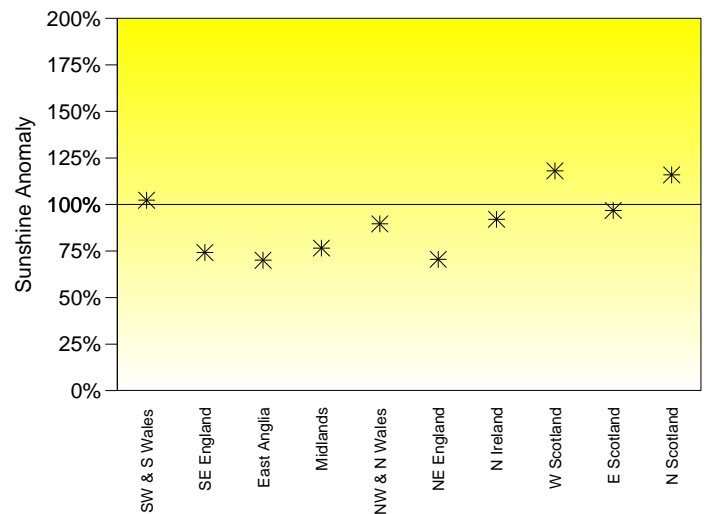
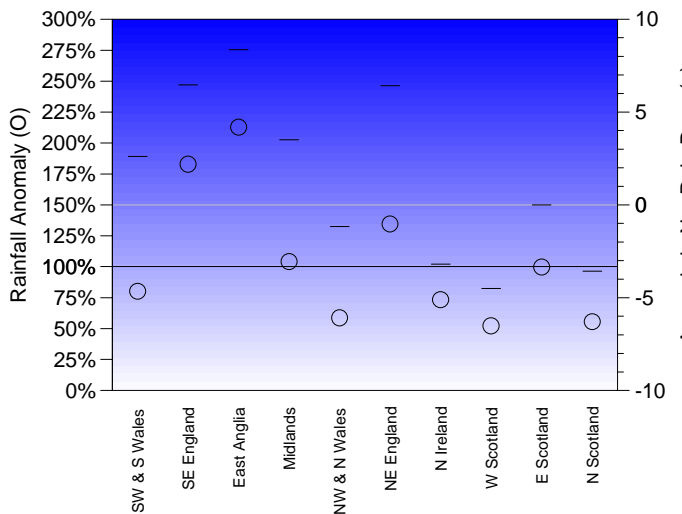


Extremes for February 2010		
Hottest:	12.5°C	Carrefour-au-Clercq, Channel Islands, 23rd
Coldest:	-19.2°C	Braemar No 2, Avon, 23rd
Most Rain:	49.0mm	Lerwick, Shetland, 25th
Most Sun:	9.5hrs	Kinloss, Grampian, 23rd
Windiest:	72mph	Jersey Airport, Channel Islands, 17th
Warmest:	7.0°C	Scilly St. Mary's SAWS, Cornwall
Coolest:	-1.4°C	Tulloch Bridge SAWS, Highland
Wettest:	138.6mm	Herstmonceux West End, East Sussex
Driest:	9.1mm	Cambridge University, Cambridgeshire
Sunniest:	102.2hrs	Dunstaffnage, Strathclyde
Dullest:	33.2hrs	Swaffham, Norfolk



The saying "a February spring isn't worth a pin" reflects the fact that despite the noticeable lengthening of the days, winter has not finished with us yet. Indeed, February can provide some of our harshest weather - because the seas around our shores are slow to gain their heat. In some south-western coastal areas February is statistically a colder month than January. This year, the freezing and snowy conditions of previous months continued...

The month opened with a cold, bright day but milder weather began to push northwards from the 3rd behind frontal systems. On the 5th, temperatures in the south rose above 10°C (50°F) for the first time since 10th December 2009, but the mild spell was brief. Cold north-east winds returned on the 7th and persisted throughout the following week. There were more snow showers in central and eastern areas and some were heavy, leading to significant accumulations, especially in Kent overnight on the 10th/11th. From the 14th, a complex set of fronts sank southwards across the UK giving several days of cold, damp weather, with a messy mixture of rain, sleet and snow. The 19th to 21st were brighter but still with winny showers, and the 22nd saw more widespread snowfall across the Midlands. Scotland had some penetrating frosts, with -19°C (-2°F) at Braemar early on the 22nd and 23rd. By this time, milder weather was pushing north across England and Wales with rain preceded by snow, but the frontal zone dividing the very cold air to the north and milder air to the south became slow-moving across Scotland on the 24th and 25th. This gave lengthy snowfall and blizzards in the Highlands that closed many roads and left thousands of homes in Perthshire without power. To the delight of skiers, 44cm of lying snow was reported from Aviemore, Highlands at 0900 on the 25th. On the 26th and 27th, snowfall became lighter and more sporadic but the mild weather never came to dominate across Scotland. On the 28th, a deep depression moving from Biscay to north-east France gave a wet and windy day in the south-east but northern and western areas were brighter.

Overall it was another cold month, provisionally the coldest February for the UK as a whole since 1991, making this the coldest winter for 31 years. Sunshine totals ranged from below normal across eastern England to well above average near western coasts - typical of a month dominated by easterlies. Precipitation was mostly below normal except in eastern and south-eastern areas of England where up to twice the normal rainfall equivalent fell.

Severe winter weather continued to affect continental Europe. In Scandinavia, temperatures fell to -42°C at Kautokeino, Norway, on the 21st, while in north-west Russia temperatures plunged below -50°C on the 19th. Thousands of snow-clearing machines worked to dig the Russian capital Moscow out of a record-breaking snowfall of 63cm 20th-21st. On the 12th Rome experienced its heaviest snowfall since 1986, closing Ciampino airport and slowing the city's traffic to a crawl. On 27th-28th at least 50 people were killed as storm 'Cynthia' lashed Spain, Portugal and France. Worst affected were the Vendee and Charente-Maritime regions on the western coast of France. Huge waves and gusts over 80mph battered many coastal towns, spreading floods inland and destroying buildings. More than a million homes in France lost electricity, dozens of flights were cancelled from Paris Charles de Gaulle airport and hundreds of train services were delayed because of flooded tracks. On the 20th at least 32 people were killed in floods and mudslides after torrential rains (132mm in 12 hours) hit the Atlantic island of Madeira. The main city, Funchal, and other towns and villages on the south coast were worst affected. Trees were felled and rocks carried away by the muddy floodwaters, blocking roads and hampering emergency services. In the USA an historic blizzard, dubbed 'Snowmageddon', hit the mid-Atlantic region on the 5th and 6th. Colesville, a suburb of Washington D.C. received 102cm. A state record of 65cm was recorded at Wilmington, Delaware, while 72cm at Philadelphia was its second heaviest fall on record. Washington Dulles Airport received 82cm - its largest ever two-day snowfall. Bulldozers had to be used in place of traditional snowploughs. Hundreds of thousands of homes lost power; schools, shops and airports closed; and roofs caved in from the weight of snow. On the 9th and 10th a second major blizzard struck the eastern U.S. This brought 48 cm of new snow to Baltimore, up to 41cm to New York City and 51cm to New Jersey. All-time seasonal snowfall records were broken for Washington, Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia and economic losses estimated to have exceeded \$2B. On February 13th, snow was present in all 49 mainland U.S. states while across the border Vancouver, host to the Winter Olympics was conspicuously snow-free!