Weather Front

May 2025/1925

May 2025

Observers Notes.

Bablake: Only 6 May months have been drier in the past 70 years; 1959, 1961, 1990, 1991, 1998, 2020.

Derby: May 2025 was the third warmest May on record since 1952.

Middleton: The third warmest May behind 2018 and 2024. The mean maximum temperature was second only to 2018 (17.8 C). Only 0.5 mm of rain up to the 22nd.

Coton-in-the-Elms: This was another warm May, though not as warm as last year, mainly due to the nights being generally a lot colder. Daytime temperatures however averaged a daily maximum of 20 C, which is highest on record here for May. The absolute maximum on the first was slightly short of the all-time maximum of 27.2 C set in May 2003. Nights were particularly cold at times, with fifteen ground frosts being recorded: the most on record for May. Rainfall was below average and, if it had not been for a very wet day on the 27th, it would have been much lower.

Mickleover: Fifth warmest May on record since 1981.

Mountsorrel: May was a mild month with high pressure dominating from the beginning of the month until the 24th. The location of the high differed, giving both warm and cooler days under a northerly, with a few days being affected by low cloud from the North Sea. While the mean temperature was 1.3 C above normal, last year was warmer at 14.3 C. Days were much warmer than the nights; days were 2 C above normal and nights 0.8 C above, thanks to long sunny days but cooler clear nights. It was a dry month and, after a thunderstorm on the first, which produced 5 mm, no more rain fell until the weather became unsettled on the 24th.

Lowdham: No measurable rain between the 2nd and 22nd, then 8.9 mm on the 23rd, the wettest day since 26th January. 239.5 hours of bright sunshine (130% of 19991-2020 average) recorded at Radcliff-on-Trent. The sunniest May since 2020.[i]

Desford: Warm, very dry, and settled.

Ely: Often warm by day, but cool nights, although no frosts. Another dryish month with rain falling in the last week. No measurable rain between the 5th and the 22nd. Only forty-one rain days in 2025, so far; the lowest total in month five in the 55 years of the station.

Saltfleetby:

10 Day Mean Temperature.

Date	Max	Min	Mean
1-10	15.8	6.9	11.4
11-20	15.4	9.0	12.2
1-20	15.6	8.0	11.8
21-31	20.3	10.7	15.5

Wind Force.

1	2	3	4	5
1	10	4	2	8

6	7	8	9	10
3	0	0	0	0

UK overview

May overall was sunny, warm and dry, with high pressure dominating for most of the month. May started with high pressure situated to the west of the UK. A few frontal systems brought rain to Scotland on the second and third, before the high pressure shifted to sit over the UK. A low-pressure system to the southwest of the UK brought some heavy rain and thunderstorms to southwestern England, Wales and Northern Ireland on the 11th and 12th, before the high pressure returned once again. The second week of May saw temperatures slightly below average for most areas, before temperatures increased into the third week. Clear skies at night led to some cooler nights, with some frost conditions in northern and rural areas. High pressure persisted through mid-month, with some scattered showers in places but otherwise fine weather for most of the UK. The weather turned more unsettled from the 23rd onwards, as lower pressure pushed towards the UK and frontal systems brought rain to much of the country. Some showers were heavy with hail and thunder in northern areas on the 25th, but there were still many areas that saw dry weather. Scattered showers persisted for the next few days, in an unsettled end to May.

Overall, the mean temperature for the UK was provisionally 1.3°C above the long-term average. Northern Ireland was slightly warmer, seeing a provisional mean temperature 1.6°C above the long-term average. Maximum temperatures in particular were high, widely over 2°C above average, while minimum temperatures were only around 0.4°C above average. Provisionally, this was the second warmest May on record in terms of mean temperature for England, the third warmest for Northern Ireland, the sixth warmest for Wales, and the

seventh warmest for Scotland. For the UK, it was provisionally the fifth warmest May on record. For maximum temperatures, this was provisionally the warmest May on record for the UK, England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and the second warmest for Scotland. The first half of the month saw below average rainfall, with the UK seeing only 3.3mm of rainfall by the 17th, but this increased through the second half of the month, with the UK provisionally recording 50.9mm of rainfall, 72% of the long-term average. Some areas of western Scotland and northern England, including Renfrewshire and Cumbria, recorded above average rainfall for May, but most places saw below average rainfall. Southern England saw less than half of the average rainfall for May, although no records were broken. Sunshine was much higher than average across the UK, with all nations provisionally reporting more than 100% of the long-term average sunshine. The UK overall provisionally saw 266.2 hours of sunshine in May, 139% of the average. This was provisionally the sunniest May on record for Scotland and Northern Ireland, the second sunniest for the UK and Wales, and the third sunniest for England. Reference climatology used for calculating anomalies is the period 1991-2020 unless otherwise stated.

Weather impacts.

• Dry weather led to wildfires across Dartmoor, north Wales and Northern Ireland in early May

• Thunderstorms between the 10th and 13th led to hail and some reports of lightning damage to homes in England

• The accumulated deficit of rain across parts of northwest England triggered a drought declaration by the Environment Agency on the 21st

May continued the theme of spring, in that much of the UK enjoyed a drier, sunnier and warmer month than average. Up to and including the 22nd, largely fine, dry and warm conditions held sway with only the odd brief interruption across the southwestern portion of the UK. On the 23rd, however, the Atlantic, becalmed for weeks on end, finally broke through and returned the UK to a much more changeable regime for the remainder of the month. Despite the final week of relatively unsettled and cooler weather, the month overall was once again warmer and sunnier than average, contributing to the sunniest and warmest spring on record. Mean temperatures for spring were just ahead of the previous record of 2024, whilst the record sunshine hours surpassed those of the Covid spring of 2020. The late burst of Atlantic mobility was sufficient to bring monthly rainfall totals across parts of the north Midlands, northwest England, Northern Ireland and southwest Scotland slightly closer to average. As for severe weather warnings, there was a single issue posted on the 11th for thunderstorms across Wales, the west Midlands and parts of central south and southwest England for the following day.

Unsurprisingly the only weather-related impacts observed during the opening 10 days of the month were from wildfires, with one such outbreak reported from Dartmoor on the 5th, another from Gwynedd on the 6th, the third from Northern Ireland on the 8th and a fourth reported from near Llandudno on the 9th. On the 10th a patch of what was by then very dry waste ground in the centre of Manchester gave birth to a sizeable dust devil, a phenomenon rarely seen in the UK, especially in such an urban location. Its occurrence spawned numerous reports on social media, backed up by some impressive video footage. No impacts to people or transport were reported.

After the very settled opening third of the month, the period from the 10th to the 13th was somewhat less settled across Wales, southwest and central south England with scattered showers and thunderstorms breaking out as the atmosphere temporarily destabilised. The most active thunderstorms occurred on the 12th (in association with the only issued warning) across parts of London and the Chilterns with reports of 2 to 3cm diameter hail in places. As these storms headed north-westwards, there were reports of lightning damage to homes, one in Bridgnorth and another in Hereford. Meanwhile, torrential rain reportedly caused temporary service suspensions on several rail lines linking Wales, the Midlands and southern England. The 13th saw further reports of thunderstorm-related flooding, this time in Winchester and Shrewsbury. The 20th and 21st also saw scattered sharp showers break out, again chiefly across Wales and southern England but with only the odd very localised impact reported.

By the 21st, the accumulated deficit of rain across parts of northwest England had reached sufficient levels to trigger a drought declaration by the Environment Agency, just in time for the return to more unsettled conditions that began on the 23rd. The 29th saw slow-moving weather fronts deliver some 70-80mm of orographically enhanced rain across parts of south Cumbria. However, no impacts were reported, the rain simply helping to arrest the steady decline in reservoir stocks in the area that had accrued during the course of spring.[ii]

Reports from around the World

Strong winds and flooding spread across New Zealand during the week ending the third, which was caused by low pressure. A state of emergency was declared in Christchurch. The low pressure deepened in the Tasman Sea to the west of New Zealand and travelled east, with the centre moving across North Island producing strong winds, especially in the Cook Strait; Wellington had some of the strongest wind of more than 90 mph. Flooding was a problem, especially in South Island. More than 100 mm of rain fell in less than 12 hours in some eastern areas, and in Christchurch rivers overflowed their banks.[iii]

On the second severe thunderstorms, with intense rain, hailstones, and squally winds were reported in Delhi. The storms lasted for six hours and eased by about 0830 local time. At Safdarjung, the main observing office in Delhi, 77 mm of rain were recorded, 60 mm falling in the first 3 hours; it was the second highest 24-hour total in Delhi for May since 1901. The

storms led to flash flooding, felled trees, and seven deaths. Further sharp showers, and thunderstorms, were expected over western and central parts of India during the following week.

Western Europe also experienced showers as an area of low pressure moved east across the Iberian Peninsula during the weekend of the third, which brought heavy storms to northern France. The low was expected to pass eastwards giving stormy conditions in Italy.[iv]

Southern and south-eastern Europe experienced a series of thunderstorms that resulted in significant rain and hail across parts of the Balkans. After a hot start to the month, with temperatures in the area in the high 20's C, thunderstorms developed over a wide area from the 5th. One storm, over Slavonski Brod, in Croatia, saw egg-sized hail, and 38.2 mm of rain. Further east, in Burgos, Bulgaria, 1 cm sized hailstones coated the ground with white, while 22.7 mm of rain fell. The storms also brought strong winds, with a gust of 62.6 mph being recorded.

Mumbai experienced further thunderstorms, with heavy rain showers developing over the city on the 6th. The rain brought welcome relief from the heat, but it also disrupted transport networks. Heavy rain and strong winds also affected several Mumbai suburbs, including Borivali, Kandivali, Malad, and Bandra.[v]

North-west Europe experienced an unusually dry spring. Belgium had four times less rain than normal, according to data from Uccle, suggesting that it is the driest spring in the country for 130 years, and a warning of extreme drought was issued. Northern France was also on the brink of drought, amid suggestions that the spring could be drier than that of 1976, although, unlike 1976, the soils are wetter after severe rain fall in January, which is not the case for Belgium.[vi]

Severe thunderstorms affected the USA during the week ending the 24th, with the storm season nearing its peak; Kentucky and Missouri being the worst affected by the outbreak, which started on the 16th. Tornadoes, associated with supercell thunderstorms, passed rapidly across the Midwest resulting in twenty-five deaths. Thunderstorms were also reported across Oklahoma and Kansas. Strong tornadoes, and hailstones of more than 10 cm diameter, were reported over the week.

In south-east Australia remote areas were inundated with torrential rain, and floods, caused by a slow-moving low-pressure system on the coast of New South Wales. Rainfall totals of 300-500 mm were widely recorded, with a further 200 mm expected by the end of the 23rd. Rivers reached very high levels, with the Manning in Taree rising to 6.3 meters, breaking a record set in 1929.[vii]

Southern China experienced heavy rain during the week ending the 27th, which produced landslides and flash floods in the Guangdong and Guanxi districts. By the 24th at least four deaths had occurred and seventeen people were also missing.

New Zealand's South Island also experienced torrential rain on the 24th/25th, triggering warnings across the region. A frontal system approached from the Tasman Sea and brought heavy rain, accompanied by strong north and north-westerly winds, which reached gale force in exposed areas. Rainfall totals reached 130- 160 mm, in places near the coast, on the 25th.The north-westerlies brought moist air in from the Tasman Sea, which led to heavy rain as the air crossed the Southern Alps. The mountains also helped to increase the wind, forcing the air up and creating turbulence and very gusty conditions.[viii]

Extreme heat was experienced over southern and central Spain, Portugal, and southern France during the week ending the 31st. Some areas saw temperatures rise to the mid, or high, 30's C. On the 28th the temperature at Almareleia, Portugal, rose to 39.5 C, while El Granado, Spain, rose to 39.1 C, and Caret-en-Roussillon, France, reached 32.3 C. The high temperatures, associated with the worst drought in decades, has raised concerns with farmers in northern Europe, as the unusually dry weather has delayed crops.

After several days of extremely cold weather, record high temperatures were recorded in Canada on the 28th; 35.9 C was recorded at Ashcroft and Kamloops in British Columbia, and 35.2 C at Lytton. Temperatures again rose to the mid-30's C in British Colombia on the 29th.[ix]

Flooding was reported from Nigeria during the week ending the 31st, with over 150 deaths being reported. Heavy rain was observed in the north of the country on the night of the 28th/29th, leading to flooding along the Niger River, displacing thousands of people, and destroying hundreds of homes. North Africa also experienced extreme weather with a summer storm affecting Alexandria on the 31st. The city experienced strong winds, hail, and heavy rain which flooded the streets, and caused power cuts. The storm was part of a cold front, linked to an area of low pressure, which moved into Egypt on the 31stx May/1st June. Storms are common during winter and spring, but less frequent closer to summer.

May 1925

Observers Notes.[xi]

Derby/Burton-on-Trent: May 1925 was exceptionally wet, but quite a warm month as well. Rainfall at the Derby sites was typically 140 mm, plus or minus 5 mm, while the burton gauges yielded amounts between 115 mm and 135 mm. The 18th/19th was a particularly wet period with 35-40 mm falling. There was some flooding from the River Trent in Burton which damaged scaffolding being used in the construction of Burton Bridge, a widening project completed in 1926. The month began with the lowest temperatures; 0C to -2 C. There were numerous warm days with 20 C being reached quite often. The highest values occurred during mid-month with 25 to 28 C being recorded. The overall mean of 12 C or so compares favourably with the CET value of 11.6 C.[xii]

Arrochar (Dumbartonshire): A remarkably wet and cold May.

Berkhamsted: The month was rather cloudy, fairly warm; number of rain days excessive owing to showers.

Cleethorpes: Thunderstorm on the 16th was the worst for several years. Wind momentarily rose to gale force accompanied by large hail stones and torrential downpours of rain. [Rainfall on the 16th was 10 mm. Total rain for the month was 2.28 in, or 57.9 mm].

Worksop: A showery, and rather dull, month, but mild, with low pressure and a good deal of thunder. Mean pressure is the lowest we have ever had in May, and for larger rainfall we have to go back to 1889.

Morwenstow: The worst May I can remember; very cold all the month, snow, with rain and hail on the fifth; abnormally wet, rain being so frequent and most persistent; frequent heavy soaking fog; land veery badly waterlogged through the greater part of the month.

Newquay: Hail 5 days, a record; May 1923 had hail on 4 days, but not nearly so severe as in this May. The least sunny and, by far, the wettest May in 35 years.

Southport: An exceptionally dull, wet, and equable month, with SW winds greatly in excess, and NE and E ones in defect. Mean air pressure the lowest for May since the record commenced.

Tavistock: A very wet month, the wettest May since 1878.

Totland Bay: During my 38 years of observations here, I have only known one May with more rain, that occurred in 1898 with its fall of 3.59 in [91.2 mm].

Ullapool: A varied month, some warm days of brilliant sunshine and, on the whole, moderate temperatures.

UK Overview, May 1925.[xiii]

May 1925 was, generally, changeable, and showery, with bright periods. Thunderstorms and hail showers were frequent, and rainfall throughout the country was above average; western Scotland, South Wales, south-eastern Ireland, and southern England had the highest rainfall totals. The mean pressure was well below normal ranging from 1005 hp in western Scotland to 1010 hp in south-eastern England; the normal range at that time was from 1014 hp to 1016 hp.

At the start of the month there were cold northerly winds and bright sunny weather in the west; over 13 hours of bright sunshine being recorded at Aberystwyth and Falmouth. From the 2nd to the 9th the weather deteriorated, becoming cool and cloudy, with thunderstorms and heavy rain at times, as a depression moved over the country; hail was a common occurrence on the 5th, 6th, and 7th and, at Tiverton, 30 mm of rain was measured on the 6th.

Ground frosts were generally reported during this period.

A ridge of high pressure spread northwards, from the Azores, on the 10th bringing an improvement in the weather. Temperatures rose to between 70 F [21 C] and 80 F [27 C] in may parts of England, 80 F [27 C] being recorded in London, Norwich, and Margat, on the 16th, while the south-east and east of England experienced more than 13 hours of bright sunshine on several days. In the north of Scotland, and parts of Ireland, the weather remained cloudy, and temperatures did not rise above 60 F [15 C]. On the south-west coast of England, sea fog was reported between the 14th and 16th, again with thundery weather. Thunderstorms, with heavy rain, were numerous on the 18th and 19th; 44.7 mm was recorded at Derby, and 37.1 mm at Calshot, on the 19th.

Pressure remained low during the last 10 days, the weather being changeable with local heavy rain dominating; falls in exceeding 50 mm were recoded local in Wales and the west of Scotland; 74 mm being recorded at Llyn Llydaw on the 26th, 36 mm at Totennyworth Park , Sussex, on the 27th, and 50.3 mm at Llyn Fawr, Glamorgan, on the 29th, and falls between 30 and 40 mm were common. There were also reports of sunshine amounts of 14 hours duration being noted in many places, but the temperature gradually fell during the last few days, with maxima around 65 F [18 C] however, in the extreme north temperatures failed to reach 60 F [15 C], the maximum at Wick being 57 F [14 C].

Ground frost was recorded in most parts of the country; Rounton, Yorkshire, had 11, and Greenwich 9. A grass minimum of 23 F [-5 C] was noted at Houghall, Durham, on the morning of the 2nd, together with an air minimum of 29 F [-2 C].

Precipitation was above normal everywhere, and at some places on the west coast of Scotland 300% of average was recorded. Thunderstorms and hail were widespread, and numerous. On the 6th, 7th, and 8th, thunderstorms and hail were widespread, and, on the 18th, severe thunderstorms were reported in many parts of England and Scotland. Liverpool had 10 days with thunderstorms, while Birmingham, Lenfield, Newquay, Dublin, and Birr Castle each had 5 days with hail.

Five days of fog were reported at Colmonell, Berwick-on-Tweed, St Anne's Head, and Balbriggan. Sea fog was also reported on parts of the west and south coasts between the 14th and 18th.

In summary, the weather during May 1925 was thundery, with heavy rain, and bright sunshine.

The World, May 1925.

Pressure was below average over much of Europe and the North Atlantic, apart from Scandinavia and Spitsbergen, and in a belt from Bermuda to Spain, where the pressure was slightly above average. The pressure pattern produced a mainly southerly, or south-westerly, airstream, with above average temperatures, and slightly above average rainfall, over the British Isles and northern Europe.

In Sweden, the temperature was + 3 F [+1.5 C] above average, together with irregular rainfall; the greatest excess of 20 to 30 mm being in the western part of middle Sweden. Thunderstorms and heavy rain affected Holland in the early part of the month; between the 1st and 6th, 69 mm of rain were reported at Den Helder, the average for the month being 43 mm. Severe storms were reported in Hungary on the 3rd and 11th, and on the 18th vineyards along the northern shore of Lake Bienna, Switzerland, were destroyed during a thunderstorm, which also caused several landslides. On the 23rd, a Turkish steamer was lost at the entrance to the Bosphorus during a storm; forty-four passengers and crew were lost. A storm, which swept over Anatolia on the 25th, destroyed many buildings in Angora, Adanna, and Mersina. In eastern Persia [Iran], the crop outlook was said to be bad with drought affecting the barley, and the opium crop severely damaged by cold. It is understood that the drought affecting Spain was broken, and rainfall was plentiful, just in time to save the spring crops.

In Australia, rainfall was above average, apart from Western Australia, and northern Queensland, which was slightly below. The coastal region of New South Wales saw very heavy rainfall, which varied from 200% on the north coast to 800% on the Upper Murrumbidgee, where flooding produced damage estimated, at the time of the report, to be in the region of £500,00. The drought in the west was broken during the latter part of the month.

High temperatures were being recorded in the USA about the middle of the month, but northerly winds caused a sudden fall in temperature along the southern shore of the Great Lakes on the 24th; the maximum at Duluth was 68 F [20 C] on the 22nd and 32 F [0 C] on the 23rd; at Toledo, Ohio, the maximum was 88 F [31 C] on the 23rd, and 42 F [5.6 C] on the 24th. It is understood that May 24th, Empire Day, was the coldest in Ontario for 75 years.

Rainfall in the northern and central regions of Brazil was irregular, being 18 mm below average in both districts but, in the south, rainfall was plentiful being 22 mm above average. The main characteristic of the month was the passage of a few large, slow moving, anticyclones. The condition of the crops was considered to be generally good.[xiv]

Central England Data.[xv] May 1925 (Averaging period is 1891 to 1920.)

Mean Maximum Temperature: 15.7 C. Average: 15.8 C.

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

Mean Temperature: 11.6 C. Average: 11.3 C.

England and Wales Rainfall: 96.5 mm. Average: 57.8 mm, 167%.

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

Midlands Mean Maximum Temperature: 15.8 C. Average: 16.7 C.

Midlands Mean Minimum Temperature: 6.6 C. Average: 6.3 C.

Midlands Mean Temperature: 11.1 C. Average: 11.5 C.

Midlands Rainfall: 95.7 mm. Average: 55.7 mm, 172%.

Central England Data May 2025 (Provisional) (Averaging period is 1991-2020).

Mean Maximum Temperature: 18.9 C. Average: 16.5 C.

Mean Minimum Temperature: 7.6 C. Average: 7.3 C.

Mean Temperature: 13.2 C. Average: 11.9 C.

England and Wales Rainfall: 32.8 mm. Average: 62.7 mm, %.

Midlands Data.

Mean Maximum Temperature: 18.7 C. Average: 15.3 C.

Mean Minimum Temperature: 7.1 C. Average: 5.8 C.

Mean Temperature: 12.9 C. Average: 10.5 C.

Midlands Rainfall: 31.3 mm. Average: 59.1 mm, %.

Sunshine: 250.2 hours. Average: 177.4 hours.

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[i] Courtesy T Scholey, through Lowdham observer.
[ii] Weather Summary, May 2025, Meteorological Office, HMSO, June 2025.
[iii] The Guardian, 3 May 2025.
[iv] The Guardian, 6 May 2025.
[v] The Guardian, 10 May 2025.
[vi] The Guardian, 17 May 2025.
[vii] The Guardian, 24 May 2025.
[viii] The Guardian, 27 May 2025.
[ix] The Guardian, 31 May 2025.
[x] The Guardian, 3 June 2025.
[xi] Monthly Weather Report, May 1925, Meteorological Office, HMSO, June 1925, p. 57.
[xii] Stanier D J, by email, 1 June 2025.
[xiii] Monthly Weather Report, May 1925, Meteorological Office, HMSO, June 1925, p.57.
[xiv] Summary of World Weather for May 1925, Meteorological Magazine, June 1925, Meteorological Office, HMSO, pp.123-128.
[xv] Hadley Centre, Central England and Midlands, Meteorological Office.