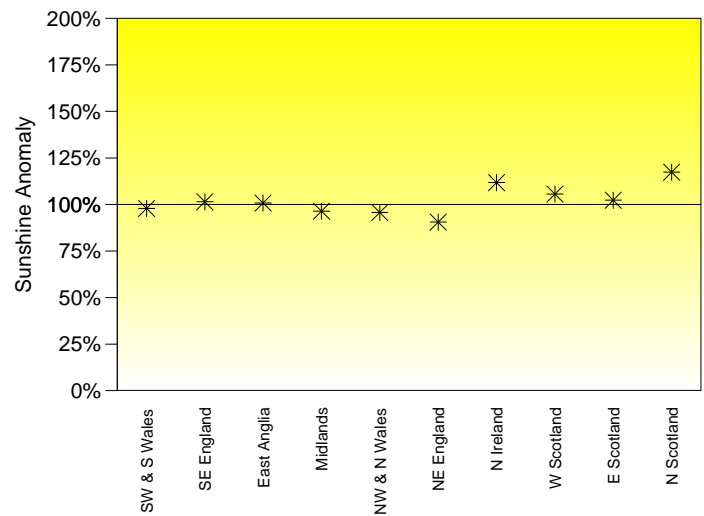
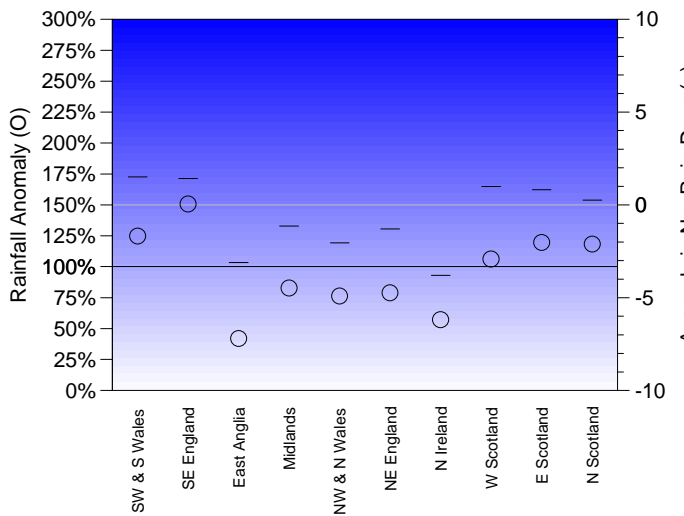


| Extremes for April 2014 |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Hottest:                | 22.1°C Leigh-on-Sea 2, Essex, 30th        |
| Coldest:                | -5.2°C Aboyne, Grampian, 20th             |
| Most Rain:              | 38.8mm Resallach, Highland, 9th           |
| Most Sun:               | 14.2hrs Monifieth, Tayside, 18th          |
| Windiest:               | 97mph Cairngorm, Highland, 17th           |
| Warmest:                | 12.6°C St James Park, Greater London      |
| Coolest:                | 6.5°C Braemar No 2, Avon                  |
| Wettest:                | 202.6mm Cluanie Inn No 3, Ross & Cromarty |
| Driest:                 | 2.4mm Charsfield, Suffolk                 |
| Sunniest:               | 192.3hrs Manston, Kent                    |
| Dullest:                | 102.6hrs Lerwick, Shetland                |



'A warming sun to soften winter's scourge,  
 Yet still the nip of frost to greet the dawn,  
 Snow too is cloaking northern hills  
 But the swelling bud foretells a longer day.' (Bowker April)

This verse suggests that April weather can be very variable - with winter, spring and summer all possible in one day. You are more likely to see a white Easter than a white Christmas, despite the fact that Easter can fall quite late in the month. Temperatures of 21°C (70°F) become increasingly common as the month progresses and the sun climbs rapidly higher in the sky with each day.

April this year commenced with four days of very poor air quality over southern and eastern England. This arose as a result of an unusual circulation; fine Saharan dust was carried in on a southerly airstream aloft, and this combined with industrial pollutants from the near-Continent which in turn mixed with our own home-grown pollution. Such was the situation that health warnings were issued for asthmatics and those with heart and lung conditions. It was not until the 4th that Atlantic fronts brought fresher air, but they also heralded an unsettled spell. The 6th and 7th saw widespread rain and Capel Curig (Gwynedd) recorded a gust of 67mph on the 6th. The 8th was brighter with a peppering of light showers, and the following 5 days saw fronts racing across northern England giving further rain to Scotland, but relatively high pressure further south - making it much drier here. It was windy in the north on the 12th and the following day Blackford Hill, Edinburgh recorded a gust of 53mph. The 14th dawned bright and crisp, but was followed by a chilly night. High pressure then maintained the generally fine weather into the Easter weekend. A raw north-east wind had developed across southern England by the 19th, and the following day (Easter Sunday) saw a change in fortunes as developing low pressure over northern France brought outbreaks of rain. Dunkeswell (Devon) notched up 30.8mm, and scattered thunderstorms affected the Home Counties on the afternoon of the 21st. The weather then stayed unsettled until month end - with the 26th a particularly wet and windy day. Slack gradients meant that heavy showers and thunderstorms were slow-moving on the 28th and 29th, but it did become warmer with a positively summery 22.0°C (72°F) at Aviemore (Inverness-shire) on the 28th.

April was warmer than normal for all of the UK, continuing the trend of mild recent months. Night times were especially mild and frosts rare. Sunshine was very close to average nationwide, but rainfall totals were extremely variable owing to the showery character of much of the rain. Thus while parts of East Anglia were very dry, totals were well above normal over some parts of southern England.

In North America, severe thunderstorms and tornadoes exploded across Kansas and Missouri 3rd-4th before sweeping across Arkansas. Over 70,000 homes were left without electricity. Eight tornadoes were reported on the 3rd, spanning from northeast Texas to southern Illinois. On the 27th, at least 17 people were killed by tornadoes as a huge thunderstorm system containing super cells swept across the central and southern United States. Sixteen of the victims were in suburbs of Little Rock in Arkansas. Tornadoes then struck in Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Alabama and Mississippi on the 28th. There were several more fatalities - the result of flattened buildings and overturned vehicles. The Florida Panhandle and Alabama Gulf Coast were hit with widespread flooding on the 30th with residents stranded in their cars and homes waiting for rescuers to find a way around impassable roads. Boats and jet skis were moved from the beaches to the streets, helicopters employed and the National Guard deployed in high-wheeled vehicles. A remarkable 500mm of rain fell in Pensacola within 24 hours.

In South America, an abnormally strong storm system brought rounds of heavy rain and severe weather to parts of central and northern Argentina on the 7th and 8th. More than 50 mm of rain in less than 6 hours fell in the Buenos Aires area, leading to flash flooding. Rosario, to the northwest of Buenos Aires, reported severe thunderstorms with wind gusts to 70 mph along with hail. Farther to the southwest, Neuquen airport received a record 250 mm rain in the first eight days of April, well above the annual average of 175 mm! The storms were responsible for at least 3 deaths.

Residents of the Solomon Islands were hit by disastrous flooding on the 4th which killed over a dozen people and left thousands more homeless. Over 600mm of rain fell in 4 days between the 2nd and 5th around the capital Honiara leaving water supplies and sewer systems overwhelmed. The flooding was reported to be the most catastrophic in the country's history and led to 52,000 people losing their homes. Entire riverside communities and bridges were washed away when the Matanikau River in Honiara broke its banks. Category-five Tropical Cyclone Ita made landfall in Queensland, Australia on the 10th. The storm contained sustained winds of up to 105 mph at the time of landfall, and Cooktown recorded 165 mm of rain in 24 hours 11th-12th.