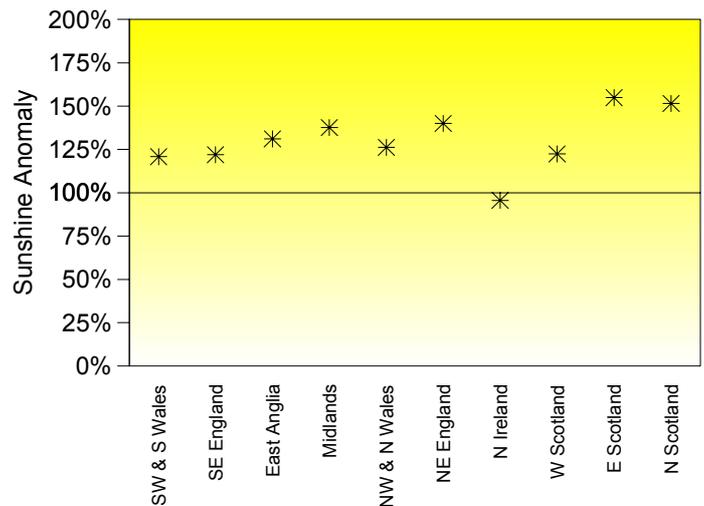
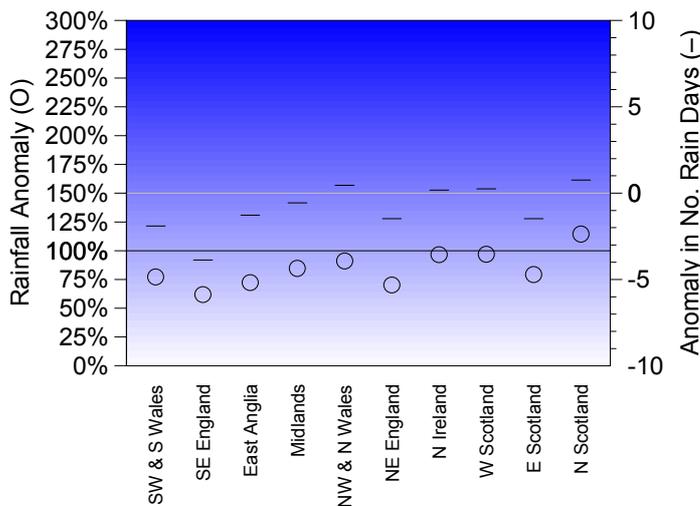


| Extremes for January 2012 |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Hottest:                  | 13.9°C Exeter, Devon, 18th                    |
| Coldest:                  | -10.5°C Aboyne, Grampian, 16th                |
| Most Rain:                | 57.8mm Cluanie Inn No 3, Ross & Cromarty, 4th |
| Most Sun:                 | 8.2hrs Norwich Airport, Norfolk, 27th         |
| Windiest:                 | 93mph Port Ellen SAMOS, Strathclyde, 3rd      |
| Warmest:                  | 8.8°C Penzance Heamoor, Cornwall              |
| Coolest:                  | 2.0°C Loch Glascarnoch, Highland              |
| Wettest:                  | 479.0mm Cluanie Inn No 3, Ross & Cromarty     |
| Driest:                   | 22.2mm Charlwood, Surrey                      |
| Sunniest:                 | 97.7hrs Hull North, Humberside                |
| Dullest:                  | 15.3hrs Threave, Kirkcudbrightshire           |



As the Christmas decorations come down, the dark, windy days of January beckon. The length of daylight increases only slowly, since the solstice is still relatively near, and statistically this is the coldest month of the year. According to Lamb's calendar of singularities, the first half is a stormy period, and this year stands as a very good example of this.

The month opened mild but unsettled and the 1st was a very wet day for the south. The 2nd was brighter but showery, and a very stormy day followed on the 3rd as a deep depression raced east across northern Scotland. Gusts in exposed places exceeded 100mph (e.g. 106mph at Great Dun Fell, Cumbria and 102mph at Blackford Hill, Edinburgh) There was widespread disruption to transport with ferries suspended and airports closed, and widespread property damage. A man died in Tonbridge Wells, Kent, when a tree toppled onto a parked van and one crew member aboard a tanker in the Channel was killed when it was hit by a large wave. The storm was fast moving, and conditions quietened down rapidly by evening, but late on the 4th and 5th, more gales battered the country as another deep low zipped south-east into Scandinavia. Great Dun Fell recorded a gust of 112mph - even windier than a few days previously. The weather then became rather less boisterous as high pressure settled close to southern Britain. There was plenty of dry and mild weather, with conditions often spring like in a gentle south-westerly breeze, although fronts continued to affect the north. A cold front moving south on the 12th was followed by five days of high pressure giving crisp, sunny days and sharp overnight frosts. Aboyne, Aberdeenshire recorded -10.5°C (13°F) on the early morning of the 16th. Late on the 17th, fronts edged in from the west and a balmy 11.4°C (52°F) at Plymouth, Devon contrasted with a chilly 0.5°C (33°F) at Dishforth, North Yorkshire. Mild, windy weather then resumed, but after frost overnight 23rd/24th, a cheerless day followed, with widespread rain, drizzle and hill fog. Snow fell on northern hills ahead of milder air - which then extended to all areas on the 25th. Meanwhile, an intense anticyclone was developing over northern Russia and this began to extend its influence westwards across Europe by the 28th. A warm front, battling against this colder air brought rain (and snow over high ground) to western Britain, but this retreated westwards on the 30th, and cold easterlies dominated everywhere by the month's end.

Despite the cold finish, January 2012 was relatively mild, and much warmer than in recent years. Southern and eastern England was dry, but for parts of the north, especially northern Scotland, it was much wetter than normal. As often in unsettled winter weather, sunshine was well above normal away from Northern Ireland and western Scotland and provisionally, this was the sunniest January since 1929.

In Europe, January began mild and stormy in the northwest but ended very cold in the southeast when a huge blizzard swept Bulgaria and south-eastern Romania 25th-26th. In North America, record-shattering warmth engulfed the USA Plains and at Philip, South Dakota, temperatures soared to 23°C (74°F) on the 5th. Severe thunderstorms spawned tornadoes northeast of Birmingham, Alabama on the 23rd, killing two people and injuring over 100. Several homes were destroyed and trees and power lines downed. In the Pacific north western states, successive winter storms hit during the third week and 10cm of snow, followed by freezing rain, left over 200,000 Seattle residents without power. On 18th a new daily snowfall record was set at Seattle Airport with 18cm and on the 19th, 58cm of snow was measured at Mullan, Washington. Further north, extreme cold and snowfall affected Alaska. Between November 2011 and early January, more than 5.5m of snow fell in Cordova, trapping people in their homes, causing roofs on houses to collapse and triggering numerous avalanches. On the 31st temperatures dropped to a numbing -70°F (-57°C) near Fairbanks.

In the southern hemisphere, heavy rains led to flooding and landslides in Brazil at the beginning of the month. At least eight people were killed and over 13,000 forced to evacuate across the states of Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro. In Africa, heavy rainfall from Tropical Depression Dando led to major flooding in southern Mozambique and north-eastern South Africa from the 15th. Ten people were killed, 56,000 others were displaced, and crop and livestock were devastated. Helicopters were called in to evacuate tourists from Kruger National Park as roads became impassable and bridges were destroyed. In Australia, 2012 was welcomed in amidst record-breaking heat. New Years day in Adelaide reached 41.1°C (106°F), the warmest in over 100 years!