

MAY DATA

The new month began as a change from the heavy rain seen at the end of April set in. This brought drier conditions though temperatures continued about normal with maxima around the 14°C/57.2°F mark. Nights were still cool enough for frost on the ground, and this occurred from the 2nd to the 4th inclusive, grass temperatures falling to -1.5°C/29.3°F on the 4th. It also continued sunny with totals above 9 hours daily on the first 5 days of the month, and reaching as high as 10.9 hours on the 1st though radiation levels had fallen back below the 1 kilowatt/square metre mark. With winds from the north or north east daytime temperatures remained on the cool side, though the winds were generally light with a maximum gust of 23-knots/27.6 mph on the 1st.

The Azores anticyclone did not extend far enough north eastwards to influence the weather over the UK to any great extent, whilst low pressure in the western Mediterranean maintained cool and very wet conditions over France, Spain and much of Italy. The UK remained relatively cool with dull days as winds from the cold North Sea brought in mist and drizzle that extended well south of the Midlands on several occasions. Though rainfall totals were not high, days were dull and miserable, especially after such a warm and sunny spell for much of the preceding month of April. Air temperatures for the first week ranged from a high of 15.2°C/59.4°F on the 5th to a low of 1.4°C/34.5°F on the 4th, rainfall for the period totalling just 1.3mm/0.05in and sunshine 53.3 hours.

The weather at the start of the second week saw little change with winds still from the NE off a cold North Sea bringing in mist and sometimes-persistent drizzle. Temperatures remained depressed with sunshine also well below the levels seen over the previous week. These dull conditions resulted in low radiation levels, the maximum for the 9th reaching no higher than 313 watts per square metre. Pressure fell over the week from 1022.2hPa on the 8th to 1006.1hPa on the 13th. Winds were variable in direction with an easterly component on 4 days gusting to a maximum of 30knots/36mph on the 14th.

Temperatures over the week ranged from a maximum of 17.6°C/63.7°F on the 12th to a low of 3.7°C/38.7°F also on the 12th giving a mean of 10.3°C/50.5°F for the week. Grass temperatures fell as low as 0.0°C/32.0°F on the 12th whilst radiation temperatures peaked at 53.4°C/128.1°F on the 11th though the maximum radiation was 1076 watts per square metre on the 14th. Rainfall for the week amounted to 14.9mm.0.59in, all of this falling on the two days, the 12th and 13th. Over the same 7-day period sunshine totalled 35.3 hours, the sunniest day, the 11th seeing 13.2 hours of bright sunshine. This was a considerable change from the almost summer-like conditions seen at the end of April when “shirt-sleeves” were the order of the day.

The markedly unsettled conditions continued into the third week with a string of low-pressure systems “queued” to cross the country. This meant that the 15th and 16th were the best days with 12.2 hours of sunshine on the latter date and both free of any measurable rain. It was also warm with a maximum of 23.8°C/74.8°F on the 16th making it the warmest day of the month so far. Temperatures ranged from this maximum on the 16th to a minimum of 7.7°C/45.9°F also on the 16th due to the relatively cloud-free skies by day and night. The grass fell to a low of 4.7°C/40.5°F on the 16th [due to this radiative cooling] whilst the slab fell to 7.0°C/44.6°F on the same date. Winds were variable in direction and moderate to light in strength, the maximum gust of 28 knots/33.6mph occurring on the 17th.

Rainfall for the week amounted to 27.3mm/1.07in falling over 5 days with 33.8 hours of bright sunshine. The maximum black-bulb radiation temperature of 57.9°C/136.2°F occurred on the 15th with the maximum solar radiation of 1.021 kilowatts per square metre on the same date. A frontal system stretched from the UK back to Newfoundland with a succession of lows developing on this as time passed. This led to one depression after another crossing the country bringing ever-worsening conditions as the week progressed. By the 21st a particularly vicious low appeared to be readying itself to cross the country on the 24th bringing unseasonable gales in its wake.