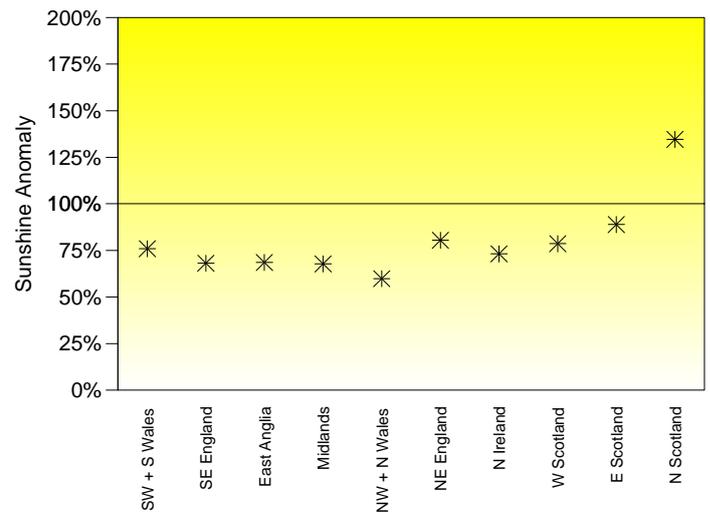
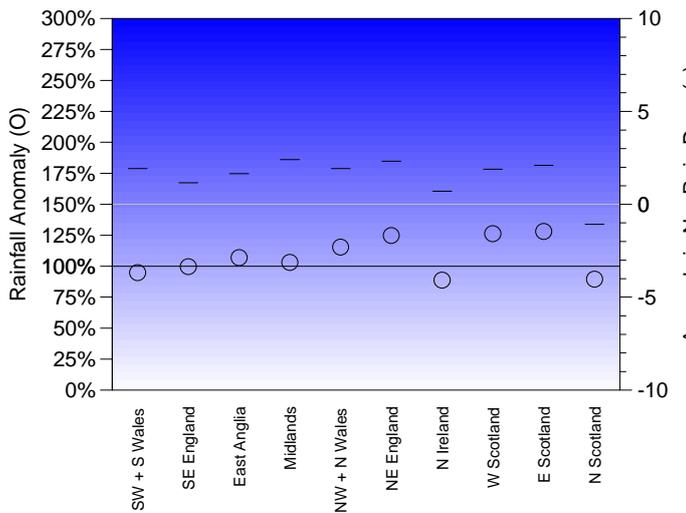


Extremes for February 2017	
Hottest:	19.0°C Woodvale, Merseyside, 20th
Coldest:	-9.8°C Altnaharra SAWS, Highland, 11th
Most Rain:	59.0mm Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd, 25th
Most Sun:	9.5hrs East Malling, Kent, 13th
Windiest:	94mph Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd, 23rd
Warmest:	9.2°C Scilly St. Mary's SAWS, Cornwall
Coolest:	3.0°C Braemar No 2, Grampian
Wettest:	304.4mm Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd
Driest:	29.4mm Rothamsted No.2, Hertfordshire
Sunniest:	95.2hrs Kinloss, Grampian
Dullest:	23.4hrs Bala, Clwyd



February marks the end of the meteorological winter - yet on average is barely warmer than January - and for some places in the southwest a little cooler. February has shown a distinct warming trend over recent decades and snow has become quite uncommon especially for southern Britain. Its second half tends to be anticyclonic, dry and settled. Not so this year!

February began mild and stormy, with coastal gales in the west on the 2nd ('Candlemas' Day). A monster 12m wave was recorded by a buoy in the south western approaches - and a gust of 76mph at St Mary's, Scilly Isles. Some Channel ferry crossings were disrupted later in the day and there were fallen trees in Dorset. Conditions became cooler and quieter from the 4th and by the start of the second week pressure was building strongly over Scandinavia. A raw easterly wind brought cloudy but mainly dry weather - and some cold nights. A sharp and widespread frost on the morning of the 6th was responsible for a spate of road accidents. On the 11th and 12th ice and wintry showers made for treacherous diving conditions over the higher routes of the Southern Uplands, Pennines and North Yorkshire Moors (e.g. Copley, County Durham reported 5cm lying snow on the 11th & 12th). During the third week the Atlantic westerlies reasserted themselves and a more zonal flow dominated for the remainder of the month. The 20th was exceptionally mild. Helped by a föhn over the mountains of Snowdonia, Woodvale, Merseyside, reached 19.0°C (66°F), and Kew in London 18.3°C (64.9°F). This made it respectively, the warmest February day since 2012 - and the warmest in the capital since 1998. On the 21st an area of low pressure out in the Atlantic was named 'Doris' and deepened rapidly as it approached the British Isles early on the 23rd. 'Doris' tracked across Ireland during the early hours, was centred over the Lake District by 0900 then exited out into the North Sea early afternoon. On her northern flank, up to 30cm of snow fell over the higher ground of central Scotland - badly disrupting the M80 between Glasgow and Edinburgh. Further south storm force winds were responsible for at least 3 deaths, numerous injuries, transport chaos and widespread property damage - notably in Merseyside, Leicestershire and East Anglia. Notable high gusts included 81mph at Weybourne on the Norfolk coast and 74mph, inland at Wittering, Cambridgeshire. Storm 'Ewan' struck just 72 hours later - although without the ferocity of its forerunner. Worst affected was Snowdonia which experienced severe gales and torrential rain. As the winds gradually veered north west, snow again returned to higher ground. On the 27th 40 vehicles were abandoned as snow blocked the A68, south of Edinburgh.

Despite a rather cold second week, it was a very mild month nationwide - and for the UK as a whole, the 9th mildest February since records began in 1910. The main reason was warm nights beneath cloudy skies - and a scarcity of frosts. Most places had a dull month, and Wales measured just half its normal sunshine. Only in northern Scotland was February relatively sunny - Lerwick, Shetland, notched up 56 hours - a marked improvement on its dismal January total of just 9 hours! Rainfall was generally a little above normal everywhere except for isolated pockets of the southwest and northern Scotland - and was about 7% above average for the UK as a whole.

Iceland experienced some very capricious weather during February. The capital, Reykjavik, had its heaviest February snowfall ever (51cm), overnight 26th-27th. A fortnight earlier, on the 12th, Brúðardalur in the east of the country had recorded 17.8°C (64°F) - remarkably mild for what is most typically the coldest time of the year. This relative "heat wave" extended even further north to the Arctic islands of Svalbard - where despite perpetual darkness temperatures peaked at 5°C (41°F) around the 8th, 25°C above the seasonal norm! Mean temperatures for the archipelago were 16°C above average for the month as a whole.

Over in North America, south-eastern Louisiana was blasted by tornadoes on the 5th. Around New Orleans and Baton Rouge, there was extensive property damage, cars and trucks were flipped and thousands of homes left without power. In eastern New England 11th-13th, a blizzard dumped 60cm of snow and caused numerous car crashes, school closures and flight cancellations. On the 19th, California was struck by a violent storm. Up to 200mm of rain fell within 24 hours around Ventura and Los Angeles, and triggered flooding that rendered many routes impassable - and left one man drowned in his submerged car. Strong winds damaged homes and trees - and falling power lines were responsible for a further fatality. 300 flights at Los Angeles international airport were cancelled or delayed. Meanwhile California's ski resorts saw record-breaking snowfall. In South America, on the 26th, torrential rain struck Chile during the country's usually dry summer months. The resulting flooding left at least 3 people dead. Worst affected were the mountain valleys near Chile's capital, Santiago, where several major rivers burst their banks and interrupted the fresh water supply to 4 million people.

South-eastern Australia, continued to sizzle in record heat during February. On the 11th, temperatures soared to 47°C (117°F) in Richmond, 50km northwest of Sydney. Numerous wildfires were ignited and the small town of Uarbry, east of Dunedoo, all but burned to the ground. In White Cliffs, New South Wales, a stifling overnight minimum of 34.2°C (94°F), marked a new state record. Mungindi, on the border with Queensland, established a new Australian record of 50 days in a row above 35°C (95°F)