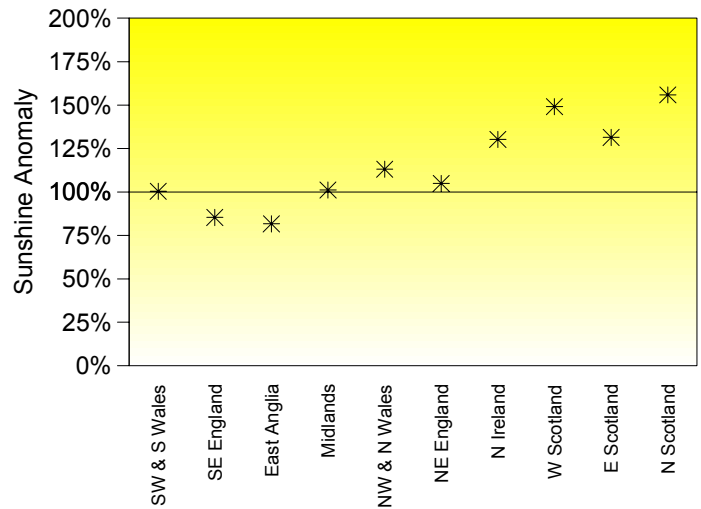
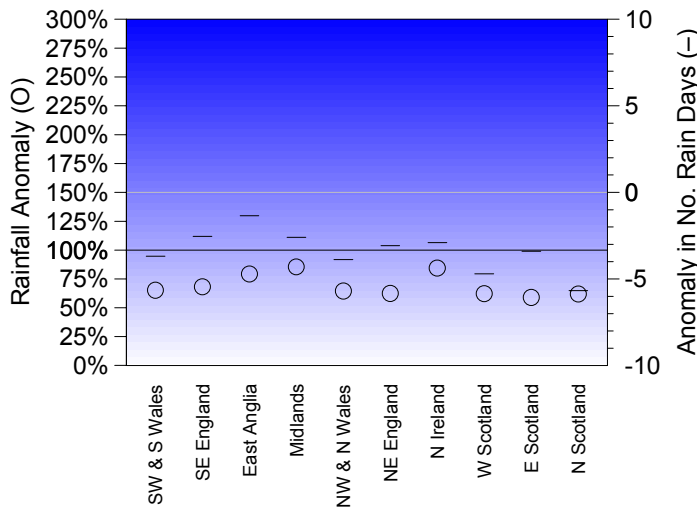


Extremes for February 2013	
Hottest:	13.4°C Kinlochewe, Highland, 17th
Coldest:	-9.7°C Altnaharra SAWS, Highland, 22nd
Most Rain:	50.0mm Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd, 13th
Most Sun:	10.4hrs Monifieth, Tayside, 26th
Windiest:	78mph Culdrose, Cornwall, 4th
Warmest:	7.5°C Scilly St. Mary's SAWS, Cornwall
Coolest:	1.2°C Dalwhinnie No 2, Tayside
Wettest:	142.8mm Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd
Driest:	13.0mm Cambridge University, Cambridgeshire
Sunniest:	109.3hrs Jersey St Helier, Channel Islands
Dullest:	41.1hrs Swaffham, Norfolk



Although still a winter month, February is very different in character to January. The period of midwinter storminess in Lamb's calendar of singularities is past, and February often ushers in drier weather; statistically it stands as the driest month of the year. Cold spells are common, since the seas around our shores are continuing to cool, but if you happen to be awake just before dawn, songbirds tell that spring is on its way.

The month began unsettled, and after a chilly, bright day on the 2nd, a deep depression moving south-east across Shetland brought severe gales to the north on the 4th with squally showers of snow and sleet. A very heavy swell and giant waves off western Scotland, caused disruption to ferry services. Eskdalemuir notched up 14cm of lying snow by 1000 GMT on the 5th. Keen northerly winds straight from the Arctic affected all areas on the 6th with further wintry showers and a weak ridge then brought a sharp overnight frost. A few days of rather cloudy, cold weather were followed by rain on the 10th which turned to wet snow across a wide area of the Midlands, East Anglia and eastern England, as fronts encountered the dominant cold air. High Wycombe (Bucks) reported 12cm of lying snow by the early hours of the 11th, but the snow quickly died out during the day. A few days of dull, raw weather were followed by milder conditions on the 14th and 15th as Atlantic fronts made a breakthrough. Winds turned south-easterly on the 17th wafting very mild air in from the continent and bringing a first glimpse of spring. Kinlochewe, (Ross and Cromarty) recorded 13.9°C (57°F). The warm spell was short lived however and by the 21st it was decidedly cold once more with leaden skies and snow flurries in the east. Aviemore (Inverness-shire) recorded a frigid minimum of -10.0°C (14°F) and the air was remarkably dry, accentuating the chill. At noon on the 22nd, the temperature in central London was 2°C (36°F) but the dew point -6°C (21°F)! Snow flurries turned into more substantial showers in parts of the east on the 23rd, giving a slight covering in places, but sheltered parts of the west and north-west saw abundant sunshine. Temperatures rose gradually through the last four days of the month but although high pressure remained dominant, there was little cheer and "anticyclonic gloom" (the phenomenon where low cloud becomes trapped in the lower levels of the atmosphere) widespread.

For the month as a whole, temperatures were generally below average. It was also a dry month everywhere. In terms of sunshine, a rather dull month for south-east England contrasted with a sunny northern and western Scotland, reflecting the preponderance of easterly winds.

Europe also experienced some wintry weather during February, and on the 11th snowstorms swept over northern and central Italy. In Liguria, blizzards damaged national landmarks, including the medieval walled town of Urbino and the ancient Coliseum in Rome. Later in the month, southern Europe was hit by flash flooding. On the 22nd, several hours of torrential rain and thunderstorms swamped the Greek capital, Athens, causing major disruption to the road, train and tram network. The deluge swept away cars and left occupants stranded waist-deep. Torrents of debris laden flood water also scoured the Sicilian city of Catania on the 23rd.

In North America, a gargantuan blizzard enveloped New England on the 8th and 9th. Hamden, Connecticut, recorded over 1m of snow! Other snow depths included Gorham (Maine) 90cm, Portland (Maine) 81cm (an all-time record), Milford (Connecticut) 96cm and Medford (New York) 86cm. Winds gusts peaked at 81mph over Portland and a storm surge breached sea walls and caused severe flooding along the Massachusetts coast where some 345,000 homes and businesses lost power. In New York's Suffolk County, police rescued hundreds of motorists stuck in snow on the Long Island Expressway. On the 25th an equally extreme winter storm hit the southern Mid-west. Whiteout conditions made virtually all Texas Panhandle roads impassable; and blizzard conditions in Amarillo culminated in gusts of 75mph and 43cm of lying snow. The weight of the snow buckled power lines and cut electricity to more than 100,000 homes and businesses.

Torrential rain brought devastation to northern parts of India and Pakistan on the 7th. At Saidu Sharif, 174mm fell in 48 hours in a deluge that led to mudslides, avalanches, road blockages and disruption to communication and power lines. In Japan, 5.6m of lying snow accumulated in Aomori city (along the Hakkoda mountain range) by the 25th - a new all time record. Category four Cyclone Rusty hit the coast of Western Australia on the 26th-27th depositing a colossal 500mm of rain at Pardoo.