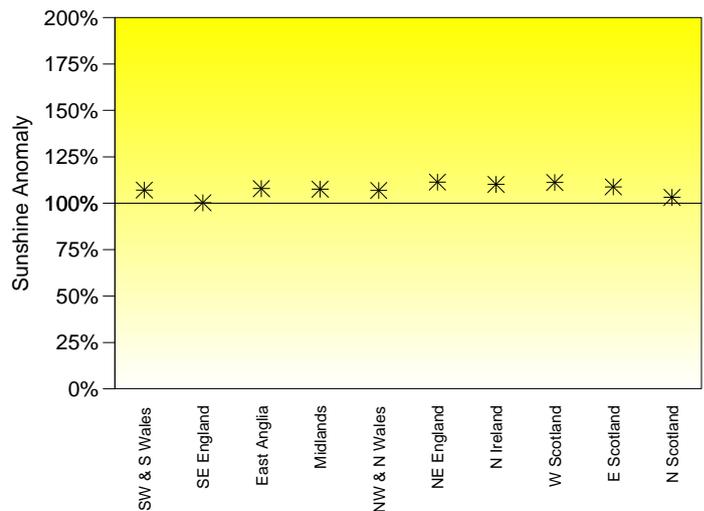
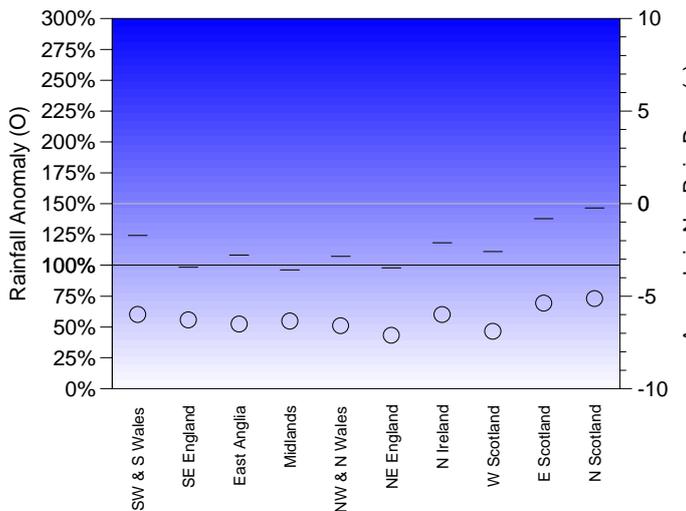


Extremes for May 2010	
Hottest:	31.0°C Leigh-on-Sea 2, Essex, 24th
Coldest:	-6.0°C Braemar No 2, Avon, 8th
Most Rain:	36.6mm Hampstead, Greater London, 2nd
Most Sun:	16.7hrs Northwood, Greater London, 19th
Windiest:	61mph Spadeadam No. 2, Cumbria, 5th
Warmest:	13.4°C Gloucester, Gloucestershire
Coollest:	7.2°C Lerwick, Shetland
Wettest:	77.7mm Penzance Heamoor, Cornwall
Driest:	7.4mm Bramham, West Yorkshire
Sunniest:	317.8hrs Radstock, Somerset
Dullest:	128.2hrs Aviemore, Highland



May is often a pleasant month as spring drifts gently into summer. The first really warm days may occur but there is a saying that "he who shears his sheep before St Saviour's day (May 13th) loves his wool more than his sheep". May 11th marks the feast day of St Mamertus and the 12th that of St Pancras, and these were named the Ice Saints, so called because mid-May was often regarded as a cold time where frosts might cause damage to young plants and fruit blossom. May this year had just such a trick up its sleeve.

The month began with some very cool and unsettled weather over the Bank Holiday. Rain across southern Britain on the 1st and 2nd was slow to clear from the south-east, and the 3rd was showery with reports of hail. It remained rather cool and cloudy for the rest of the week and a raw north-easterly set in on the 7th and 8th with eastern areas overcast and damp. High pressure then transferred to the mid-Atlantic and drew Arctic air across the UK in time for the Ice Saints' festival. Snow was reported from Newcastle and Aberdeen on the 11th and the next two nights saw the coldest May minima for 15 years with widespread air frosts and temperatures as low as -5°C (23°F) or -6°C (21°F) in the Highlands. A ridge brought a sunnier day on the 13th and temperatures slowly recovered thereafter but weak fronts moving south-east caused widespread rain or showers. On the 17th pressure began to build across the UK and while fronts brought cloud, drizzle and sea fog to western coasts, other areas became sunnier and much warmer. By the 22nd much of the country was cloud-free and new temperature records for May were set across Scotland - e.g. 26.2°C (79°F) at Leuchars. The hot weather reached its climax in the south on the 24th when 28.8°C (84°F) was recorded at Heathrow. By this time cooler air was invading the north and the rest of the week saw lower temperatures everywhere though with some sunshine. Heavy, thundery showers affected Scotland on the 27th and the Bank Holiday was a mixed affair. Widespread rain in the south on the 29th was followed by a brighter but blustery day on the 30th, and such was the strength of the winds that 'planes had difficulty in landing at Stansted airport. The final day was cool and rather cloudy with more rain approaching western parts.

Average temperatures for the month as a whole ended up close to normal - but it was the driest May across the UK since 1998. Sunshine totals were close to, or a little above normal.

In Europe, up to 200mm of rain fell in 24 hours over southern Poland and the Czech Republic on the 16th - 17th. Rivers burst their banks forcing tens of thousands of people from their homes and inflicting an estimated 2 billion euros in damage. Further torrential rain struck Poland on the 31st with Zakopane recording 124mm and Kasprowy Wierch 108mm. Tornadoes swept across eastern Germany on the 24th killing one person in Saxony and injuring a further 38. In the town of Walda-Kleinthiemig, almost 80% of houses lost their roofs and many trees were uprooted.

Across the Atlantic, a massive storm system stagnated over the Central U.S.A as the month began. Thousands of homes and businesses were flooded by record breaking rainfall - and 29 people were killed. Bowling Green, Kentucky recorded a total of 245mm for the 1st and 2nd and Nashville, Tennessee, 344mm. 52 of Tennessee's 95 counties were declared disaster areas, as were 73 of Kentucky's 120 counties. Damages were estimated at more than \$1.5 billion. The storms spawned at least 45 tornadoes and one person was killed by flying debris in Arkansas. Unusual heat gripped eastern Canada during the last week. On the 25th, Timmins in north-western Ontario experienced its warmest May day since records began in 1955 with 34.6°C (94.3°F) - an astonishing 15.6°C (28.1°F) above normal for this time of year.

In Asia on the 2nd, at least 17 people were killed and 50 injured by lightning strikes as thunderstorms and hailstorms pounded Bangladesh. A remorseless pre-monsoon heat wave continued in Pakistan and 53.5°C (128°F) was recorded on 26th at Mahenso-Daro, a new national record high. India's capital city, Delhi, topped out at 45°C (113°F) the same day.