



Monthly Weather Summary

The Weather of May 2008

Warmest May on record in most places; dry and sunny almost everywhere

After an unsettled start, much of the weather of May was dominated by areas of high pressure close to the country, giving dry and sunny weather on many days. These anticyclones were located mainly to the north or east of Ireland, bringing an easterly airflow across the area for much of the month. Mean air temperatures for May were above normal everywhere and were more than three degrees higher than normal in western areas. It was the warmest May in over a century of record at the long-term stations of Dublin (Phoenix Park), Malin Head and Birr, while at Valentia Observatory, the mean temperature for this month of 13.5°C equalled its previous highest May value, recorded in 1940. There was neither air nor ground frost during the month at the majority of stations, but 5 or 6 ground frosts were recorded in some inland areas. It was a very dry month over much of the country, with less than half of the normal May rainfall in places, but isolated heavy or thundery showers on a number of days brought totals close to normal at stations in the south and southwest. A number of stations recorded their driest May since 1991. Between 4 and 13 wetdays were measured during the month (days with 1mm or more rainfall), around half of normal for May in many places. It was a sunnier than normal month at almost all stations, especially in the north and west, where totals were more than 35% higher than average. The first half of May was particularly sunny, with daily values of over 10 hours on many days.

1st to 4th: Rain or showers affected all areas, heaviest in the south and southwest on the 3rd. Becoming warm after a cool start, with sunny spells each day also. Winds were mainly south to southwesterly, generally moderate in strength, but strong with gale gusts near western and northern coasts on the 3rd.

5th to 20th: Pressure rose over the country, as an anticyclone developed to the east of Ireland and moved very slowly westwards. Rainfall was recorded on a number of days, mainly as a result of isolated thunderstorms giving locally heavy falls, but amounts at almost all stations during this period were very small. Most days during this period were sunny, particularly between the 13th and 15th under almost cloudless skies. Temperatures rose well above normal on many days, but eastern and northern coasts were cooler, affected by onshore breezes. All areas became cooler after the 16th, as cloudier conditions developed. Winds throughout this period were mainly easterly in direction, light to moderate in strength.

21st to 31st: A band of heavy rain moved slowly eastwards during the 21st and 22nd, followed by thundery showers in western areas. Further bands of rain affected eastern and southern counties between the 24th and 27th, while heavy and thundery showers again developed over the western half of the country on the 30th and 31st. Temperatures continued above normal for most of the period, particularly at the end of the month, which was also very sunny in many places. Fresh to strong southeasterly winds at first backed to an easterly direction and slackened; strong to gale force east to northeasterly winds developed on the 25th and 26th, later becoming light and variable.

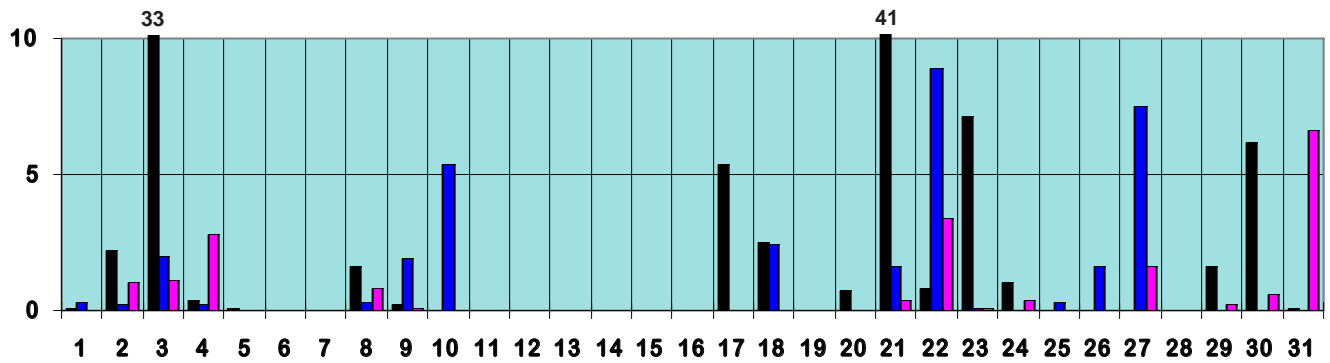
Wind and elements: Mean windspeeds for the month of between 6 and 10 knots generally (11 and 19km/h) were below normal for May. The strongest winds of the month at most stations were recorded on the 25th/26th, but the highest gust of 47 knots (87km/h) was recorded at Malin Head on the 3rd. Thunder was frequent, particularly over the western half of the country; it was most widespread on the 1st, 8th and in the periods 10th to 12th, 22nd to 23rd and 30th to 31st. Hail was recorded only at Belmullet on the 12th.

Extreme values

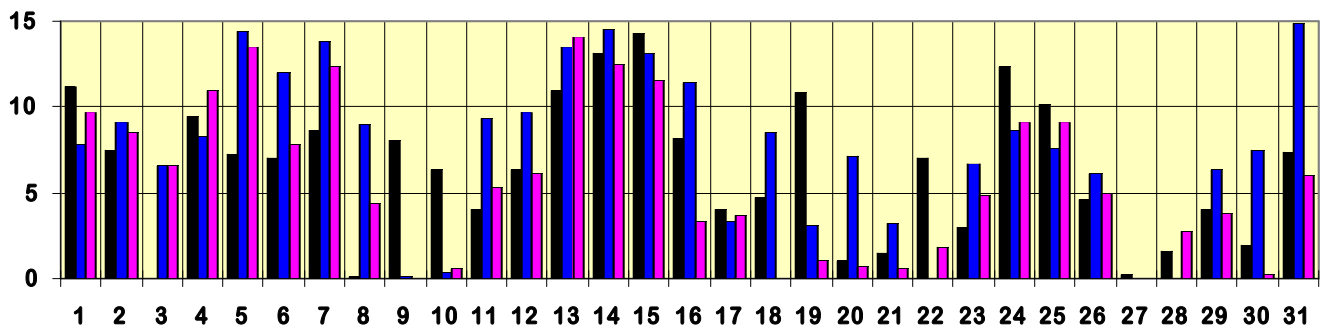
Rainfall	Highest total: 103mm at Valentia Observatory Lowest total: 16mm at Malin Head (<i>its driest May since 1975</i>) Highest daily rainfall: 40.7mm at Valentia Observatory on 21st
Temperature	Highest mean monthly temperature: 14.0°C at Shannon Airport (<i>its warmest May since records began there in 1945</i>) Lowest mean monthly temperature: 11.6°C at Dublin Airport (<i>its warmest May since 1992</i>) Highest temperature: 25.0°C at Birr on 12th (<i>its highest May temperature since 1997</i>) Lowest air temperature: 0.6°C at Dublin Airport on 20th Lowest grass minimum temperature: -2.9°C at Casement Aerodrome on 20th
Sunshine	Highest monthly total: 265 hours at Malin Head (<i>its sunniest May since 2000</i>) Lowest monthly total: 173 hours at Cork Airport Highest daily sunshine: 15.3 hours at Malin Head on 26th (<i>its highest daily value for May since 1997</i>)

May 2008 Daily values at selected synoptic stations

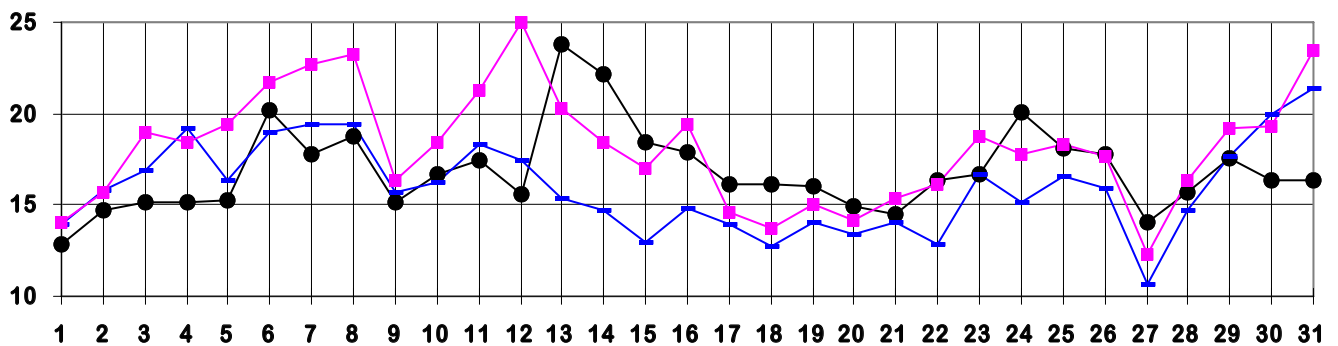
Rainfall (mm)



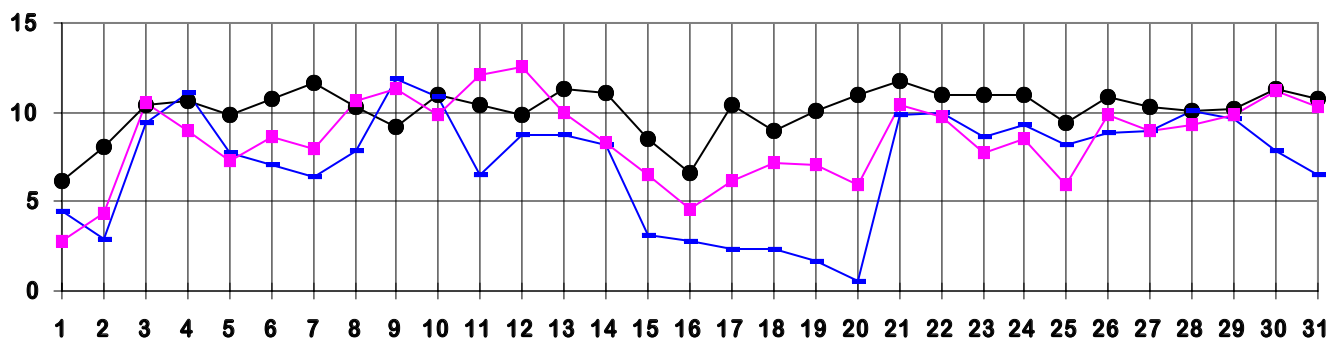
Sunshine (hours)



Maximum temperature (°C)



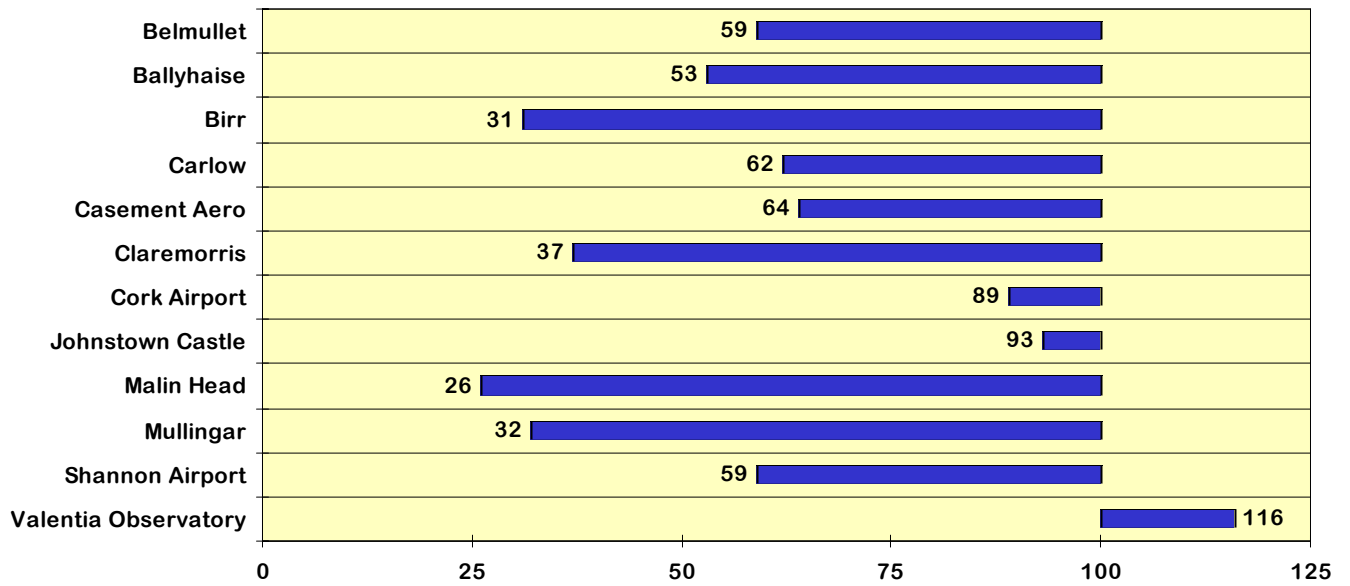
Minimum temperature (°C)



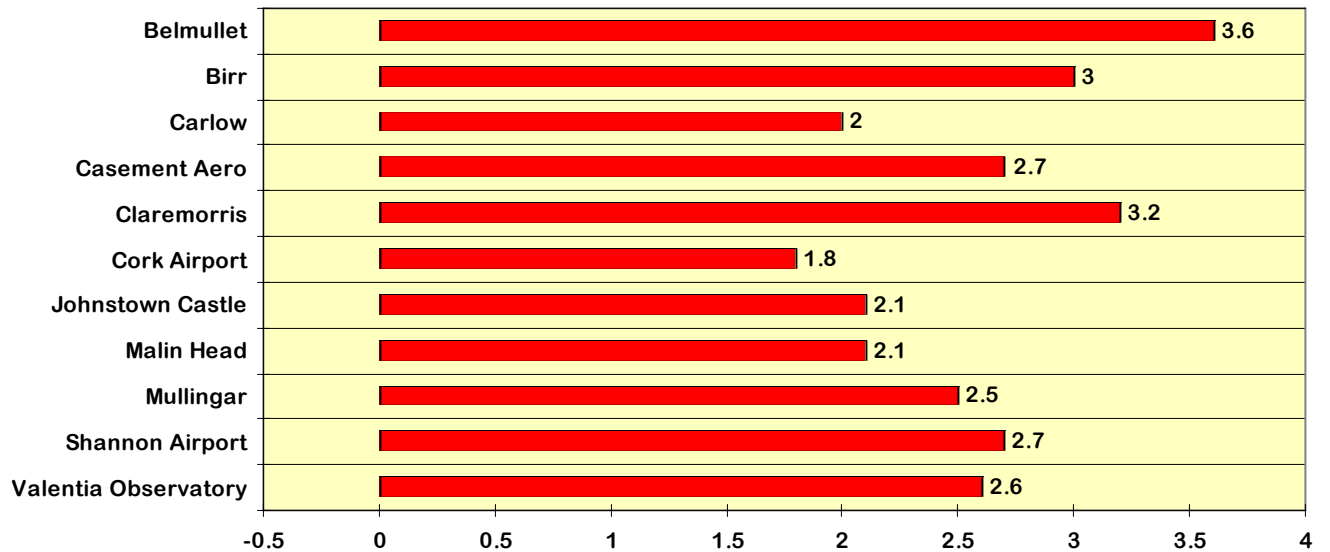
● Valentia Observatory - Dublin Airport ■ Birr

May 2008 Percentage / Difference from 1961-90 monthly normals

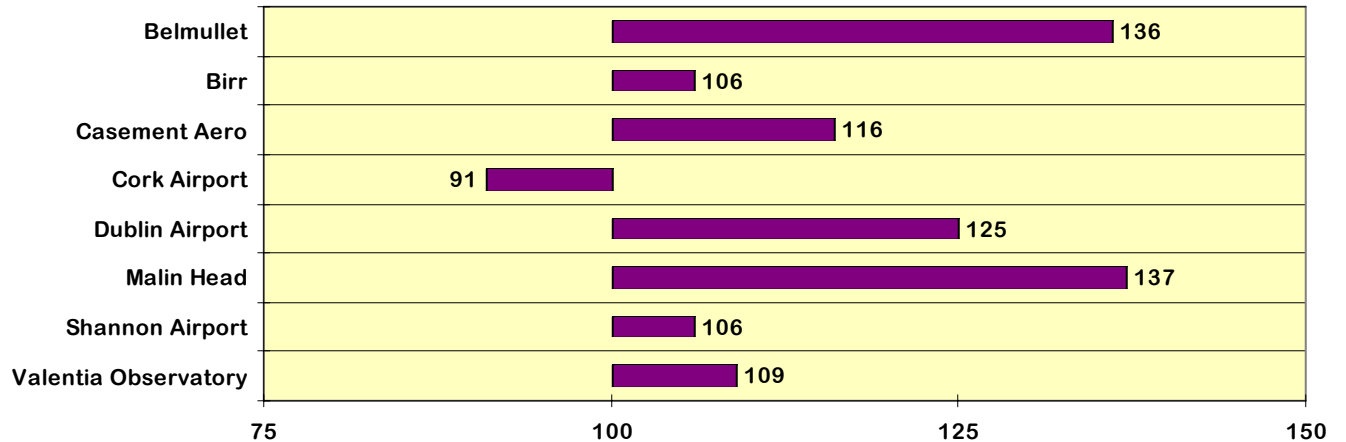
Rainfall (% of normal for period 1961-1990)



Temperature (°C difference from normal for period 1961-1990)



Sunshine (% of normal for period 1961-1990)



The Weather of Spring 2008

(March, April and May summary)

Becoming warm after cool start; sunny with near normal rainfall

Mean air temperatures for the season were between a half and one degree above normal almost everywhere, with highest departures from normal in the west of the country. Temperatures were close to normal values in both March and April, but May was exceptionally warm, especially over the western half of the country. Temperatures rose above 20°C at many inland and western stations during the second week in May, with the highest spring maxima for between 5 and 11 years recorded during this period at many stations. The lowest temperatures of the season were associated with a spell of very frosty weather between March 17th and 19th, when ground temperatures fell below -10°C at Birr; there was a total of 47 ground frosts during the 3-month period recorded at this station, compared with its seasonal average of 32.

Rainfall totals for the season were close to normal generally. Both April and May were relatively dry except in parts of the west, but March was a very wet month in many areas. The number of wetdays (days with 1mm or more rainfall) measured during the season was close to or higher than normal; there were between 33 and 51 wetdays compared with the normal range for spring of between 32 and 42. Many stations recorded their highest daily falls of the season between March 28th and 31st.

Sunshine totals for the season were well above normal generally, with each of the spring months being sunnier than normal. At no station was it as sunny as spring of 2007, however, which was the sunniest on record in many places. Just over 15 hours of sunshine were recorded at Malin Head on May 26th.

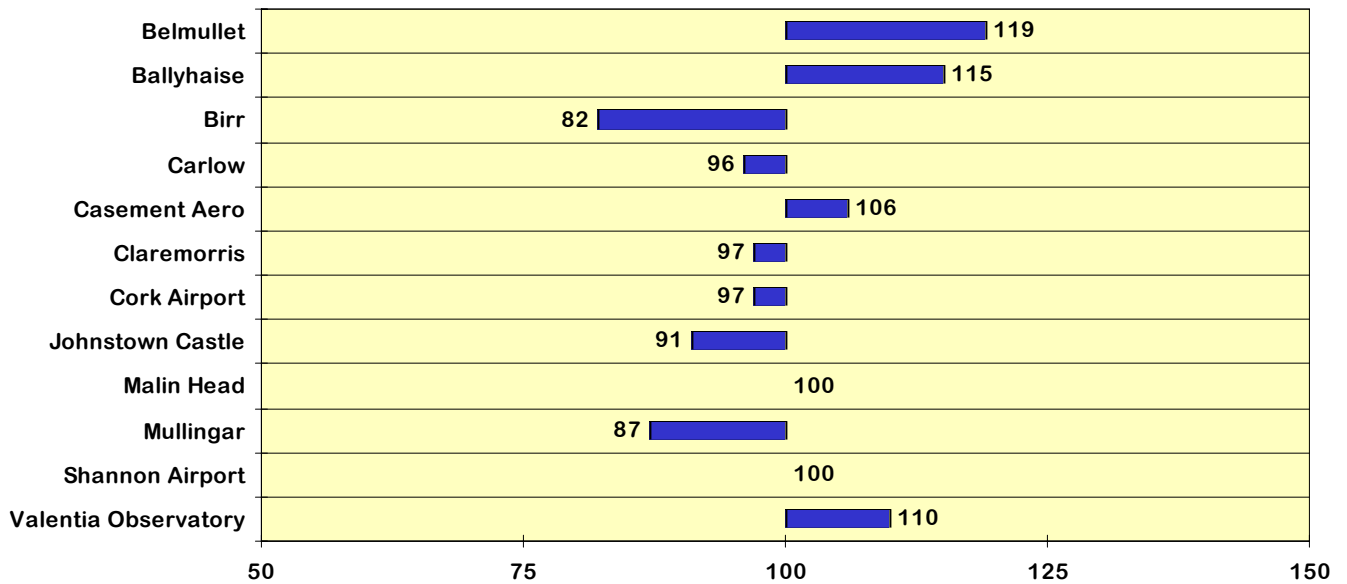
The highest gust of the season, 73 knots (*135km/hour*), was recorded at both Valentia Observatory on March 10th and at Belmullet on March 11th; this was the highest spring gust at Valentia since 1959. Both gusts were associated with an exceptionally deep depression which passed over the south of Ireland on March 10th.

Extreme values

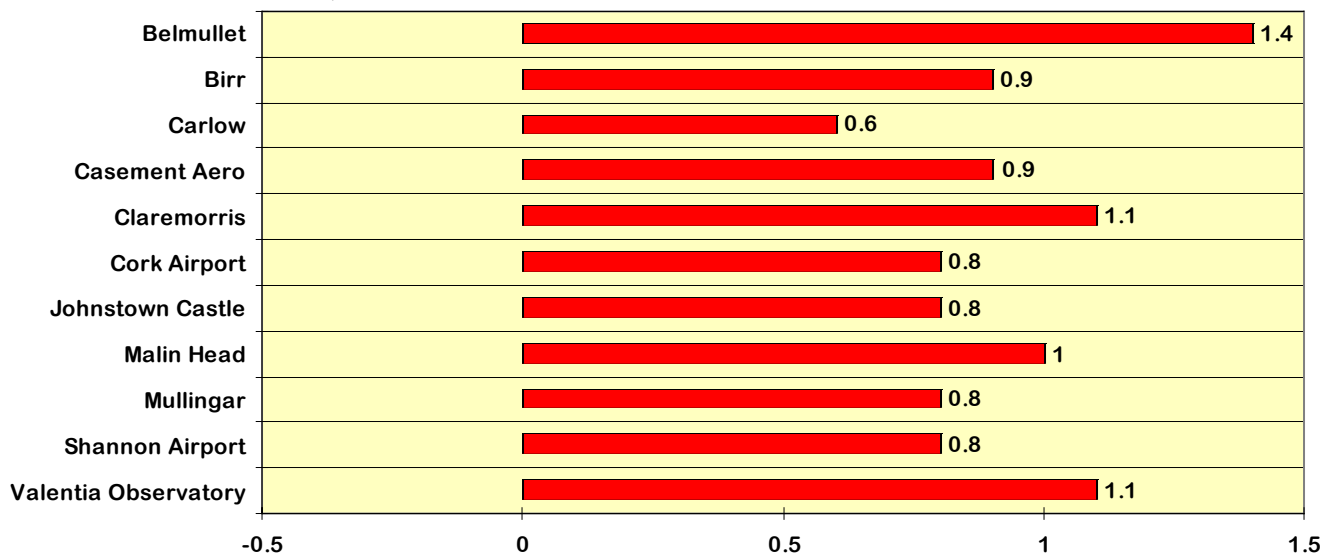
Rainfall	Highest seasonal total: 319mm at Valentia Observatory Lowest seasonal total: 145mm at Birr Highest daily rainfall: 40.7mm at Valentia Observatory on May 21st
Temperature	Highest mean seasonal temperature: 10.2°C at Valentia Observatory Lowest mean seasonal temperature: 8.1°C at Knock Airport Highest temperature: 25.0°C at Birr on May 12th (<i>its highest spring temperature since 1997</i>) Lowest air temperature: -4.1°C at Casement Aerodrome on March 18th Lowest grass minimum temperature: -10.9°C at Birr on March 18th
Sunshine	Highest seasonal total: 573 hours at Malin Head Lowest seasonal total: 449 hours at Birr Highest daily sunshine: 15.3 hours at Malin Head on May 26th (<i>its highest daily spring value since 1997</i>)

Spring 2008 Percentage / Difference from 1961-90 monthly normals

Rainfall (% of normal for period 1961-1990)



Temperature (°C difference from normal for period 1961-1990)



Sunshine (% of normal for period 1961-1990)

