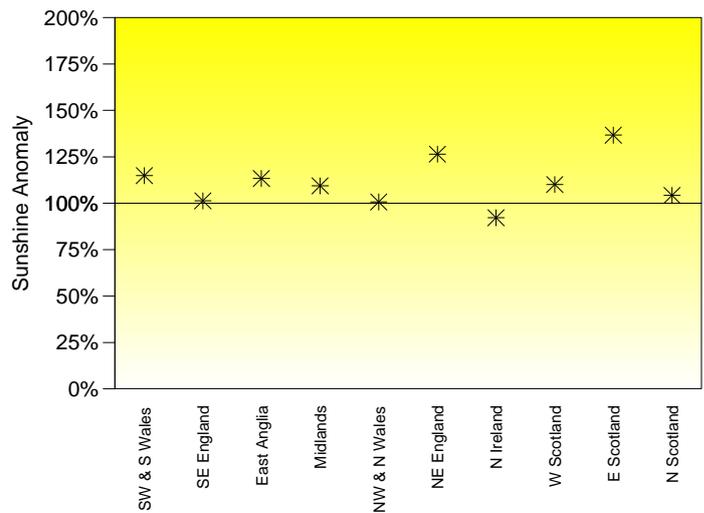
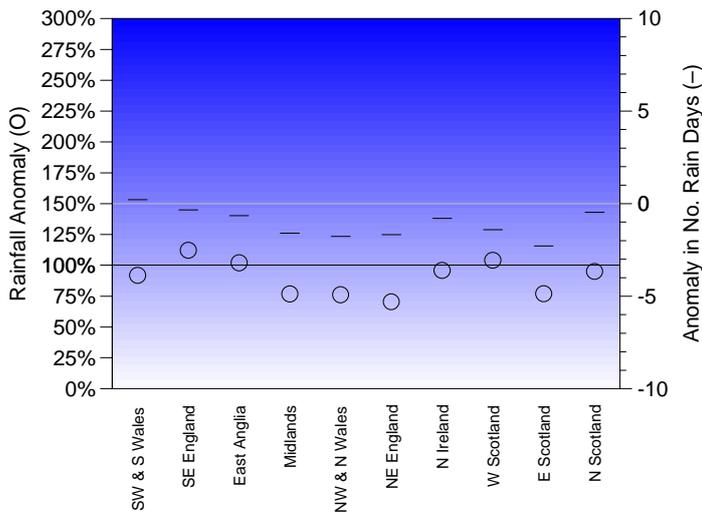


Extremes for February 2015	
Hottest:	15.1°C Kinloss, Grampian, 18th
Coldest:	-11.0°C Dalwhinnie No 2, Tayside, 3rd
Most Rain:	59.8mm Achnagart, Highland, 18th
Most Sun:	9.4hrs Wittering, Cambridgeshire, 17th
Windiest:	77mph Berry Head, Devon, 13th
Warmest:	7.5°C Scilly St. Mary's SAWS, Cornwall
Coolest:	1.7°C Dalwhinnie No 2, Tayside
Wettest:	281.0mm Achnagart, Highland
Driest:	10.4mm Ryhill, West Yorkshire
Sunniest:	130.4hrs Jersey St Helier, Channel Islands
Dullest:	40.4hrs Lerwick, Shetland



Despite the lengthening of the days, February is rarely much warmer than January and for the south and west is often the coldest month of the year. One weather saying relates to 2nd February - the half way point between the winter solstice and the vernal equinox. 'If Candlemas Day be sunny and bright winter will have another flight; if Candlemas Day be cloudy with rain, winter is gone and won't come again.' Do not trust it! rarely is it borne out by the weather records...

February began cold. Much of the country enjoyed dry, crisp weather but there were snow showers in the east and hard frosts at night. Bewcastle (Cumbria) recorded a minimum of -10.9°C (13°F) early on the 3rd and icy roads caused numerous road accidents nationwide. From the 6th, high pressure began to build leading to a settled and rather less cold spell. Initially it remained quite sunny but from the 9th, anticyclonic gloom became widespread. This is a common winter phenomenon where dreary stratus becomes trapped in the lowest layers of the atmosphere. On the 13th, gales in the southwest (Berry Head, Devon recorded a gust of 77mph), heralded a change to unsettled westerly weather - and over the following week several rain bands crossed the country. The 16th and 19th were both very wet but the days between notably sunny. Fyvie Castle (Aberdeenshire) to the windward of the Cairngorms reached a remarkable 15.6°C (60°F) on the 18th under the curious influence of a föhn wind. Snow showers occurred as far south as the Midlands on the 21st as it briefly turned colder before winds reverted once more to the west. An Atlantic storm in conjunction with record spring tides battered the north and west on the 22nd and this was followed by another very windy day nationwide with driving rain and blizzards on northern hills. Winds eased through the 24th, before tropical air flooded the country and brought a welcome taste of spring. Bournemouth airport reached a balmy 14.0°C (57°F) on the 25th. February ended with yet more wet and windy weather. Vigorous south-westerly winds swept the country on the 28th and Tyndrum (Perthshire) recorded 49.8mm of rain.

Temperatures for the UK for February were just below normal - bringing to an end a run of five warmer than average months. Rainfall was a little below normal for most places, but sunshine rather above - especially in eastern areas. Interestingly, this has been the sunniest winter in a series since 1929.

In Europe, it was the south of the continent that experienced the severest winter weather. On the 5th, Spanish emergency services rescued 200 motorists trapped by up to 40cm snow and temperatures of -15°C on roads between Cantabria and the province of Palencia. Snowfall closed roads as far south as Andalusia - and in Catalonia, 75mph winds disrupted railway services. Albania was hit by its most severe flooding since 1971. A remarkable 220mm of rain fell in Gjirokaster, Albania 4th - 5th and in Novosela, the river Vjosa burst its banks flooding neighbouring land. On the 17th, heavy snowfall blanketed much of Turkey, disrupting travel and cutting off villages. Istanbul, was brought to a standstill as snow clogged roads throughout the capital - and Turkish Airlines cancelled 123 flights from the main airport. Even further south and east, the higher terrain of Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan was also affected by snow 19th-20th. 25cm fell around Jerusalem and closed roads, businesses and schools.

In India, Jakarta was flooded as thunderstorms unleashed 300-450 mm of rainfall 8th - 10th. The deluge knocked out power supplies and inundated roads and homes. 6,000 residents were forced to evacuate and flood waters reached 60cm around the Presidential Palace and the National Monument.

For the Mid-West and eastern USA, February was one of the most extreme winter months on record. On the 1st and 2nd a blizzard enveloped Chicago and deposited 49cm snow - the fifth largest snowstorm ever to impact the city. By the 20th, Boston had already recorded its snowiest month ever, with over 200cm of cumulative snowfall and 18 successive days with half a metre or more of lying snow. On the 20th, the state Mount Washington observatory simultaneously recorded a temperature of -28°C (-18°F) and a mean wind speed of 81mph - combining to give a frightening wind chill of -53°C (-63°F)! At Whitefield, New Hampshire, temperatures plunged to an arctic -35°C (-33°F) on the 23rd. A snow and ice storm 25th - 26th left hundreds of thousands without power - and a trail of disruption from Texas to North Carolina and Virginia. 20cm of snow fell in Huntsville, Alabama, the second-highest daily snowfall to ever hit the city.

In the southern hemisphere, Tropical Cyclone Marcia rapidly intensified just prior to making landfall in eastern Queensland, Australia on the 20th. Marcia became only the sixth cyclone to make landfall in Australia at Category 5 strength and peak wind gusts of 183 mph were experienced as the cyclone came onshore.