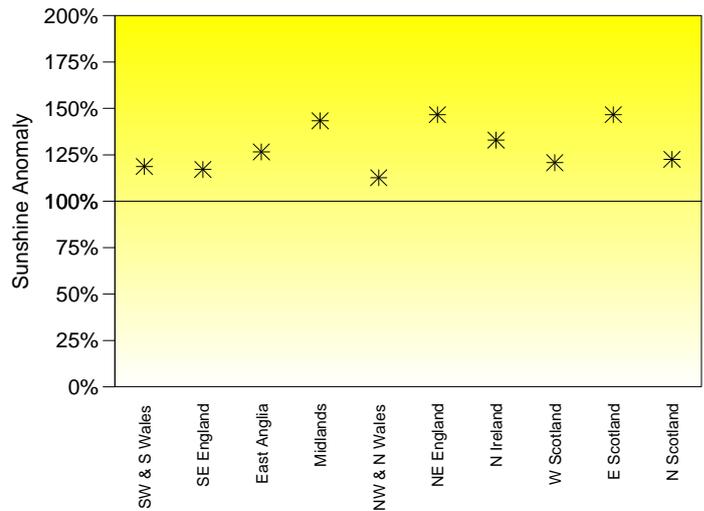
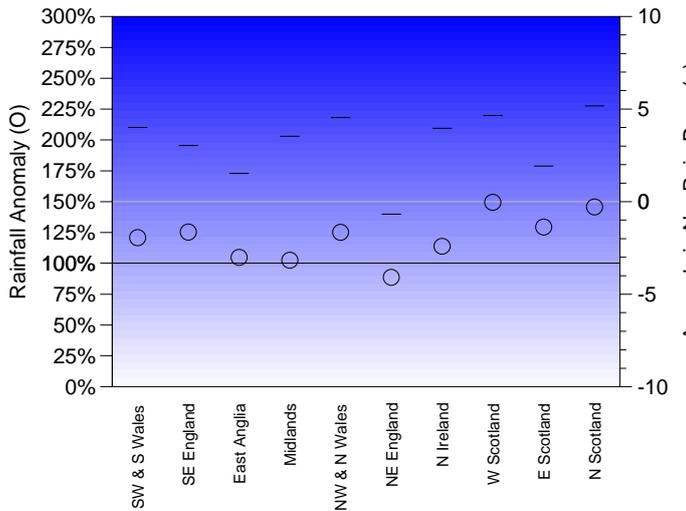


Extremes for January 2015	
Hottest:	16.5°C Exeter, Devon, 9th
Coldest:	-13.0°C Loch Glascarnoch, Highland, 20th
Most Rain:	87.6mm Tyndrum No 3, Perthshire, 1st
Most Sun:	7.8hrs Manston, Kent, 24th
Windiest:	113mph Stornoway, Western Isles, 9th
Warmest:	8.7°C Scilly St. Mary's SAWS, Cornwall
Coollest:	1.7°C Braemar No 2, Avon
Wettest:	598.2mm Achnagart, Highland
Driest:	18.2mm Cambridge, Niab, Cambridgeshire
Sunniest:	94.9hrs Dyce, Grampian
Dullest:	13.4hrs Lerwick, Shetland



'Generals January and February will fight for us.' So goes an old saying among army brass who knew how to cope with the weather better than their opponents. It reflects the savagery of this winter month, not just in terms of cold but also lack of daylight and storminess. Indeed, the period 5th-15th is a notorious for gales, followed by quieter spells thereafter, and 2015 conformed beautifully to this pattern.

Mild but windy weather characterised the first half of the month. There were plenty of wet days - notably the 1st and 7th when totals well in excess of 40mm fell over the Scottish Highlands. A vigorous depression brought very stormy conditions to the north on the 8th/9th. Gusts of 80-100mph were widespread across northern Scotland and the Western Isles, and Stornoway Airport recorded 113mph. 24 hours later another rapidly deepening depression just to the north of Scotland gave a repeat performance. Gusts reached 100mph across Shetland, the Scottish coastline was battered by monster waves, there was widespread disruption to transport and thousands of homes were left without power. Meanwhile the trailing warm sector brought tropical air to the south and Exeter Airport basked in a balmy 16.5°C (62°F) on the 9th. Unstable polar maritime air invaded the UK on the 13th and there were snow showers to low levels in Scotland. Conditions turned blizzard like overnight 14th/15th as heavy snow in the north was accompanied by further gales. 30cm blanketed Aviemore (Morayshire) and Tulloch Bridge (Perthshire). Blackford Hill, Edinburgh recorded a gust of 80mph and there was at least 1 fatality from a falling tree in County Antrim. The second half of the month marked a dramatic transition to cold and quiet weather with some hard night frosts and wintry showers. By the 19th, snow cover was extensive over the high ground of the north and the month's lowest temperature of -13.7°C (7°F) occurred at Loch Glascarnoch (Highland). Remarkably this occurred during the daytime! Even in the south, there were minima down to -8°C (18°F) over the following week and icy roads were the cause of numerous accidents. It briefly became milder 25th - 27th as winds backed westerly, but a cold front drove squally rain south-east on the 28th. Cold north-westerlies followed and there were showers or longer periods of rain, sleet and snow over the final three days. Buxton (Derbyshire) had 30cm of lying snow by the 31st.

The contrasting halves meant that mean temperatures were very close to the average for the UK, with most of England and Wales fractionally above. As often in an unsettled, mobile winter month, sunshine was well above average - but so was rainfall, and Scotland was especially wet.

In Europe, exceptional föhn winds across the Alps brought exceptional warmth on the 10th. Germany saw a new all time January high with 20.5°C (69°F) at Bad Reichenhall, Bavaria and a new Austrian January temperature record was set when Graz-Strassgang and Obervellach reached 21.7°C (71°F). In striking contrast, northern European Russia was very cold during early January. At Khosed-Khard near the Ural Mountains, the temperature dropped to a numbing -51.5°C (-61°F) on the 11th. Meanwhile southern Norway experienced exceptional snow which accumulated to depths of 2.5m or more - leaving some households completely isolated.

In the USA, the great northeaster blizzard of 2015 raged from central Long Island to southern and eastern New England 26th-27th. This storm brought 87cm snowfall to Worcester, Massachusetts and 63cm to Boston. Storm surges and 30 feet waves caused major flooding and considerable property damage along the seacoast in Massachusetts. In contrast, at the same time as the northeastern 'whiteout' some mid-western states basked in exceptional warmth. At Great Falls, Montana 20.0°C (68°F) was reached on the 26th, and at Hays, Kansas, 30.0°C (86°F) on the 28th - both far surpassing previous January records.

On the 17th, wind driven snow buffeted northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Region, stranding motorists on open roads around the capital Urumqi. In Africa torrential rains in Malawi on the 14th killed at least 48 people, left 70,000 homeless, destroyed bridges and roads and ruined crops. Downpours and flooding also hit neighbouring Mozambique, where 25 schoolchildren were swept away by torrents on the 18th. On the island of Réunion, east of Madagascar, Haute de Ste-Rose received 506mm of rain in 24 hours on the 15th, courtesy of the edge of tropical Cyclone Bansi.

Australia - now in its high summer - also experienced extremes during January. On the 10th, Alice Plaza, in the heart of Alice Springs, received 125mm of rain. Charles River Big Dipper was drenched in 114mm of rain and Mount Lloyd 100mm. However, on the 21st, the town of Carnarvon on Western Australia's northwest coast recorded its equal hottest day ever, with a scorching 47.8°C (118°F).