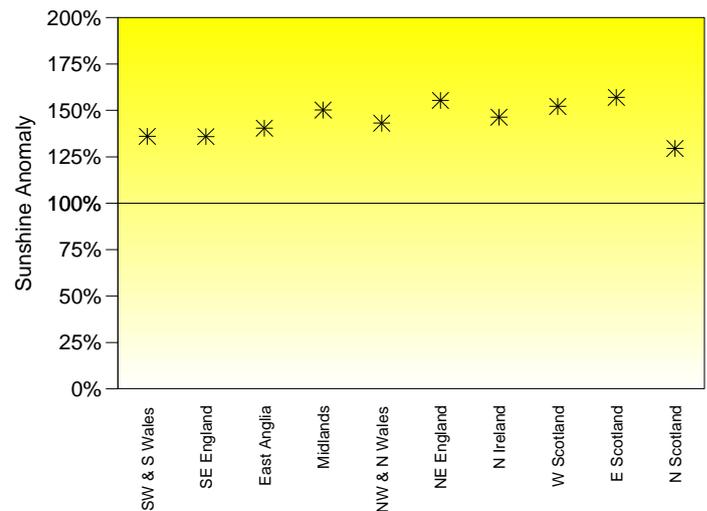
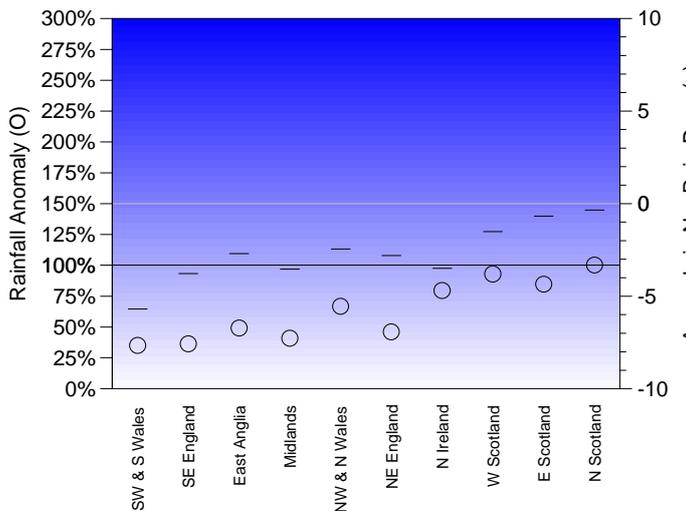


Extremes for April 2015	
Hottest:	25.2°C Jersey St Helier, Channel Islands, 15th
Coldest:	-8.0°C Katesbridge, County Down, 27th
Most Rain:	54.2mm Achnagart, Highland, 14th
Most Sun:	14.6hrs Tiree, Strathclyde, 30th
Windiest:	76mph Capel Curig SAWS, Gwynedd, 12th
Warmest:	11.5°C St James Park, Greater London
Coolest:	5.6°C Braemar No 2, Avon
Wettest:	166.8mm Achnagart, Highland
Driest:	8.0mm Llydsdinam, Powys
Sunniest:	237.2hrs St. Athan, South Glamorgan
Dullest:	107.5hrs Aviemore, Highland



'April is the cruellest month, breeding lilacs out of the dead land', says TS Eliot in *The Wasteland*. This recognises the dramatic changes in temperature that can often be felt during April - as well as the threat posed by damaging late frosts. Benign weather is also possible however, and despite its reputation for showers, April is typically one of the driest months of the year.

Following the storms of late March, April began unsettled and rather cold with wintry showers in the north on the 1st. A soggy start to the Easter weekend followed, with widespread rain on the 3rd and dull, raw conditions in north-easterly winds the next day. By Easter Sunday (5th) pressure was rising and a fine spell followed - although cloud sometimes masked bright sunshine and mist or fog were prevalent overnight. Days became steadily warmer - and the 10th saw maxima widely exceeding 20°C (68°F), although air quality was notably poor. Southerly winds bore pollution and haze from industrial areas of Europe - and occasionally, even more exotic Saharan dust. Pressure then began to fall, and by the 11th, a cold front had swept much cleaner, fresher air across all of the UK. A small depression moving east across northern England brought a cold, wet day to central areas on the 12th. The following day, there was heavy rain in the extreme north and west (e.g. Achnagart, Highland notched up 60.4mm), but elsewhere, high pressure building over northern France produced an early burst of summer. Faversham (Kent) reached 25.5°C (78°F) on the 15th, and although it became a little cooler everywhere on the 17th/18th in north-easterly winds the sunshine continued - and away from North Sea coasts, persisted throughout the following week. Temperatures were often highest in the Scottish Highlands - bathed in warm air from föhn type winds. By the 24th, high pressure over Greenland forced cold air over the Norwegian Sea south - and this brought an end to the warmth. At Drumnadrochit, on the shores of Loch Ness, snow and a midday temperature of only 1°C (34°F) on the 26th contrasted with blazing sunshine and 21°C (70°F) just five days earlier! The final week was unsettled and cool everywhere with showers or longer spells of rain and some snow on northern hills. Skies were often clear at night bringing an unwelcome return of night frosts for gardeners and growers. The mercury sank to -8°C (18°F) at Katesbridge (County Down) on the 27th.

Despite the chilly finish, average temperatures were 1-2°C above normal nationwide. It was also a very dry month for the south and east although rainfall for northern and western Scotland was more typical. Sunshine was abundant everywhere, making it the sunniest April since at least 1929.

In the USA, eight confirmed tornadoes roared across northern and central Illinois during violent thunderstorms on the 9th. The strongest tornado, an EF4 with winds of 180 to 200mph, hit Fairdale, leaving two people dead and 22 injured. The half-mile wide twister tracked on the ground for 29 miles - a record-long path for the region. Severe storms hit parts of eastern Texas on 26th-27th with softball-sized hail, damaging winds and tornadoes. One tornado struck Rio Vista, about 40 miles south of Fort Worth, leaving overturned trucks and widespread damage to buildings including the local high school. Trees crashing down from Fort Worth to Houston left thousands of residents without power. Early on the 27th, Navasota, Texas, was struck by a tornado while flash flooding sparked travel chaos. Multiple water rescues were required in Johnson County. The destructive storms swept through southern Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi and reached western Florida. Squalls blew several railroad cars off the Huey P. Long Bridge in Metairie, Louisiana and 150,000 people were left without power.

A major sandstorm engulfed Dubai on the 2nd forcing residents to remain indoors. The sandstorm disrupted air traffic and caused extensive traffic jams in the United Arab Emirates capital. On the 5th-6th a succession of severe thunderstorms left devastation across Bangladesh and neighbouring parts of India such as Agartala. Rainfall exceeded 125 mm and 36 people were killed following the storms which downed trees and destroyed many homes. Seasonably dry and hot weather subsequently returned to India and temperatures in New Delhi reached 41°C (106°F) on 20th. On the 26th a small cyclone struck northern Pakistan, killing 45 people and injuring more than 200. It was officially described as the most devastating wind storm ever to hit this region. Sustained winds over 75 mph, accompanied by heavy rain and hail caused widespread damage to buildings and infrastructure.

In Australia, extreme weather struck Sydney on the 22nd-23rd with a huge swell, damaging winds and torrential rainfall. The strongest gusts recorded were 84 mph at Nobbys Head (Newcastle), Norah Head (Central Coast) and Wattamolla (Illawarra). Exceptional 24-hour rainfall occurred in the Hunter Valley, Newcastle and Sydney's northern suburbs, including Maitland (301mm), Dungog (312mm), and Crawford (259mm). Following this deluge, a fierce thunderstorm crossed Sydney on the 25th, covering the ground with hail, flooding roadways and covering yards. Buildings in Huntingwood had 50cm of hail deposited on their roofs - and its sheer weight caused five warehouses to collapse!