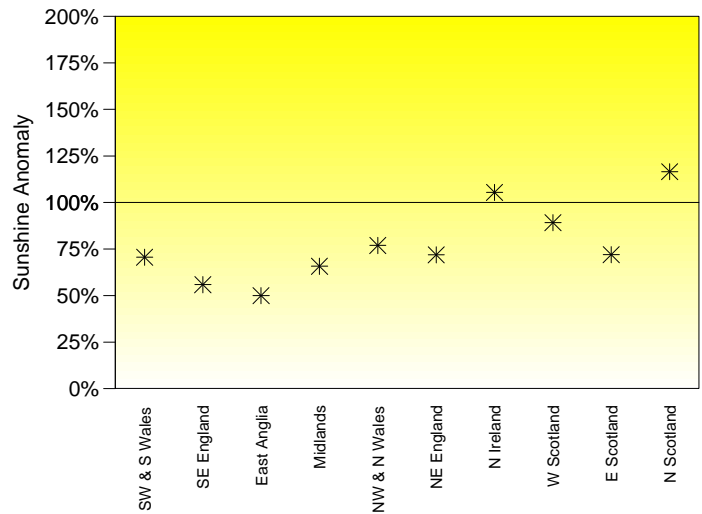
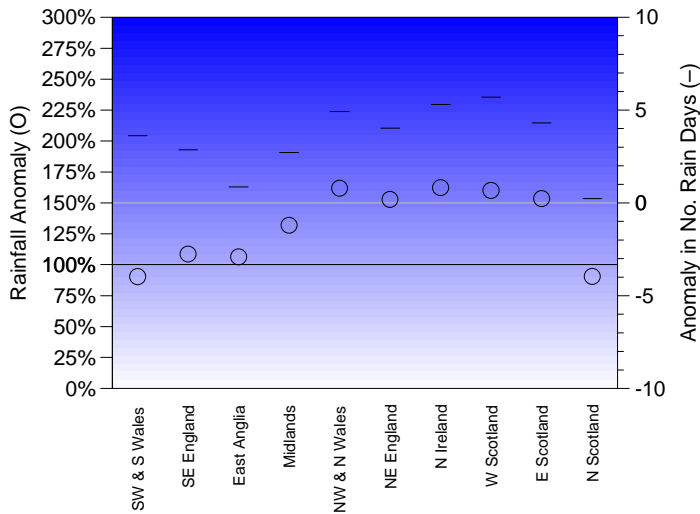


Extremes for February 2011		
Hottest:	16.0°C	Biggin Hill, Greater London, 24th
Coldest:	-8.9°C	Llysdinam, Powys, 1st
Most Rain:	108.6mm	Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd, 5th
Most Sun:	11.0hrs	Ronaldsway Airport, Isle of Man, 28th
Windiest:	91mph	Foula No 2, Shetland, 4th
Warmest:	9.4°C	Scilly St. Mary's SAWS, Cornwall
Coolest:	2.5°C	Braemar No 2, Avon
Wettest:	414.5mm	Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd
Driest:	25.4mm	Otterborne W Wks, Hampshire
Sunniest:	82.4hrs	Newtownards, County Down
Dullest:	18.4hrs	Ronaldsway Airport, Isle of Man



The days become noticeably lighter in February but it is often chilly and dull as the Atlantic westerlies run out of steam, especially after Valentines Day (14th). Such was the case this year when the only real glimpse of spring occurred towards month end.

February 2011 began with a spell of mild, windy and unsettled weather. It was particularly blustery in the north, and Great Dun Fell, Cumbria recorded a gust of 108mph on the 3rd. Tropical Maritime air flooded the UK from the 4th, and it became very mild in the south but there was prolonged rainfall over northern England and N. Wales on the 5th/6th. In the 24 hours to 0900GMT on the 6th, Capel Curig, Conwy, notched up a colossal 122mm. Conditions were quieter from the 8th, which was a dry, bright day but rather damp and gloomy conditions prevailed thereafter under the influence of weak fronts. After a wet day on the 13th, the 14th was much brighter, though with scattered sharp showers in many places, whilst north-east Scotland had further rain from a slow-moving occlusion. By mid month, pressure was building over Scandinavia and this fed intensely cold air into Eastern Europe. The cold snap never really reached the UK however and instead, the high slowed the progress of fronts eastward, resulting in an exceptionally gloomy second half of the month in many places. North Sea coasts became cold and raw from the 18th, adding to the cheerless feel, and 5-10cm of snow fell widely over northern hills the next day. Western areas were milder, and this difference was illustrated on the 22nd when 11.0°C (52°F) at Plymouth, Devon, contrasted with only 5.5°C (42°F) at Weybourne, Norfolk. A short-lived burst of spring finally materialised from the 23rd as a warm front won the battle against the colder air to the east. The 24th saw sunny spells and maxima above 13°C (55°F) in favoured spots, with 14.8°C (59°F) at Tain Range, Highland. The mild weather continued into the 25th but it turned colder and more unsettled again as the month drew to its close.

The UK mean temperature was about 2°C above the long term average. The number of air frosts was the fourth lowest in February in the last fifty years, reflecting the persistent cloud cover. It was a generally wet month, except in the far south and far north, and away from north-west Britain it was also very dull. Indeed, East Anglia and south-east England experienced one of their dullest Februaries on record.

Europe experienced some huge contrasts this February with spring-like Fohn weather in the French mountains - and the deepest freeze of the winter in Scandinavia. 21°C (70°F) was registered at Luchon at 618m in the Pyrenees on 7th with 20°C (68°F) at Chamonix in the Haute-Savoie - both record high temperatures for February. In contrast, Kautokeino, Norway, recorded a numbing -43°C on the 18th when -42°C was reached at Sallan Naruska, Finland. A devastating winter storm hit the central and north-eastern USA and southern Canada 1st-4th. The storm stretched over 2,000 miles and also brought heavy snow, freezing rain and ice. 18,500 flights were cancelled and the National Guard helped rescue motorists stranded in snow drifts over 10 feet (3m) high. In Missouri all 250 miles of Interstate Highway 70 were closed. The Tulsa World newspaper was unable to publish - for the first time in its 105-year history because of the heavy snow. Chicago received 51cm of snow and fire fighters used snowmobiles to navigate the streets and rescue hundreds of people trapped in their cars. The northern Mexican state of Chihuahua also experienced a rare cold snap around the same time. Temperatures plunged to 0°F (-18°C) in the city of Ciudad Juarez - the lowest temperature since 1950 - and power outages closed many factories. In Asia, heavy rainfall 1st-6th hit northern Sri Lanka and flood waters inundated roads cutting off several towns. More than 320,000 people were displaced into government refugee camps. A winter storm hit the Korean Peninsula 11th-14th dumping 100cm of snow at Samcheok - a record for South Korea since records began in 1911. Officials in the Gangwon province mobilized 22,600 volunteers and 1,750 snow ploughs to clear highways. In Australia, category 4+ cyclone Yasi made landfall in northern Queensland near Mission Beach on February 3rd, packing wind gusts to 177mph (285 km/hr). Rainfall totals included 471 mm at South Mission Beach and 464mm in Hawkins Creek. The remnants of the storm stalled across Victoria, causing floods 4th-6th and a state of emergency was issued in Melbourne to keep people from entering the streets on inflatable toys and rafts. Another Cyclone, Carlos, hit the northern Australian coast on February 14th and remained stationary for three days, dumping 685 mm of rain on Darwin, breaking the all time three day rainfall record for the city.