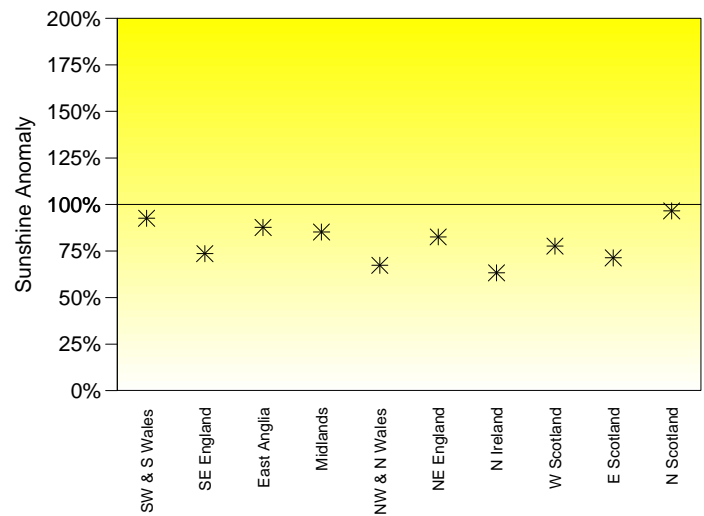
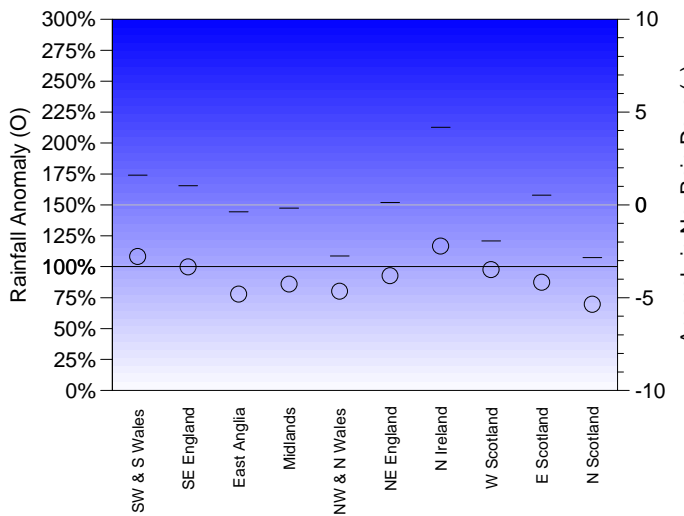


Extremes for January 2013	
Hottest:	15.0°C Doncaster Airport, South Yorkshire, 29th
Coldest:	-13.9°C Pulham St. Mary, Norfolk, 16th
Most Rain:	54.0mm Cassley, Sutherland, 30th
Most Sun:	7.7hrs Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd, 9th
Windiest:	83mph Fair Isle, Shetland, 30th
Warmest:	8.6°C Scilly St. Mary's SAWS, Cornwall
Coolest:	1.7°C Copley, Durham
Wettest:	267.8mm Cluanie Inn No 3, Ross & Cromarty
Driest:	23.2mm Cranwell, Lincolnshire
Sunniest:	65.7hrs Calthorpe, Norfolk
Dullest:	10.0hrs Bala, Clwyd



January is statistically both the coldest and the windiest month. Despite being well past the winter solstice, mornings are at their darkest and the days remain short, lengthening perceptibly only after the first fortnight.

After the December deluges, 2013 opened with a bright, chilly day for most, but a warm front brought cloud and light rain eastward by the 2nd. There followed a week of very mild weather with maxima widely exceeding 10°C (50°F) but plenty of cloud - especially on west-facing coasts and hills. Light winds meant fog often persisted during mornings, but where and when the sun broke through, it felt positively spring like. There is a saying "a February spring isn't worth a pin" - and the same is true of a January one! Pressure began to build over Scandinavia from the 10th and temperatures across the UK plummeted. Snow flurries affected some southern, central and eastern areas on the 12th and 13th, before a more organised band of sleet and snow slid south-east on the 14th. Three days of mainly dry, cold weather with patchy freezing fog were followed by a classic snow situation on the 18th with a combination of a Scandinavian high and fronts pushing in from the south-west. There were heavy falls up to 25cm over Wales, western and central England. 10,000 households were left without power and many roads blocked. Birmingham, Cardiff, Bristol and Southampton airports were closed for part of the day, and at Heathrow, almost one third of 1300 flights were cancelled. There followed a blisteringly cold night with temperatures in East Anglia as low as -10°C (14°F). The snow, while disruptive, was helpful in unexpected ways; in the west Midlands, police arrested two suspected metal thieves after following them home by tracking their pet dog's paw-prints in the snow! The fronts weakened overnight and the 19th brought a temporary respite - before more snow advanced northwards across eastern England on the 20th and 21st. One in six schools across England was shut due to concerns about icy playgrounds. Minimum temperatures over snow cover in the East were again minus double digit cold. On the 25th, the North Atlantic fronts made a come-back and milder air won through - but not before there had been another dumping of snow across Scotland and northern England. As the month drew to a close it became windy and unsettled but very mild at times. On the 29th - just a week after the deepest of the freeze, the mercury reached 14°C (57°F) at several places across Central England. The rapid thaw and heavy rain caused flooding in some areas - notably Wales and Lincolnshire. Thunderstorms and hail affected Wales and north western England during the early hours of the 31st.

Despite the notable cold snap, a mild start and end meant that mean temperatures across the UK were close to normal. Scotland was slightly milder than average and England and Wales slightly cooler. With the exception of Northern Ireland, most places were a little drier than average, but it was a gloomy month for all, especially the north-west.

Blistering heat affected Australia in the first three weeks of 2013. By the 7th, bushfires were ablaze in five of Australia's six states, with 90 fires in the most populous state - New South Wales. In Western Australia, Eucla recorded 48.2°C (119°F) on the 3rd - its hottest day since records began in 1957. By the 4th, northerly winds directed very hot air into southeast Australia - and Hobart, at 41.8°C (107°F) experienced its all time high for any month in 130 years of records. The area of intense heat moved northeast on the 5th, with Marree in South Australia recording 48.4°C (119°F) and Hay in New South Wales recording 47.7°C (118°F) - breaking its all time temperature record. On the 12th, Moomba, South Australia, peaked at 49.6 °C (122°F). While Australia sizzled, the India capital New Delhi saw a maximum temperature of 9.8°C (49.6°F) on the 2nd - the lowest since records began in 1969! Fog forced cancellation of flights and trains. On the 30th, tropical Cyclone Felling became the strongest cyclone of the South Indian 2012-2013 storm season. Highest sustained winds rose to an estimated 132mph - equivalent to a Category 4 hurricane.

Tornadoes ripped through four American states (Mississippi, Georgia, Indiana and Tennessee) on the 9th and 10th killing at least two people. Behind the severe weather, an Arctic front brought heavy snowfall to the Central Plains. Further north and east, blizzards swept through eastern Newfoundland on the 11th. Wind speeds topped 75 mph and 50cm of snow accumulated in some parts leading to cancelled flights, closed schools, docked ferries and the shutdown of public services. On the 19th, much of Russia was blanketed in a deep layer of snow. This season's snow events have been dubbed a "snowpocalypse" and caused unrelenting travel chaos. 28cm of snow in Moscow gave picture postcard scenery but left a 13km long traffic jam along one of the capital's main highways. Rather less commonplace - but no less dramatic was the rare snowfall that occurred in parts of Lebanon on the 10th with accumulations of up to 150cm in the north of the country.