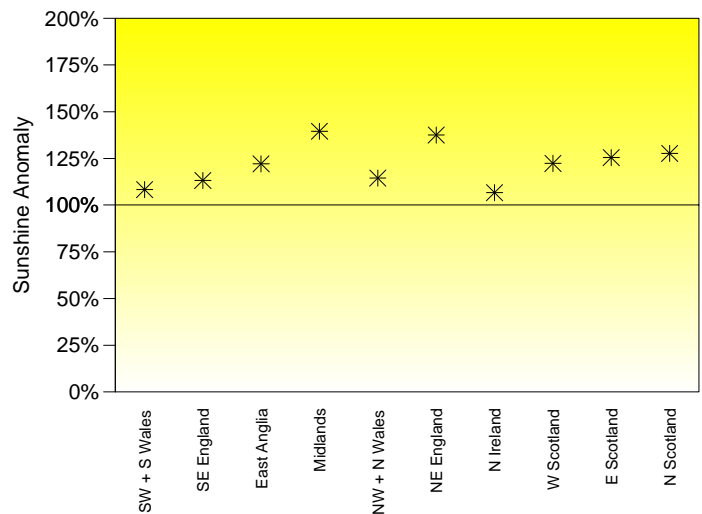
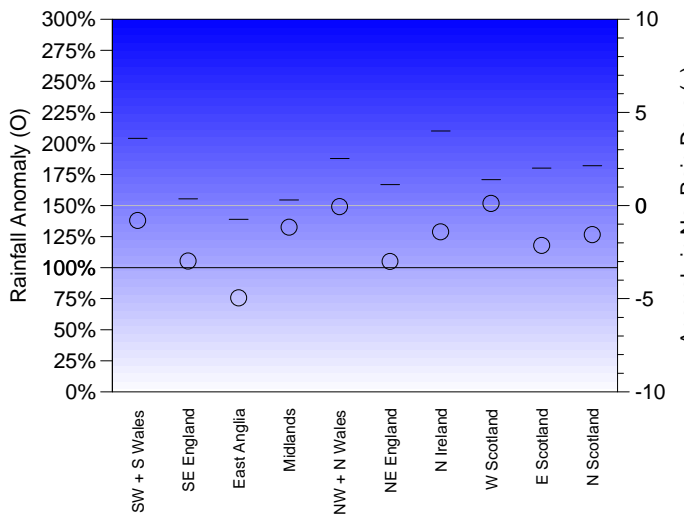


Extremes for February 2016		
Hottest:	16.0°C	Exeter, Devon, 21st
Coldest:	-10.3°C	Loch Glascarnoch, Highland, 28th
Most Rain:	97.4mm	Kinlochewe, Highland, 2nd
Most Sun:	9.8hrs	Morecambe, Lancashire, 23rd
Windiest:	90mph	South Uist Range, Western Isles, 1st
Warmest:	8.4°C	Scilly St. Mary's SAWS, Cornwall
Coolest:	1.6°C	Carterhouse, Borders
Wettest:	350.2mm	Cluanie Inn No 3, Ross & Cromarty
Driest:	16.4mm	Cavendish, Suffolk
Sunniest:	109.0hrs	Wellesborne, Warwickshire
Dullest:	59.7hrs	Manston, Kent



February is typically the driest month of the year for the UK and about 4 years in 10 the coldest. Sea temperatures reach their nadir at this time of year - and the sun remains too low to impart much heat - despite the lengthening days. The weather tends to become settled from mid month, and the latter half is most typically the driest fortnight of the year for eastern and central England.

February began mild but unsettled. Storm 'Henry' on the 1st & 2nd spawned monster waves off the Western Isles and hurricane force winds across the Cairngorms. At low level, gusts peaked at 90mph over South Uist (Western Isles) where schools were closed and 13,000 homes left without power. Structural damage was reported in Glasgow, East Kilbride and Dundee, whilst further south, the Forth and Tay Road Bridges were closed to traffic. Cassley (Sutherland) recorded 83.6mm of rain in the 24 hours ending 0900 on the 2nd. The 6th was a very wet day across the south west and South Wales and flooding affected the fishing village of Portreath, Cornwall, the following day. On the 7th and 8th coasts of South West England and Wales bore the brunt of 'Imogen' - the most severe storm to affect southern England since February 2014. Sea conditions in the south west approaches reached 'phenomenal' (the highest classification), many ferries were cancelled and a wave 19.1m high was recorded off the coast of St Ives. In Wales, 5000 homes lost power, the Severn Bridge was closed for a time, and a sports centre in Blaenau Gwent was evacuated after heavy rain led its roof to collapse. Needles Old Battery (Isle of Wight) recorded a highest gust of 96mph on the 7th and Pembrey Sands (Camarthenshire) 83mph on the 8th. It stayed unsettled, although less windy, throughout the second week, before turning colder around the 14th, Valentines Day. -14.1°C just before dawn at Braemar (Aberdeenshire) made it the chilliest night of the winter - and indeed of any night in the UK since 11th February 2012. It heralded a period of notably colder weather with snow in the north and in the east e.g. 10cm at Aviemore (Inverness-shire) on the 15th - and flurries as far south as Kent and Sussex. After some further rain, there was a brief mild interlude 20th-21st before the weather once more turned dry, sunny and cold with some sharp overnight frosts up to month end.

For England and Wales, February was a little warmer than normal, but Scotland a little cooler. Except for along the east coast, it was another wet month nationwide - especially so in already sodden Cumbria and North Lancashire - which received twice their usual rainfall. It was a sunny month for the entire UK with central England measuring >100 hours, ~50% more than usual, making it the fourth sunniest February here since at least 1929. Whilst the weather of February 2016 was unremarkable, record warmth and rainfall during December and early January have, for many places, left Winter 2015-16 without precedent. For Central England it has been the second warmest since 1659 and for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland no winter has been wetter in over 100 years. Capel Curig (Gwynned) recorded >2m rain throughout the winter, and 2.8m in the 4 months from November to February - 106% of the annual average!

Rain turned increasingly to snow across Iberia 14th-15th as cold polar air surged southwards over western Europe. Spain's northern coast saw the heaviest snowfalls with Galicia in the northwest being buried in up to 40cm. There were numerous road closures and hundreds of drivers were left trapped in their cars near Ourense. The same weather system brought torrential rain and widespread flooding to northern and central Portugal. 64mm fell in 24 hours at Coimbra.

In North America, several tornadoes ripped across eastern Mississippi and western Alabama on the 2nd, felling trees and power lines - and leaving 14,000 homes without power. Meanwhile a brutal winter storm paralysed parts of the Midwest. Much of Colorado was blasted with more than a foot of snow, with 105cm in Coal Bank Pass. Snow also pounded New England on the 8th causing hundreds of flights to be cancelled at Boston International Airport. By Valentine's Day, extreme cold had gripped the eastern USA. New York's Central Park, shivered in -18.3°C - its coldest February night since 1963, and its coldest night since 1993. In Boston, -23°C was the lowest temperature in 60 years. Watertown, New York state recorded an even more numbing -38.5°C. On the 15th, an ice storm swept states from Georgia to Maine. Airports were forced to shut, rime build up on overhead cables caused the collapse of power lines, there was a spate of road accidents and numerous route closures. Further north, in Canada, on the 16th, Ottawa recorded its highest ever daily snowfall. 51cm fell within 24 hours, smashing the previous record (41cm), set in 1947.

In Asia, Karachi (Pakistan), reached 36°C on the 27th - a new record high for February. In contrast, heavy snow on the 1st disrupted public transport in southern China, leaving thousands of travellers marooned. A massive category five cyclone 'Winston' swept through Fiji, levelling entire villages, causing at least 40 fatalities and rendering over 60,000 people homeless. It was the strongest storm ever to hit the islands - and at the peak of its intensity on the 20th, and shortly before landfall, had a central pressure of just 915mb and packed sustained winds of 143mph.