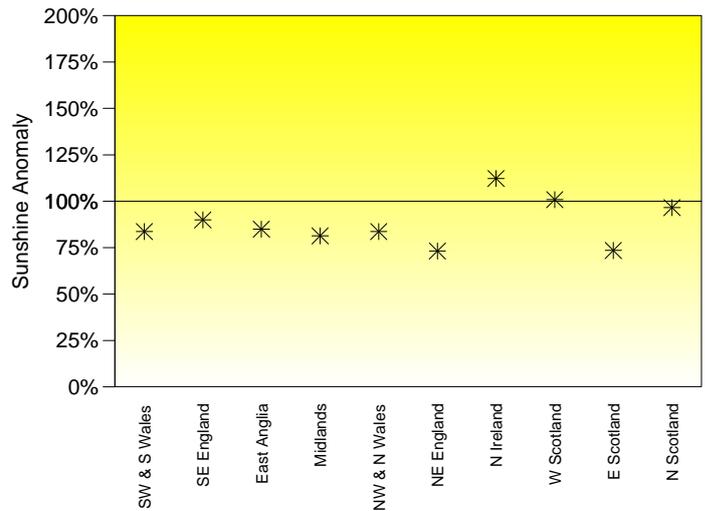
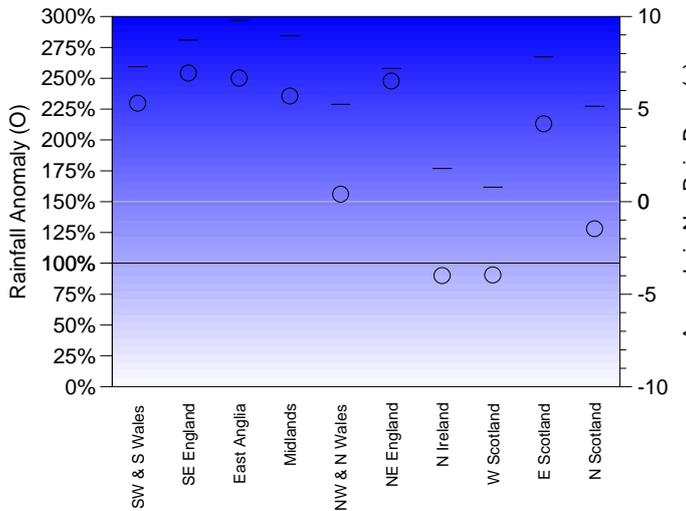


Extremes for April 2012	
Hottest:	19.7°C Kew Gardens, Greater London, 30th
Coldest:	-8.2°C Braemar No 2, Avon, 5th
Most Rain:	55.8mm Liscombe, Somerset, 29th
Most Sun:	15.1hrs Dunstaffnage, Strathclyde, 29th
Windiest:	76mph Warcop Range SAWS, Cumbria, 29th
Warmest:	9.7°C Portchester, Hampshire
Coollest:	3.6°C Braemar No 2, Avon
Wettest:	248.5mm Ebbw Vale, Gwent
Driest:	29.0mm Newton Rigg, Cumbria
Sunniest:	240.9hrs Radstock, Somerset
Dullest:	70.7hrs Dyce, Grampian



Spring begins in earnest during April but it is a notoriously fickle month. The meandering nature of the jet stream means that cold northerlies can swing to warmer southerlies and then back again with baffling swiftness. Despite its reputation for showers, April is often a dry month and 2011 was outstandingly dry, warm and sunny. This year however was beset by record-breaking deluges....

Following record warm spell of late March, April began cooler and more unsettled. By the 3rd, a complex area of low pressure was situated over the UK and with cold north-easterlies on its upper flank there were substantial snowfalls over northern hills. Snow and ice accumulation, brought down power lines across north-east England on the 4th leaving 10,000 homes without power. The Easter weekend began cold and cloudy for many, before winds backed westerly by the 8th to bring a little warmth. Easter Monday was a wet day virtually nationwide but the 10th was brighter with a mix of sun and showers. As the flow became slack over the next few days, some showers became heavy and slow-moving, giving some torrential downpours with hail and thunder. By the 15th, pressure was rising from the west but chilly northerlies gave wintry showers in the east and night frosts. Another set of fronts approached from the west late on the 16th and rain swept east overnight, followed by the familiar mix of sun and blustery showers. The associated area of low pressure then stagnated over the UK for the next five days. As a result, there was widespread heavy rain with many reports of hail and thunder. A new depression brought more rain on the 24th only to be followed by another more vicious system on the 25th - which was an especially wet and windy day. Thereafter, depressions from the Continent brought further wet, cold and windy weather to England and Wales. During the weekend of 28th / 29th, strong winds across the West Midlands, south-west England and South Wales uprooted hundreds of trees and left 12,000 properties without power. In comparison, Scotland and Northern Ireland were brighter, but chilly with overnight frosts. Warmth finally arrived to southern areas on the 30th with maxima at last exceeding 16°C (61°F)

For the UK as a whole, April 2012 was the wettest since records began in 1910 yet, there remains a drought situation in some parts of the country. Sunshine was close to the average, but it was a cold month everywhere - and there have only been 19 colder Aprils in the last 100 years.

In Europe during April, a severe spring storm on 17th-18th unleashed damaging winds across Turkey and Greece. Trees were toppled, roofs torn off, boats capsized (at Bodrum) and a dust storm disrupted flights into the Turkish capital, Ankara. On 28th-29th central and eastern Europe experienced an early taste of summer with April temperature records smashed. Munich recorded 32°C (90°F) as did parts of Lower Austria; Vienna basked in 28°C (82°F) drawing large crowds to the banks of the Danube. The heat also extended into Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and western Russia, with Moscow sizzling in 29°C (84°F) Across the Atlantic, Anchorage, Alaska picked up 10cm of snow on the 7th, making it the snowiest season ever. Tornadoic thunderstorms ravaged parts of the USA Plains on 14th, killing six people and leaving behind a swathe of destruction. Over 100 tornadoes were reported from Oklahoma through Kansas, Nebraska and southern Iowa. The deadliest ravaged the town of Woodward, Oklahoma, where six people were killed and 30 injured. Another tornado tore through the southern portion of Wichita, Kansas, causing \$283 million damage. A tornado also ripped through the town of Thurman, Iowa, destroying most of the town. Golf ball sized hail fell near Petersburg, Nebraska and baseball-sized hail occurred just east of Dodge City, Kansas. Meanwhile eastern states twinned in an early heat wave. In Albany, New York, the record high of 33°C (91°F) on the 16th was the earliest in the year ever for reaching the 90°F mark. Baltimore equalled its record April high of 32°C (90°F) and more than 1,200 runners were treated for heat-related problems in the Boston marathon.

In India, violent thunderstorms saw sixteen people killed in multiple lightning incidents in the south-eastern state of Andhra Pradesh on the 29th. Victims were farmers or the homeless, caught outdoors. On the 30th more than 100 people were killed after a ferry sank in the Brahmaputra River of north-eastern India during another thunderstorm. The boat broke into two pieces after capsizing in torrential rain and fierce winds. Winds of typhoon strength swept over Japan on the 3rd leaving one person dead and tens of thousands stranded due to cancelled flights. In Australia, severe floods affected eastern New South Wales, including greater Sydney, on 16th-18th, swamping streets and inundating buildings. Two-day rainfalls of 75 to 150 mm were widespread with the highest rainfall of 180 mm observed between Sydney and Newcastle.