

Derby: May 1922 was a dry month, with all but one of the rainfall locations having totals in the 20-30mm range. The wettest was 36.1mm. This was around half the (then) normal monthly amount. There was a high frequency of very warm days. Maxima in the 26-28C range were recorded on the 8th/21st/22nd/25th/30th and 31st, while 24C or so values were noted on the 23rd/24th/28th and 29th. In Burton, the highest values were on the 30th and 31st jointly at around 28C (logged as 83F for both at the time).

There were by contrast, some cold nights! The lowest minimum at Byrkley Gardens was -1C, and for Burton, 0C. These minima were recorded on the 12th, and this followed a cold 11th, which had a maximum of only 6C.

The overall mean temperature varied from about 12C at Byrkley Gardens to 13.4C at Burton. Each being some way either side of the official CET value of 12.7C.ⁱ

Overview of May 1922.

The significant aspect of the weather of May 1922 was the hot spell which began around the 20th in the south-east and east of England. Thunderstorms were noted at the beginning and end of the month. Hailstones of exceptional size were reported during the latter part of the month, otherwise the month was generally dry, only 52% of average was noted over the Midlands.

During the first week the weather was unsettled due to the passage of a series of depressions to the south of Iceland, winds being mainly from the west or south-west and reaching gale in exposed places. Frequent showers of rain and hail were reported, together with line squalls in one or two places. Screen minima below [0 C] were reported around the 3rd, the lowest being [-3 C] at Balmoral and Porton, and [-1 C] at Renfrew and Birr Castle. Grass minima of [-6 C] were also recorded in many places. These temperatures were due to a northerly airstream in the wake of a depression centred over Denmark.

From the 6th an anticyclone over France began to influence the weather over south-east England and maximum temperatures proved to be unusually high over most of England and Ireland, [26 C] being recorded in London on the 8th. By the 9th high pressure dominated the whole country and fine, warm weather prevailed.

On the 12th the anticyclone was located between Iceland and the Azores, with a deep depression over Scandinavia. This produced a northerly airstream over the country and temperatures fell accordingly; several stations reported temperatures well below freezing on the 12th and 13th.

On the 12th, a depression to the west of Iceland moved east to affect the north of the British Isles, and on the 14th a depression near Faroos moved east producing strong winds and gales at Blacksod Point [North-western Ireland, near Belmullet]. The associated weather was unsettled, considerable falls of rain being reported over Scotland and northern parts of England. The heaviest falls were 58 mm at Rothsay, 35 mm at Kilmarnock, and 33 mm at Renfrew. The total for the 14th and 15th was 109 mm at Fort William and 85 mm at Ford (Argyll). However, with an anticyclone extending from the Azores to Austria, pressure remained high over southern England, and the weather remained fair or fine, with occasional showers in places.

These conditions remained almost unchanged up to the 18th, and on the 19th small secondary depressions started to produce generally unsettled conditions. A depression to the west of the British Isles moved slowly north-east, bringing rain to the north and west of the country. However, by the 20th the anticyclone situated over the continent began to extend northwards over England, and from the 22nd to the 24th the weather over eastern and south-eastern England saw temperatures reaching [32 C] at Camden Square and Bexley Heath, [31 C] at Norwich and Reading, all on the 22nd, and [31 C] at Grain (Kent) on the 23rd. These nights were also very warm, minima at several stations did not fall below [16 C] and in one or two places the minimum stood at [18 C]. Thunderstorms occurred in many places, while one thunderstorm in particular was accompanied by heavy hail, "large walnuts..." as one observer noted, occurred in Yorkshire on the 21st, and at West Witton, the rainfall measured 68 mm. Thunderstorms were reported on the 25th in London and south-eastern England. By the morning of the 28th the anticyclone had extended over Scotland. During the rest of the month the weather over most of the country was fine, dry and plenty of sunshine and high temperatures.

The most notable feature of the temperature was the hot spell from the 20th. At Kew the maximum in the North Wall screen reached [30 C] on the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th. This was the highest for May during the preceding fifty years. The mean temperature throughout the country, particularly over England, was above average, ranging from [+3 C] in eastern England, to [+0.6 C] in northern Scotland.

Rainfall was above the average in the western half of Scotland, where a considerable area received more than twice the average, and in isolated parts of western Ireland. The greatest amount of rain in one day was at Egremont (Cumberland) where 81 mm was recorded on the 16th.ⁱⁱ

Europe and the Rest of the World, May 1922.

On 13 May 1922, between 1530 and 1600, the town of Montpellier, and surrounding districts, noted a severe thunderstorm with heavy hail. The hailstones were around 10 to 15 mm in diameter. After the storm hail lay to a depth of around 10 cm. In many streets rain was unable to drain away and the hailstones had combined in lumps, in many places to a depth of 50 or 60 cm. Traffic became blocked and the military were called in to clear the problem. The shower was limited to about half a kilometre wide and 5 or 6 kilometres long. Damage was considerable but there were no injuries.ⁱⁱⁱ

At the start of the month the Garonne was around 10 ft. above normal, and parts of Toulouse were under water. In Paris, because of heavy rain, the Seine was so high that the steamboat service had to be stopped for several days. The river had not been so high since the 1910 floods. Towards the end of the month the weather became very hot over northern France, particularly in Paris, where the temperature reached [33 C] on the 24th. This was the highest May temperature recorded for the previous fifty years, and in spite of the high rainfall, and rise of the Seine earlier in the month, water supplies had to be restricted!

The highest temperature recorded for any month at Flushing [34 C] was noted on the 24th.

The P and O steamer "Egypt" was sunk at 1900 on the 20th, after being in collision with the French steamer "Seine"; 96 lives were lost. The incident took place 28 miles off the Armen Light, on the coast of Finisterre. It is understood that an anticyclone, which was dominating western Europe, moved warm air northwest from Africa and had produced dense fog at the entrance to the English Channel.

There was more snow lying on the mountains north and north-west of Madrid than in December, which resulted in the winter sports season lasting for over five months in that area.

Low levels of the river Nile was causing some anxiety in Cairo, particularly with regard to the cotton crop. The White Nile, which provided the bulk of the summer water, was lower than in any previously recorded year. It was also noted that the Blue Nile was very low.

On the 10th, an area of 50 square miles to the west of Winnipeg was under water after the Assiniboine River broke its banks. The average depth was four feet and a large area of wheatlands was threatened. The floods were aggravated by further heavy rain.

A bridge over the Brazos River, Texas, USA, collapsed on the 16th due to serious flooding. Of thirty individuals on the bridge at the time only six were rescued.

Further much needed rain fell in South Australia.

In Brazil the general rainfall for the month was 180 mm. In the north it was above average, with many stations reporting 150 mm above average. In the centre of the country rainfall was slightly below average, and in the south, it was irregular or scarce. The excessive rainfall in the north was harmful to the sugar crop, but favourable to coffee. There were slight frosts, but only in the south.^{iv}

Central England Data.^v (Averaging period is 1891 to 1920.)

Mean Maximum Temperature: 17.9 C. Average: 16.3 C.

Mean Minimum Temperature: 7.5 C. Average: 6.7 C.

Mean Temperature: 12.7 C. Average: 11.3 C.

England and Wales Rainfall: 34.0 mm. Average: 57.8 mm.

Midlands Data. (Averaging period is 1911 to 1920).

Midlands Mean Maximum Temperature: 18.2 C. Average: 16.7 C.

Midlands Mean Minimum Temperature: 6.7 C. Average: 6.3 C.

Midlands Mean Temperature: 12.5 C. Average: 11.5 C.

Midlands Rainfall: 28.8 mm. Average: 55.7 mm. (52% of average).

2022 (Provisional)

Central England (Averaging period is 1991-2020).

Mean Maximum Temperature: 17.5 C. Average: 16.5 C.

Mean Minimum Temperature: 8.6 C. Average: 7.3 C.

Mean Temperature: 13.1 C. Average: 11.9 C.

England and Wales Rainfall: 58.8 mm. Average: 62.7 mm. (94% of average).

ⁱ D J Stanier, by email, 2 June 2022.

ⁱⁱ Monthly Weather Report, May 1922, Meteorological Office, HMSO, July 1922, p. 57.

ⁱⁱⁱ Meteorological Magazine, June 1922, Meteorological Office, HMSO, June 1922, p.11.

^{iv} Met Mag, June 1922, pp 141 and 148.

^v Hadley Centre, Central England and Midlands, Meteorological Office.