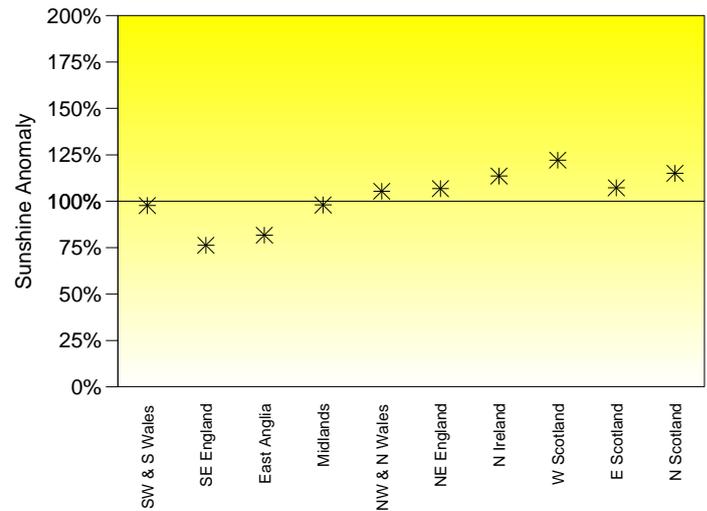
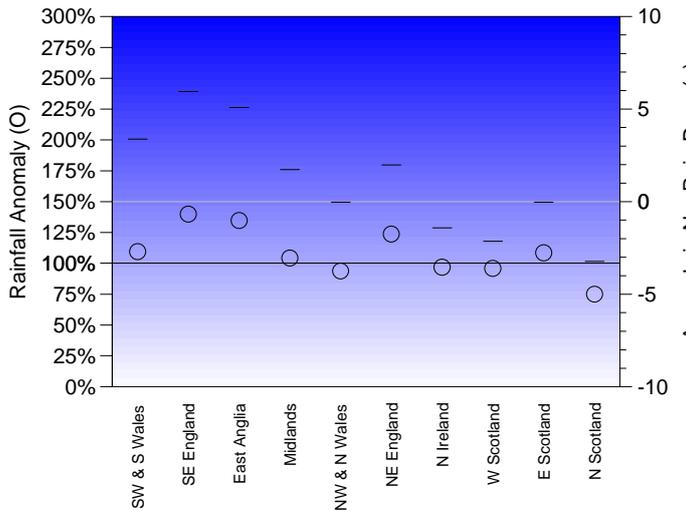


Extremes for October 2012	
Hottest:	19.2°C Langdon Bay, Kent, 22nd
Coldest:	-7.8°C Braemar No 2, Avon, 17th
Most Rain:	61.4mm Ballypatrick Forest SAWS, County Antrim, 18th
Most Sun:	10.4hrs St. Athan, South Glamorgan, 6th
Windiest:	69mph Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd, 31st
Warmest:	13.2°C Carrefour-au-Clercq, Channel Islands
Coolest:	4.8°C Dalwhinnie No 2, Tayside
Wettest:	231.1mm Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd
Driest:	44.4mm Wainfleet, Lincolnshire
Sunniest:	144.5hrs Radstock, Somerset
Dullest:	35.6hrs Swaffham, Norfolk



As autumn hastens on and the leaves turn, October can throw just about everything meteorological at us; sun, rain, gales, fog, frost, hail and snow can all feature, and such was the case this year. Last October saw record breaking warmth, but 2012 witnessed an early wintry outbreak towards month end. The first week was a typically mixed bag with bands of rain or showers, some sunshine in between and the odd chilly morning with grass frost, notably on the 4th. The 5th saw widespread rain which was heavy over southern areas, but the fronts moved away by the 6th - which was a sunny, crisp day nationwide. After further rain in the south on the 8th, a couple of settled days followed beneath high pressure but wet weather returned from the west on the 11th. Flash flooding occurred across parts of west Wales and also at Clovelly in Devon. On the 12th as the low pressure moved north, north-east Scotland was inundated. 50-70mm rain was recorded widely; there was disruption to road and rail services, and some damage to property in Fife. The next 4 days were increasingly cold and on the early morning of the 17th, the mercury fell to -7.8°C (18°F) at Braemar, Aberdeenshire. It then became milder everywhere, but very windy and wet as a deep depression off south-west Ireland drove active fronts north-east. On the 18th a combination of strong winds and very high tides caused coastal flooding in Devon and Cornwall. By the 20th, fronts were stagnating over the near Continent under the influence of high pressure to the east, and a warm front progressed slowly north-west over the next few days. This gave extensive low cloud and gloom over central and eastern UK and fog was troublesome 22nd-23rd and caused some disruption at airports. A cold front moving south on the 25th and 26th cleared the murk, but introduced much colder arctic air. Showers were wintry in the north and east, and parts of eastern England and Scotland awoke to snow cover on the 27th. Accumulations were mainly small and quickly melted but a snow depth of 12cm was observed at Copley, County Durham. It became less cold on the 28th as winds backed westerly and Atlantic fronts swept south-east. The month closed on a very unsettled note as a vigorous cold front brought heavy rain and squally winds to all areas.

For the UK as a whole, rainfall and sunshine totals were close to the long-term average. Some eastern and southern counties were rather wet, and it was a dull month across south-east England. By contrast, western Scotland fared very well in the sunshine stakes. It was a rather cold month, particularly across Northern Scotland and for the UK as a whole it was the coldest October in a decade.

An icy arctic blast swept southwards across Europe during the last week of October. In Switzerland 19cm of level snow was measured at Zurich on the morning of the 29th, just short of the previous October record. In Poland snowstorms raged throughout the 27th and in the Mazovia province, 70,000 homes were left blacked out.

In the southern hemisphere, Australia's island state of Tasmania was battered by winds of up to 85mph on the 4th. Trees and power lines were downed, 9000 people left without electricity and several forest fires sparked. Diverted and cancelled flights caused a backlog of passengers through Hobart airport. An unusual cold wave in southern Australia on the 10th-11th brought the first October snow in a century. Snow whitened the ground along the Mount Lofty and southern Flinders ranges, east and north of Adelaide, South Australia. The snow and freezing rain stemmed from a storm that swept in from the Southern Ocean. Even further south, winter sea ice around Antarctica reached a record high (in contrast to Arctic sea ice which recently recorded a record summer low). Massive hailstones struck Gauteng province, South Africa on the 20th shattering windows, denting cars and smashing windscreens. The town of Ekurhuleni felt the brunt of the hailstorm, where stones were commonly the size of golf balls and occasionally the size of tennis balls! The Eastern Cape was hit by severe flooding on the 21st. Sections of the N2 highway were closed to traffic after part of the road collapsed, leaving a hole 25m wide and 50m deep between Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown.

However the biggest story of October was Hurricane Sandy. This hurricane hit Cuba on the 25th, and torrential rain and wind gusts in excess of 150mph left a trail of destruction, especially in the historic city of Santiago de Cuba. The country's second largest city was littered with fallen trees, damaged buildings and debris-choked streets. Sandy hit the northeast USA on the 30th and produced the lowest pressure of any storm making landfall north of Cape Hatteras. It featured every variety of extreme weather. Easton, Maryland, was swamped with 319mm rain while the nation's capital Washington, D.C recorded 138mm. The highest wind gusts were recorded at Eaton's Neck, New York (93mph) and Montclair, New Jersey (87mph). Colossal snowfalls included Mt. Leconte, Tennessee (86cm) and Clayton, West Virginia (83cm). Meanwhile, waves reached 12m off Atlantic City, New Jersey and 9.9m near New York Harbour entrance. The storm surge reached 2.7m at The Battery, New York. About 8.5 million homes lost power and in New Hampshire a "microburst" spawned by the storm toppled pines onto lakeside cottages.