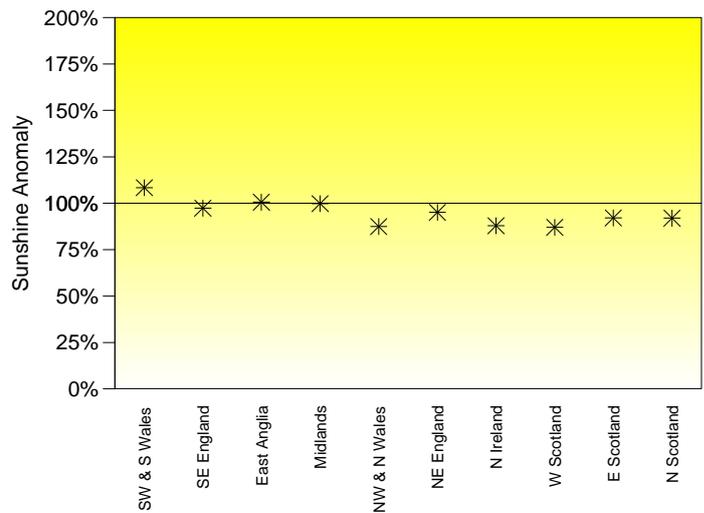
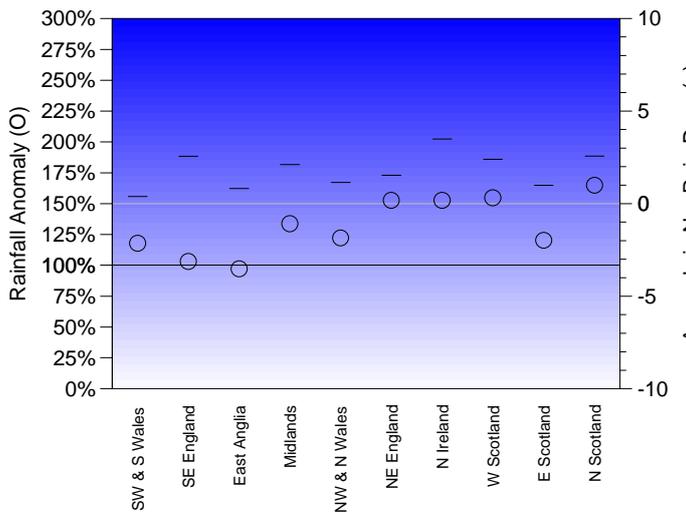


Extremes for May 2013	
Hottest:	24.7°C Totterdown, Bristol, 7th
Coldest:	-4.8°C Tulloch Bridge SAWS, Highland, 2nd
Most Rain:	69.8mm Pembrey Sands, Dyfed, 14th
Most Sun:	16.2hrs Tiree, Strathclyde, 29th
Windiest:	71mph Mumbles Head, West Glamorgan, 9th
Warmest:	12.4°C St James Park, Greater London
Coolest:	7.5°C Fair Isle, Shetland
Wettest:	275.4mm Achnagart, Highland
Driest:	21.2mm Nantwich Reaseheath Hall, Cheshire
Sunniest:	311.3hrs Radstock, Somerset
Dullest:	118.8hrs Eskdalemuir, Dumfries and Galloway



May is the month when spring gathers pace and the countryside continues to bloom, but like April, it can often surprise with a wintery twist. Night frosts remain a risk - as many a gardener will lament. Also characteristic of May is the tendency for anticyclones to build and to persist in the north-east Atlantic - and this often brings sunshine and dry, settled weather to Northern Ireland and north-west Scotland.

This year, the month began settled in the south - and the early spring Bank Holiday saw a surge of warmth with temperatures exceeding 21°C (70°F) on the 6th. The warm weather extended northward on the 7th as south-easterly winds developed. By the 8th, pressure was falling everywhere and a period of very disturbed weather commenced. There were showers or longer spells of sometimes heavy rain over the next four days and temperatures were depressed. On the 13th an unusually deep depression to the north of Scotland brought conditions more typical of March with strong winds and squally showers - which were wintry over northern hills. A further depression running north-east across England and Wales on the 14th/15th gave more rain and also, remarkably (just 5 weeks before the summer solstice) widespread snow over high ground in south-west England, Wales and northern England. Snow lay on the summit of Cross Fell, Cumbria for several days with drifting around the summit shelter as winds remained cool and from the northerly sector. Arctic air extended to all areas again on the 22nd and 23rd with sharp showers of rain and hail as well as thunder and further snow over northern hills. The 24th was a very cold and wet day for England and Wales as a depression over the North Sea extended its influence south-westwards. Maxima were widely below 10°C (50°F) over England, with a mere 6°C (43°F) reported from High Wycombe, Bucks. The Bank Holiday weekend saw a little improvement with sunshine more abundant under a ridge of high pressure, but further wind and rain reached western districts on the 27th heralding three days of damp and gloomy weather for much of England and Wales. Once again, western Scotland and Northern Ireland fared rather better, before brighter, warmer weather and sunshine extended to all areas on the 31st.

Another month of below average temperatures rounded off what has been the coldest spring across the UK for over fifty years - although this was mainly a function of the exceptionally cool March. Rainfall totals for May were close to their long-term averages over south-east England and East Anglia, but it was a wet month elsewhere else. Despite this, interestingly, sunshine amounts were close to normal for most places reflecting the general mobility of the weather regime.

Cold, unsettled weather also affected many parts of Europe during May. In Norway, hundreds of people were evacuated from their homes on the 22nd after heavy rain caused flooding in the south-east of the country. In Nesbyen, a mudslide filled basements with water, and in Kvam, a river burst its banks sending water surging through the centre of the village. In Canada, a record May snowstorm 18th/19th buried parts of Newfoundland under 60cm of snow. Gander logged a depth of 69cm. Meanwhile in the USA, schoolchildren in Minnesota and Wisconsin got a rare May snow day off school on the 2nd as 40cm of sticky snow blocked highways and cut power to tens of thousands of homes. The 28cm recorded at Forest City and Britt, Iowa, was the state's deepest snow ever recorded in May. Intense storm activity in the mid-western USA led to flooding and several fatalities just after mid month. San Antonio, Texas, received 250mm of rain on the 18th - making it the second wettest 24 hours for the city on record. The following day, tornadoes and baseball-sized hail brought destruction to a mobile home park in Shawnee, a suburb of Oklahoma City. On the 20th, a devastating tornado hit Moore, just south of Oklahoma City, flattening neighbourhoods and causing widespread fires. Homes and buildings were reduced to rubble, cars were strewn across roadways and entire blocks were flattened. 24 people died and at least 237 were injured. The tornado was an EF5 - the highest rating with winds exceeding 200mph. Damage assessment teams confirmed the huge tornado cut a path 17 miles long by 1.3 miles wide. Incredibly, another EF5 tornado struck Oklahoma on the 31st. It was responsible for several more fatalities - including five people sucked out of their cars. In Alaska's interior, a river Yukon ice jam caused major flooding, washed out roads and submerged homes and other buildings. The town of Galena was mostly underwater on the 21st - with an estimated 90% of the community's roads flooded and impassable.

In Chile, east of Santiago, 100cm of snow fell during the last week, while simultaneously flooding hit coastal and valley cities of central Chile. The latter was caused by a two-day rainstorm, during which 150mm of rain fell. Coastal roads were also inundated by a heavy storm surge. On the 29th, hurricane Barbara hit Mexico's southern Pacific coast, flooding roads, toppling trees and leading to at least 2 fatalities. Western Uganda experienced its worst flooding since 1976 on the 7th. Over 130km of main roads in Kibuku district were destroyed by torrential rains and 57 bridges washed away. Movement across the district became increasingly difficult as roads became flooded and hundreds of motorists (and cyclists!) were left stranded. A tropical storm packing winds of 70 mph and torrential rain lashed coastal areas of Bangladesh on the 16th. In the worst hit Patuakhali district, 12 people were killed, thousands of huts destroyed and up to a million people forced to flee.