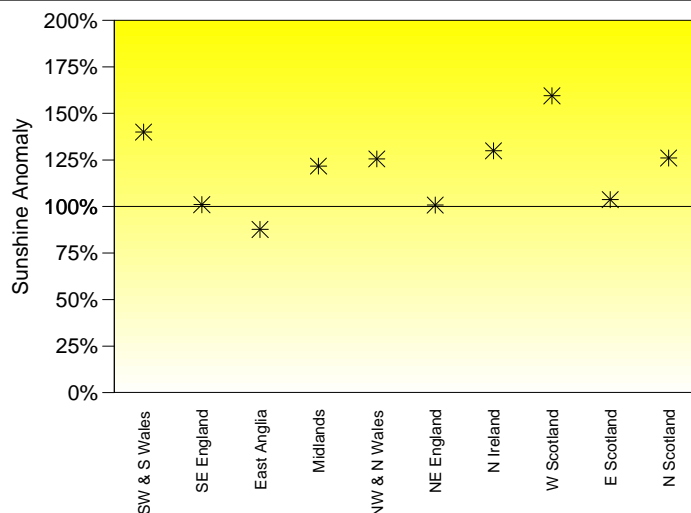
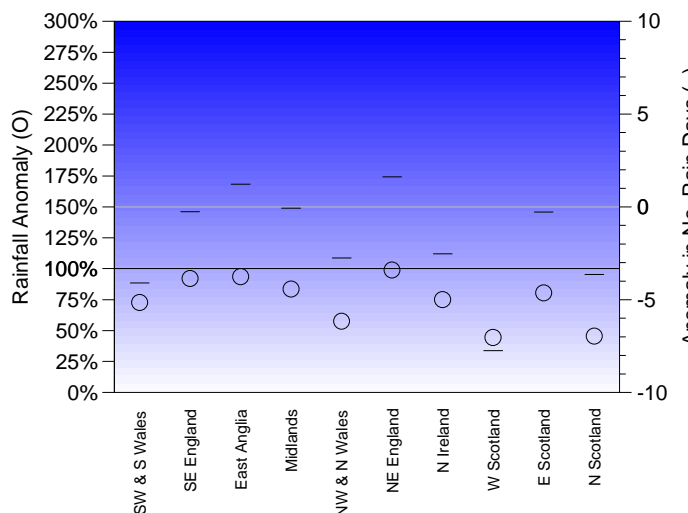


Extremes for January 2010		
Hottest:	12.4°C	Exeter, Devon, 16th
Coldest:	-22.3°C	Altnaharra SAWS, Highland, 8th
Most Rain:	59.2mm	Kinbrace, Highland, 12th
Most Sun:	8.8hrs	Portchester, Hampshire, 30th
Windiest:	75mph	Sule Skerry MAWS, Orkney, 16th
Warmest:	6.4°C	Scilly St. Mary's SAWS, Cornwall
Coolest:	-0.9°C	Carterhouse, Borders
Wettest:	136.0mm	Ballypatrick Forest SAWS, County Antrim
Driest:	28.1mm	Cambridge University, Cambridgeshire
Sunniest:	102.5hrs	Camborne, Cornwall
Dullest:	27.8hrs	Aviemore, Highland



The days draw out noticeably in January but after the festivities of Christmas, it still often seems a dark and gloomy month. The first half is notoriously mild, wet and stormy as the Atlantic westerlies reach maximum strength, but this year the cold winter persisted and winds from the north and east brought frost and more snow.

Starry skies greeted most midnight revellers as the New Year opened and the first few days of 2010 saw plentiful sunshine, hard night frosts and scattered snow showers. On the 3rd, there was a minimum of -16.7°C (2°F) at Braemar, Aberdeenshire. By the 5th, pressure began to fall as fronts moved southwards, bringing a band of snow to the Scottish borders which closed schools just as the new term started. This turned out to be merely the prelude to very heavy snowfall over much of central and southern England overnight and into the 6th. There was widespread disruption to road and rail traffic, airports were closed and motorists were left stranded overnight on the A3 in Hampshire. The area of snow edged away from south east England late on the 6th, leaving accumulations of 25-30cm widely across central and southern parts of the UK, and up to 40-50cm across north east England and southern Scotland. More snow followed over the next few days, especially over Yorkshire and Humberside during the evening of the 8th - but it was the low night-time temperatures that were most noteworthy. Benson (Oxfordshire) recorded a minimum of -17.7°C (0°F) on the 7th and Altnaharra (Highland), a numbing -22.3°C (-8°F) early on the 8th. A fresh band of snow approached southern England from the continent on the 9th and 10th but this turned out to be less heavy and more localised than had been initially forecast. On the 12th, however, rain over the far southwest of England turned to snow as it moved inland and met colder air. Transport chaos ensued across southwest England and south Wales, and 'blizzard' conditions extended slowly to other parts of England and Wales on the 13th - closing many schools and disrupting pupils due to sit public exams. A slow thaw then set in beneath dull and misty skies, and this gathered momentum on the 16th as Atlantic fronts brought sleet then rain. The 17th was brighter, but a sluggish weather pattern brought grey and gloomy weather over the following week. Temperatures fell again on the 20th with further snowfall over parts of Wales, the Midlands and southern England. Fronts brought rain and higher temperatures on the 22nd but quiet weather resumed thereafter as the system stagnated in the North Sea. During the final few days, the main focus of high pressure transferred to mid-Atlantic and the flow veered north-westerly and then northerly, introducing a plunge of Arctic air. This gave sunshine inland, sharp night frosts and wintry showers around exposed coasts - bringing the month to a crisp, invigorating end. Provisionally, it was the coldest January in the UK since 1987 and equal eighth coldest in a series from 1914. Precipitation was close to or below normal, especially in western areas, while sunshine was well above average in the west but rather below average along the east coast.

In contrast to the frigid UK, New Years Day on Crete saw Heraklion basking in 29.8°C (80°F) - a record high January temperature for Europe! Elsewhere on the continent, however the lengthy cold spell that began in December continued. Geneva airport was shut down over the weekend of January 8th due to heavy snow. Over 90% of flights at Frankfurt airport (Germany's busiest) were also cancelled on the 8th, while on the 10th snow drifts 2m deep near Freiburg trapped hundreds of drivers in their vehicles. In Poland, at least 200,000 households were left without power and 1.5m of snow was reported in Leszno. In Holland, icebreakers were deployed to clear shipping routes such as the Twente canal and the harbours of Almelo and Enschede. Seville, Spain reported snow for the first time in 50 years. Between January 20th and 27th another severely cold spell affected eastern Europe. At Intorsura Buzauli (Romania) on the 25th, temperatures fell to -35°C (-31°F) and in Bulgaria, emergency workers struggled through 4m snowdrifts to deliver supplies to stranded villages. Severe cold also hit the United States during the first fortnight. International Falls, Minnesota set a new record low temperature of -38°C (-37°F) on both the 2nd and 3rd. In northern Florida, citrus crops were hit hard when temperatures dipped below -2°C (28°F) on several nights. Widespread snow fell across the state - even in Orlando - a very rare event. In China, central Beijing received 8cm of snow on the 2nd, the heaviest fall since 1951, while some suburbs reported 33cm. In the aftermath, on the night of 4th, temperatures plummeted to -18°C (-1°F). 28cm of snow fell in Seoul, South Korea on the 3rd, the greatest snowfall since records began in 1937. In the southern hemisphere, the first summer snowfall since records began occurred on January 18th in the town of Bombala, New South Wales, Australia. Just 1 week earlier, temperatures in the region had exceeded (45°C) 113°F!