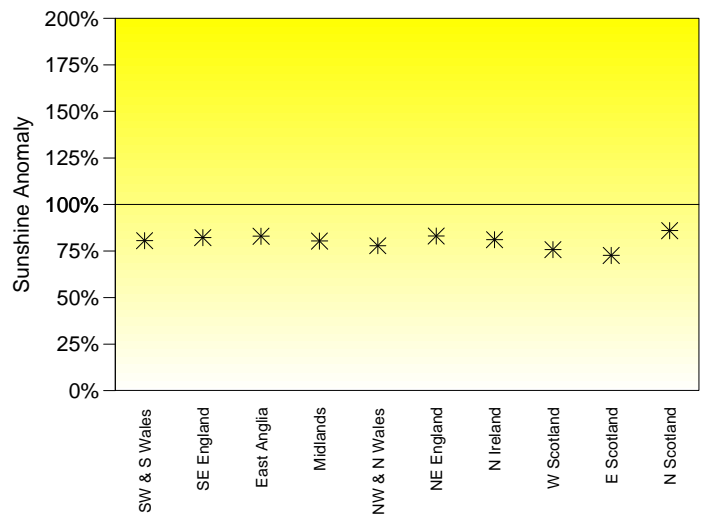
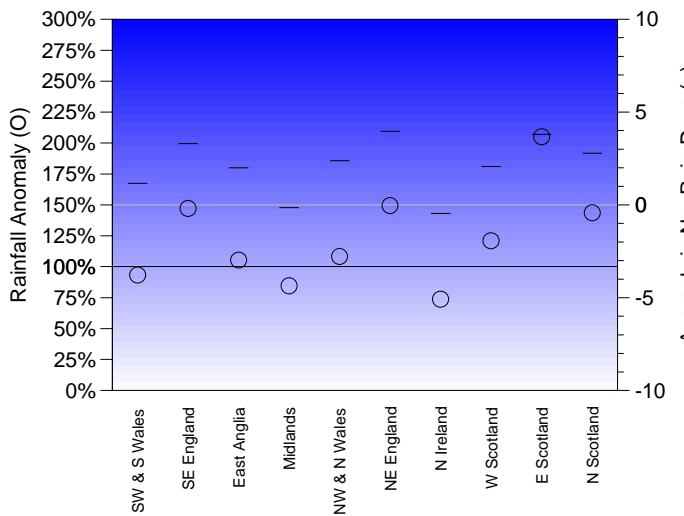


Extremes for August 2011		
Hottest:	30.3°C	Gravesend Broadness SAMOS, Kent, 3rd
Coldest:	0.0°C	Tiree, Strathclyde, 18th
Most Rain:	115.2mm	Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd, 10th
Most Sun:	16.2hrs	Leeds W/C, West Yorkshire, 9th
Windiest:	68mph	Rosehearty, Grampian, 28th
Warmest:	17.7°C	Gravesend Broadness SAMOS, Kent
Coolest:	11.3°C	Loch Glascarnoch, Highland
Wettest:	263.8mm	Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd
Driest:	19.4mm	Newport (Salop), Staffordshire
Sunniest:	280.6hrs	Radstock, Somerset
Dullest:	52.9hrs	Kinlochewe, Highland



August is prime holiday season - yet the weather often conspires to disappoint with humid days devoid of sunshine and slow-moving areas of heavy rain. A notable example was August 2008 when some places had less sunshine than during the following December! Summer really begins to wane by month end. The nights draw in noticeably and early mornings can become misty and quite chilly.

August began sultry with some sunshine and a peppering of thundery showers. The 3rd marked the climax of the hot weather and 30.3°C (86°F) was recorded at Gravesend (Kent) before heavy thunderstorms broke out in eastern England during the evening. The 4th was a much cooler and wetter day and this marked the start of an unsettled period as slow-moving depressions took control. There were showers or longer periods of sometimes thundery rain, and Wallington (Northumberland) recorded 39.6mm on the 6th. The next two nights were chilly as the cool north westerly wind eased, but the 9th brought a glimpse of summer sunshine under a ridge of high pressure. Active fronts drove widespread rain across the north on the 10th and a humid, changeable period ensued with more rain over the next three days; Malham Tarn (North Yorkshire) recorded 78.6mm for the 24 hours ending 0900GMT 11th. For much of the following week, slow moving fronts affected the southern UK while the north escaped. A deluge affected several places in England and Wales on the 18th; Portland, Dorset, collected 58.4mm (its average August total) in just 12 hours - and there was major flooding in Bournemouth town centre. Wokingham (Berkshire) was also inundated. The 22nd saw a short lived reprieve before more sluggish systems brought prolonged and sometimes heavy rain 23rd-27th. The Bank Holiday weekend offered mixed fortunes; most places experienced some sharp showers and a little sunshine, but north-east Scotland had a true taste of autumn on the 28th with gale force northerly winds, very cool temperatures and driving rain. Pressure rose during the final two days but it stayed generally cool and cloudy.

For August and the UK as a whole, it was a dull month, with 25% less sunshine than normal. Temperatures were also depressed everywhere - and for Scotland and Northern Ireland it was the coolest August since 1993. Rainfall totals were very variable, reflecting the localised nature of the downpours; it was a very wet month for southern England, the eastern half of Scotland and north-east England - but parts of Northern Ireland, Wales and the Midlands were drier than average.

Southern Europe endured blistering heat in the second half of August. Cordoba, Spain, hit 44.3°C (112°F) on the 20th, Florence, Italy, an all time high of 40.7°C (105°F) on the 21st and Cape Carbonara, Sardinia a phenomenal 47°C (117°) on the 23rd. In Greece, 6,200 acres of forest and cropland were destroyed by wildfires. In Belgium, high winds from a severe thunderstorm caused a stage to collapse at the Pukkelpop music festival on the 19th. Tragically, five people were killed and 40 others injured. In North America a similar disaster occurred when a line of severe thunderstorms moved through central Indiana on the 13th. Winds of over 60 mph caused the roof of the concert band stage to collapse at the State Fair, killing seven people and injuring many more. There were some scorching temperatures in the southern USA; Fort Smith, Arkansas, recorded 46.1°C (115°F) on the 3rd - setting a new all-time high; Waco, Texas broke the 1980 record for the greatest number of consecutive days over 37.8°C (100°F) with the 44th and final day ending on the 12th. New York, Kennedy Airport recorded a prodigious 198mm of rain on the 14th smashing the all time city record (159 mm set in June 1984). This was a prelude to Hurricane Irene which struck the east coast and New England on the 28th and brought catastrophic flooding to Vermont which left several towns, including Brattleboro and Bennington submerged. 26 monitoring stations broke their all-time daily rainfall records between the 27th and 29th and in New York, the Passaic River reached a new record height of 7.35 m on the 30th. Towns were cut off and roads and bridges were swept away. Newark also had its wettest ever day (227 mm) on the 28th. New York, Philadelphia and Newark, New Jersey all recorded their wettest month ever. Storm damages were estimated at \$7 billion. In Canada, an EF-3 (T6) tornado, with wind speeds of 174 mph, tore through the town of Goderich, Ontario on the 21st.

In Asia, Super Cyclone Muifa continued its northwest track into the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea during August. Although winds had abated, Muifa still flooded 220,000 homes in South Korea. In New Zealand, an Antarctic polar blast brought frigid temperatures and icy conditions 14th-16th at the end of the antipodean winter. Auckland saw its first snowfall since 1939 and recorded its all-time lowest daytime temperature 8.2°C (47.8°F) on the 15th - breaking the previous record set in 1996. Wellington recorded a daytime max of just 6.8°C (44.2°F) - its second coldest day since records began at the airport in 1959. Thousands of homes in Wellington, Christchurch, and the Coromandel Peninsula lost power and schools across the lower South Island were closed. High winds produced 5m swells which halted ferry services in the Cook Strait between the North and South Island.