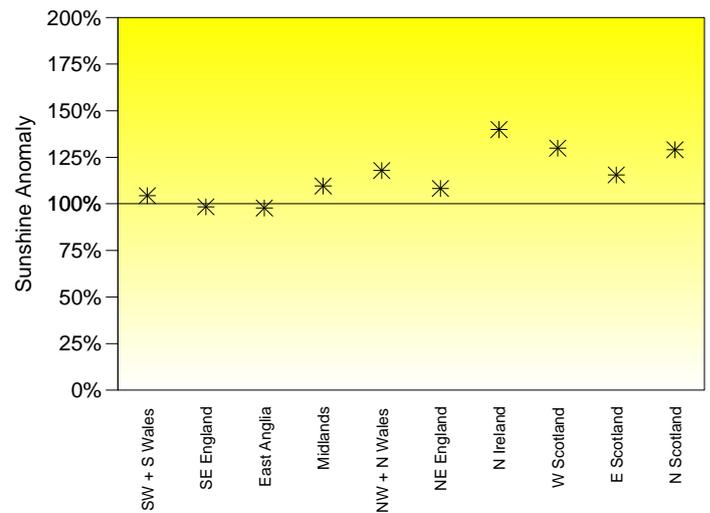
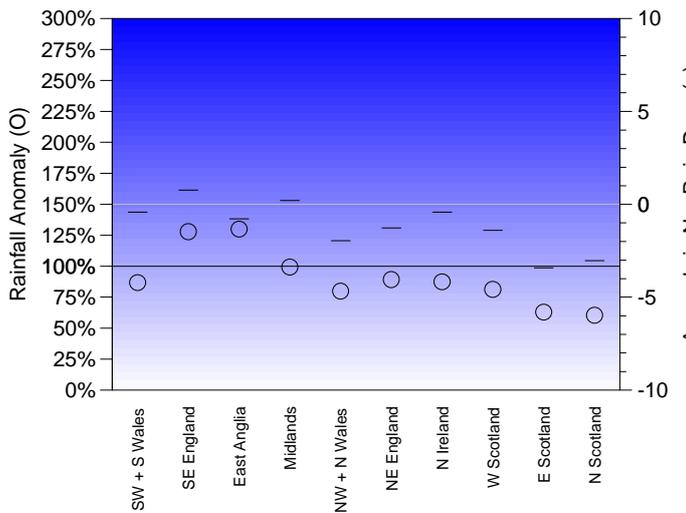


Extremes for May 2017	
Hottest:	29.4°C Lossiemouth, Grampian, 26th
Coldest:	-5.1°C Shap SAWS, Cumbria, 9th
Most Rain:	53.9mm Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd, 15th
Most Sun:	16.1hrs Kinloss, Grampian, 25th
Windiest:	62mph Culdrose, Cornwall, 5th
Warmest:	15.3°C St James Park, Greater London
Coolest:	9.0°C Braemar No 2, Grampian
Wettest:	155.5mm Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd
Driest:	14.6mm Newton Rigg, Cumbria
Sunniest:	269.5hrs Aldergrove, County Antrim
Dullest:	134.2hrs Liscombe, Somerset



Cloud borne on westerly winds is at its rarest during May, and the first fortnight is very often fine and dry and sunny - especially for north and west Britain. This May was a case in point with Northern Ireland proving the sunniest place in all of Europe over its first 10 days. The period 12th-14th May corresponds to the "Ice Saints" and is supposedly cooler - whilst the final week is reputedly reliably warm. The hottest day of the year has fallen in May on three occasions since 1875.

May started cool with an area of low pressure strung out across the south, producing coastal gales in Cornwall and Devon on the 5th. Pressure then built steadily from the north and an anticyclonic easterly flow became established. The first 11 days of the month produced abundant sunshine across Northern Ireland and the west of Scotland - where sunshine averaged over 12 hours per day. The dry spell that had started in March also continued across many parts of the country. Nights were often cool, beneath clear skies and air frosts were frequent across the North of Scotland, and affected places further south including Cumbria, Oxfordshire (e.g. Benson -2.8°C) and Devon (e.g. Exeter Airport -0.5°C) on the 10th. By the 11th high pressure was waning, winds had veered south west and this ushered in a spell of more unsettled weather, with some spells of heavy rain for central and south-eastern Britain. There was localised flooding in Maesteg, south Wales and a tornado caused damage in Stapleford, Nottinghamshire. The 17th and 18th were very wet days for south and east England but any impacts were minor or localised. High pressure briefly re-established 24th-26th and it was gloriously sunny with temperatures widely in the mid to high 20°C's. A foehn wind in the lee of the Cairngorm mountains on the afternoon of the 26th saw Lossiemouth, Moray reach 29.4°C (85°F) - the hottest 26th of May to be recorded anywhere in the UK since 1880. The three days of fine weather broke down from the south on the 27th (as it so often does in Britain) with a series of widespread and spectacular thunderstorms. On the 27th lightning strikes in the southwest of England, Lake District and across southern Scotland, caused disruption and there were incidents of localised flooding in North Yorkshire, Lanarkshire and Fife. On the morning of the 29th (Bank Holiday Monday), a severe storm over France drifted across the Channel into southeastern England. At its peak the storm blazed with 500 strikes per minute, and several properties across Kent sustained damage from lightning.

For the UK as a whole, May was the second warmest since 1910 with mean temperatures 1.7°C above the long-term average. This was despite the cool start and nights that were only a little milder than normal. Days were frequently warm or very warm and Scotland experienced a record May, with temperatures more typical of June. North and western Britain was also exceptionally sunny. Scotland had its 8th sunniest month ever and its 3rd sunniest May, Northern Ireland its 7th sunniest month ever and its 3rd sunniest May. Both provinces were also drier than average, but only Scotland significantly so. Further south and east, sunshine and rainfall totals were generally close to average, except for some places in south and east England that found themselves directly in the path of thunderstorms.

In Europe, Skellefteå in central Sweden was blanketed in snow on the 14th - in striking contrast to the southern Swedish towns of Malmö and Helsingborg which basked in a balmy 19°C (66°F). In Russia, the deadliest storm in 100 years struck Moscow and its suburbs on the 29th. A narrow band of violent squalls along a cold weather front caused 70mph gusts that left buildings including the Kremlin damaged, toppled an estimated 3,500 trees, damaged 1,500 cars, killed 16 people and injured 150 more. Remarkably, all this occurred in the entire absence of torrential rain, lightning or hail.

Across the Atlantic, a combination of melting snow and exceptional spring rainfall led to the worst flooding in decades in the eastern Canadian provinces of Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick. Further south, hail as large as tennis balls peppered Denver, Colorado, USA on the 8th. 150 flights were delayed at Denver International Airport, there was widespread damage to crops and trees and hundreds of cars were ruined. On the 18th, late season snowstorms swept across Colorado and Wyoming closing highways and burying some communities under several feet of snow. At Ward, Colorado, snow lay 97cm deep early on the 19th. Violent thunderstorms struck the central Plains, the mid-Mississippi and Tennessee River valleys on the 27th. Grapefruit sized hail smashed windows and dented vehicles and at least 15 tornadoes touched down in Missouri and Oklahoma felling trees and causing widespread power outages.

On the 28th landslides and monsoon floods in the south and west of Sri Lanka forced 20,000 people to flee their homes. It was the worst flooding to hit the country since 2003, with campaigners blaming massive deforestation to clear land for export crops like tea and rubber. Many communities were cut off, hundreds of homes buried beneath mud and at least 151 people left dead. Most casualties were from Ratnapura, 60 miles east of the capital, Colombo, where the Kalu river burst its banks. On the 30th, Cyclone Mora brought high winds and torrential rain to Bangladesh, killing seven people and destroying thousands of homes.