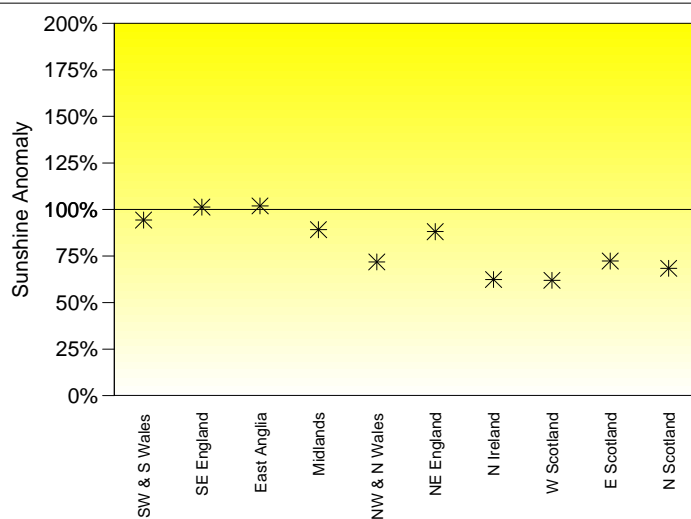
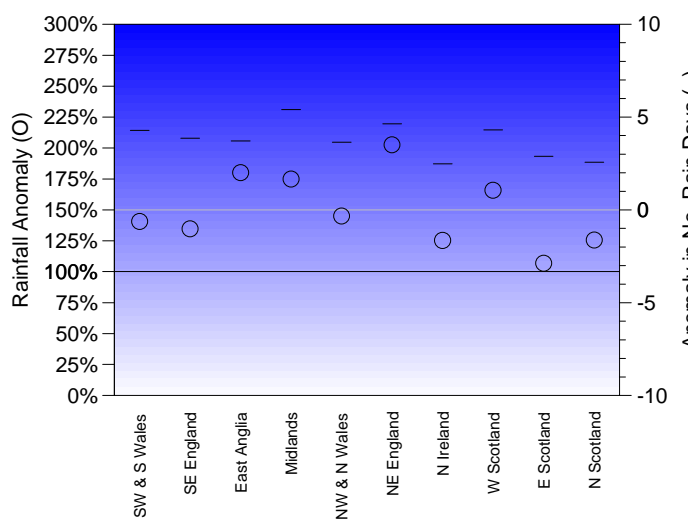


Extremes for May 2014	
Hottest:	26.3°C Heathrow, Greater London, 19th
Coldest:	-4.3°C Altnaharra SAWS, Highland, 2nd
Most Rain:	52.3mm Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd, 10th
Most Sun:	15.2hrs Ronaldsway Airport, Isle of Man, 21st
Windiest:	63mph Mumbles Head, West Glamorgan, 10th
Warmest:	14.2°C St James Park, Greater London
Coolest:	8.5°C Fair Isle, Shetland
Wettest:	160.4mm Dunstaffnage, Strathclyde
Driest:	38.8mm Balmoral, Grampian
Sunniest:	262.0hrs Jersey St Helier, Channel Islands
Dullest:	69.6hrs Bala, Clwyd



May is the month when the evenings draw out noticeably and the sun climbs ever higher in the sky - yet it is a notoriously tricky month for farmers and growers. Sudden hailstorms are not uncommon, while sharp frosts remain a distinct possibility, even in the south, and these may prove disastrous for an apple crop. The Atlantic circulation tends to be at its weakest in May in a meandering jet stream, so gales become less likely, with spells of fine and warm weather hinting at summer just around the corner. Equally though, this may mean that depressions can be quite slow-moving with prolonged grey and soggy weather, as happened at the month's end this year.

After a cool, wet opening day in the south, fortunes changed for the early Bank Holiday weekend. There was a good deal of dry and fine weather - but mornings were decidedly nippy with a frost on the 2nd confined to the north reaching to include central and southern England on the 3rd. Fronts approached western areas on the 5th and a windy, unsettled spell followed with bands of rain interspersed with brighter, showery weather. The weekend of the 10th/11th was particularly breezy and changeable as low pressure moved out into the North Sea. A wind gust of 67mph was recorded at Needles Old Battery (Isle of Wight) on the 10th, and by the morning of the 11th, Capel Curig (Conwy) had notched up 57.4mm of rain in 24 hours. There was some disruption to road transport in South Wales owing to the strong winds. Two more days of sunshine and showers with local hail and thunder followed before pressure began to build across the south on the 14th, killing off the showers and ushering in a much warmer and more settled spell. Daytime temperatures climbed steadily with 21-25°C (70-75°F) widely achieved after the 17th. On the 19th, Heathrow reached 26.3°C (79°F) - the month's highest maximum temperature. Fronts continued to affect the far north and as pressure fell generally during the 20th/21st, it became changeable once more. The 22nd saw widespread thundery showers across the Midlands and south-east with lightning striking the Shard Tower in central London. On the same day, a cold north-easterly on the other side of the depression meant that temperatures struggled to rise above single figures Celsius over most of northern and eastern Scotland. The late Bank Holiday saw cool, damp and disappointing weather for most. Western Scotland saw the best of any brightness. Low pressure sneaking in from the continent ensured that cool, cloudy conditions with spells of rain persisted over much of England and Wales 27th - 29th, but rising pressure during the final two days gave a drier, brighter and warmer finish.

Mean temperatures were above average nationwide, although this was a consequence of some mild nights under overcast skies, rather than any exceptional warmth. Sunshine totals were below normal everywhere, with Scotland and Northern Ireland experiencing a particularly dull month. Rainfall was above average everywhere, with the north-east of England experiencing its wettest May since 1979.

In Europe, exceptional rainfall affected the Balkan countries of Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia on the 14th-15th. Daily rainfall totals for the 15th broke all time records in the Serbian cities of Belgrade (108mm) Valjevo (108mm) and Loznica (129mm). In Belgrade, 205 mm of rain fell in just 48 hours, more than the normal rainfall for all of April, May and June combined! Rapidly rising rivers surged into homes, forcing people to go upstairs or to climb onto rooftops and await rescue. Tens of thousands of people were forced to abandon their homes which had also been left without electricity or drinking water. The overflowing rivers closed roads and caused hundreds of mudslides across the region, leading to 37 deaths. Obrenovac, Serbia, was swamped with 3m of floodwater. Meanwhile northeast Europe experienced an equally remarkable early heat wave. Estonia notched up a new record high for May on the 19th with 33.1°C (92°F) measured in Kunda. Tallin also broke its May record with 31.4 °C (88°F). On the same day St. Petersburg, Russia (where measurements have been ongoing since 1881), experienced a new record high for May of 33.0°C (91°F) and Arkhangelsk on the Arctic Ocean peaked at a remarkable 31.7 °C (89°F)

Fierce heat and wildfires raged across California on 14th-15th. Los Angeles reached 37°C (99°F) on the 14th. A major fire engulfed the coastal town of Carlsbad, north of San Diego, scorching several buildings and forcing an amusement park to close. 20,000 people were evacuated in the area and a local University campus was shut. A mid month deluge affected eastern China on the 15th-16th. Eighteen people died after a wall collapsed following torrential rain in Qingdao. Taishan, located just west of Hong Kong, received a colossal 419mm of rain in 24 hours on the 15th. In India, a prolonged heat wave in Odisha state saw temperatures reach 44.6°C (112°F) in Banda on the 3rd with 43°C (109°F) at Churu.

A late-autumn hailstorm left parts of Sao Paulo, Brazil, covered in white on the 18th. Enough ice accumulated that children were seen playing in yards and streets across the city, even making "snowmen." In Australia, Adelaide recorded its coldest start to May on record with a high of just 11.9°C (53°F) on the 2nd. Meanwhile Antarctic sea ice continued to wax - reaching its highest ever recorded extent for May by month end.