

## MAY STATISTICS RECORDED AT LERWICK OBSERVATORY

	May 2009	Averages 1971-2000
Mean maximum temperature	11.4°C	10.2°C
Mean minimum temperature	6.7°C	5.2°C
Daily mean temperature	8.9°C	7.6°C
Mean sea-level pressure	1012.9 hPa (mb)	1013.8 hPa (mb)
Total rainfall	68.8 mm	53.6 mm
Wet days => 1 mm	16 days	10.1 days
Sunshine (electronic sensor)	235.5 hours	168.3 hours
Air frosts	0 days	0.5 days
Ground frosts	2 days	4.8 days
Snow/sleet	0 days	2.2 days
Days with gale	2 days	0.6 days
Maximum daily mean temp.	13.3°C on 31st	
Minimum daily mean temp.	6.2°C on 10th	
Highest maximum	17.4°C on 31st	
Lowest day maximum	7.8°C on 10th	
Highest night minimum	10.3°C on 29th	
Lowest minimum	2.4°C on 11th	
Lowest grass minimum	-1.9°C on 11th	
Wettest day	8.8 mm on 23rd	
Sunniest day	15.6 hours on 12th	
Highest mean hourly wind	46 knots on 7th	
Highest gust	62 knots on 7th	

### **WARM AND SUNNY, SLIGHTLY ABOVE NORMAL RAINFALL**

**The 1st - 10th with pressure low near Iceland, were unsettled, changeable and windy, with a mainly SW'ly cyclonic airflow over Shetland. A settled, dry and sunny interlude followed from the 11th - 16th, as an anticyclone drifted north over the Northern Isles. Unsettled conditions then followed as low pressure became centred over the British Isles. However, the last few days of May were dry, warm and sunny, as another anticyclone drifted northeast over the North Sea into Scandinavia.**

**Overall, temperatures were slightly above-normal across Scotland, but more so in Shetland. May was a rather wet month across the west of Scotland. while rainfall was average in the east. However, the northeast was wetter than normal. It was a sunny month across Scotland, particularly towards the north and north-east. Fair Isle - for the second year running - was the sunniest place in the UK during May, with 282.2 hours. However, this figure fell well short of the 304.7 hours recorded in May 2008 - the Isle's sunniest month ever.**

After a bright start, outbreaks of occasionally heavy rain - accompanied by fresh or strong S to SE'ly winds - affected Shetland later on the 1st, as a deep depression in the Atlantic pushed fronts over the Isles. Rain cleared overnight and winds veered SW'ly, with sunny spells and a few showers on the 2nd, as the low moved away over Iceland. A shallow frontal trough - moving east - brought some rain early on the 3rd. However this soon cleared, and the remainder of the day was mostly dry and sunny with moderate W'ly winds across the area.

As the first depression moved north from Iceland, another quickly took its place, driving further fronts east over the Northern Isles. These gave a dull and sometimes misty day on the 4th, although rainfall tended to be light and patchy. Fresh to strong S to SW'ly winds veered SW to W'ly later in the day, as showery conditions followed from the west. With low pressure remaining slow-moving over Iceland, fresh SW to W'ly winds brought a mixture of sunshine and showers - some of hail - on the 5th.

The 6th started cool and showery - some of these showers with hail - but became mostly dry and bright later as a ridge moved east. This soon declined, with winds backing SE'ly as another frontal wave ran east over northern Scotland. Little if any rain fell in Shetland but, by the morning of the 7th, winds - having veered SW to

W'ly - were severe gale-force, gusting to 71 mph at Lerwick Observatory. Winds eased later as a ridge moved east.

The 8th, as a small vigorous low swung in towards northwest Scotland, was a bright day with sunny spells, showers - some of hail - and a strong SW'ly wind. The showers became more frequent and heavier for a time on the 9th, as the low moved north and winds veered more W'ly. Showers - some of hail - died out on the 10th and cold NW'ly winds fell light, as pressure began to build from the west.

The mornings of the 11th and 12th - with light winds and clear skies, resulting from an anticyclone developing over Scotland - were cool with a widespread grass frost inland. These two days and the following three were dry and mostly sunny, as the anticyclone drifted slowly north over the Northern Isles. However, with SE'ly winds freshening as the high continued north, nights were not quite so cool. Sunshine for each of the six days 11th - 16th averaged just over 13 hours, with most places seeing no rainfall. However, as a low drifted slowly north over western areas of the British Isles, associated fronts eventually brought rain - heavy at times - accompanied by strong E'ly winds to Shetland on the 17th.

With low pressure covering much of the British Isles, and frontal troughs in its circulation affecting northeast Scotland, the 18th was also dull with patchy rain or drizzle, hill fog and strong SE'ly winds. The 19th, with the low further north and winds therefore circulating round over the Scottish mainland, was much brighter with long sunny spells and fresh S'ly winds.

During the next few days, though the low then drifted east over the Northern Isles, it was a weak and filling feature, so the 20th, 21st and 22nd were mainly dry and sunny with light and variable winds, although fog patches did linger over and around some hills and headlands.

The 23rd started off dry and bright, as high pressure over Iceland built across Scotland to link with a small anticyclone over the Low Countries. However the ridge was short-lived, with winds freshening SE'ly as an Atlantic depression pushed fronts quickly east, bringing rain, mist and low cloud for the latter half of the day.

With high pressure over the southern North Sea and a waving front nearby, the next two days saw mild SW'ly winds blowing across Shetland, bringing some patchy light rain. There were some sunny spells on the 24th and 26th, but the intervening 25th was rather cloudy with hill fog. As low pressure moved away towards Iceland on the 27th, winds veered W'ly and showers affected Shetland early in the day. After a bright, dry start to the 28th, winds backed and freshened SW'ly, and misty conditions with outbreaks of rain or drizzle followed later in the day, as fronts were trailed across the Northern Isles. With high pressure transferring northeast over the North Sea into Scandinavia, the last three days of the month were dry and sunny with warm S'ly winds backing SE'ly and eventually light E'ly, by which time - late on the 31st - the first signs of sea-fog were beginning to make their appearance on eastern coasts.

**Dave Wheeler**

**Initial Statistical details for Scotland as a whole (1961-1990 average) for May:**

**Mean Temperature – 13.5°C (0.8°C above average).**

**Rainfall – 124.5 mm (157% of average).**

**Sunshine – 221.2 hours (126% of average).**

(These figures may be revised as late data becomes available)

**Data from the UK Met Office**