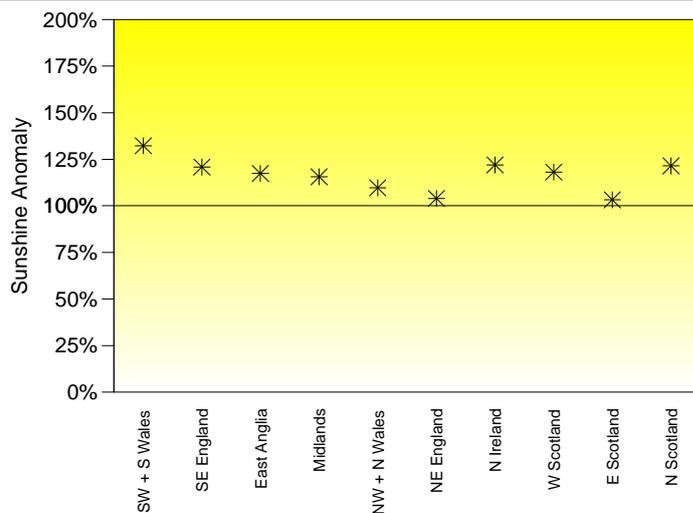
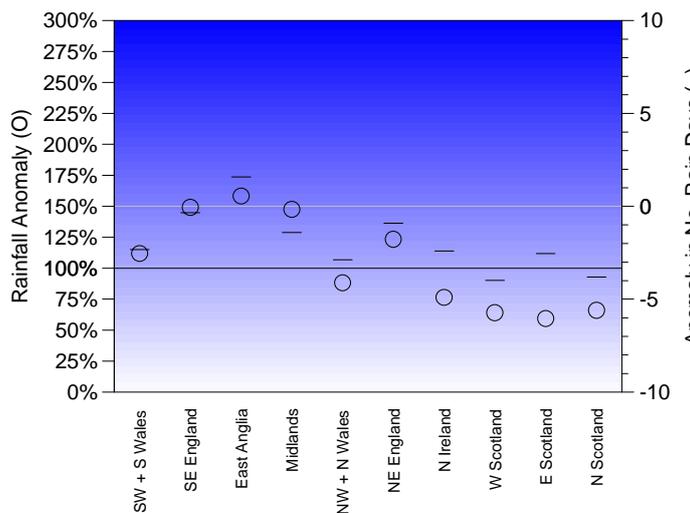


Extremes for March 2016	
Hottest:	16.1°C Tulloch Bridge SAWS, Highland, 16th
Coldest:	-7.6°C Altnaharra SAWS, Highland, 31st
Most Rain:	55.3mm Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd, 1st
Most Sun:	12.3hrs Bude, Cornwall, 31st
Windiest:	91mph Berry Head, Devon, 9th
Warmest:	8.4°C Scilly St. Mary's SAWS, Cornwall
Coolest:	3.6°C Carterhouse, Borders
Wettest:	234.7mm Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd
Driest:	28.8mm Edinburgh Royal Botanic Garden No 2, Lothia
Sunniest:	173.9hrs Jersey St Helier, Channel Islands
Dullest:	78.5hrs Eskdalemuir, Dumfries and Galloway



March marks the beginning of meteorological spring. It reputedly starts, and ends, cold and stormy - with a quiet anti-cyclonic spell in between. Undeniably, warmer days become more common after the vernal equinox when (for the northern hemisphere), the net heat that the sun imparts each day steadily, and cumulatively, increases. March is often showery and north westerly winds - and hail - are both more common than in any other month.

March started wet, cold and unsettled. Storm 'Jake' brought heavy rain to North Wales and north western England on the 1st and gales to the western approaches (e.g. 81mph at Abedaron) on the 2nd. On the 4th, significant snow fell over northern England - with Yorkshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire worst affected. 17cm was recorded in Buxton, Derbyshire and 6cm at Leeds Bradford Airport caused all morning flights to be suspended. There were numerous road closures across the Pennines and a spate of road accidents. The 7th started frosty but was a glorious sunny day nationwide, although it became very cold after dark - e.g. -7.1 °C at Benson (Oxfordshire) The 9th was a very wet day for central and southern England. Totals widely exceeded 20mm and minor flooding was reported from the Midlands, Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire. It was also very windy in the southwest (e.g. 91 mph at Berry Head (Devon), and 6,000 properties were left without power across Cornwall. High pressure became established 13th- 23rd, and brought dry, settled weather - and plenty of clear sky. The 14th and 17th saw uninterrupted sunshine although it remained stubbornly cool for England and Wales with temperatures struggling to 10°C (50°F). Northern Scotland was rather milder and a maximum temperature of 18.7°C (66°F) at Braemar (Aberdeenshire) on the 17th was the highest anywhere in the UK so far this year. The 20th marked the earliest vernal equinox in 120 years, but for most places any early spring warmth remained elusive. Good Friday, the 25th sunny, but the weather for the remainder of the Bank Holiday weekend was disappointing at best - and lethal at worst. Strong winds in the south on the 26th caused travel disruption and a young girl was killed when a bouncy castle broke its mooring and was blown across a park in Harlow, Essex. The 27th was very wet in the south and on the 28th, Easter Monday, Storm 'Katie' brought torrential rain to northern England and damaging gusts to Channel coasts (Needles Lighthouse, Isle of Wight recorded 106mph at 0500) and to the south east. The M25 QE2 Bridge, the M48 Severn Bridge and the A38 Tamar Bridge were all closed for a time, flights to and from Gatwick and Heathrow were suspended and the Port of Dover was closed. 200,000 properties were left without power and a kayaker was missing, feared dead, after he capsized in the River Wey, Surrey. Typically, the return to work coincided with sunshine and it became a little warmer.

For the month as a whole, England and Wales were rather cooler than average, but Scotland a little milder. It was a sunny month nationwide - especially so in the south and the west, but a wet one too for England and Wales. This was a product of the episodes of heavy rain that occurred at the start of the second week and the end of the fourth. In Scotland, by contrast, some places received just half their normal rainfall.

In Europe, devastating flooding and landslides hit central and eastern Serbia 8th -9th leaving hundreds of homes under water and roads ruined. At Preljine near Cacak, 80mm of rain fell in 12 hours - and caused the River Cernica to burst its banks. There was tragedy high in the Italian Alps on the 12th as an avalanche struck and consumed six skiers.

In Asia, spring remained on hold. Moscow received 20cm of snow overnight 1st-2nd - the heaviest March fall there in 50 years. There were dozens of flight cancellations and chaos on the roads - with 1,000 traffic incidents reported. Further south, a violent storm 9th /10th struck the south-eastern Arabian Peninsula. All flights out of Abu Dhabi International Airport (UAE) were suspended, and in neighbouring Oman, thunderstorms and torrential rain led to widespread flooding. Islamabad, Pakistan, was also struck 11th-15th receiving 135mm of rain in 5 days and Murree, on the mountain slopes just above the city, 300mm. Hundreds of homes were washed away by the resulting floodwaters and a coal mine collapsed leaving 12 dead.

In the USA, Louisiana and Mississippi were clearing up after a deluge of rain 10th-12th left roads submerged, bridges washed out and forced 3,500 people to evacuate their homes. At Shreveport, Louisiana, 275mm of rain (equivalent to treble the monthly average) was reported in less than 72 hours. On the 13th some southern states were battered by severe winds of up to 110mph, giant hail and tornadoes. In the south-western county of Montgomery, Arkansas, hailstones the size of baseballs caused damage to roofs, skylights and cars.

Australia, well into its Autumn, experienced some remarkable warmth. On the 9th, Melbourne recorded a maximum of 38.6°C (101.5°F) about 5pm, and subsequently its hottest ever March night - with the temperature falling no lower than 27.7°C (82°F)