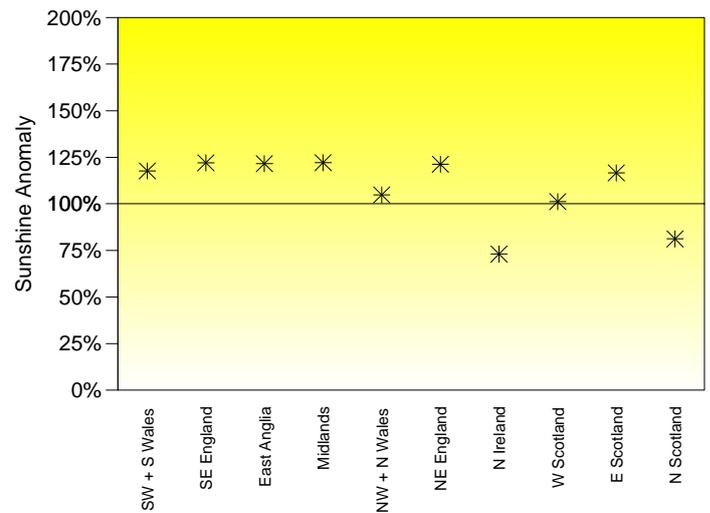
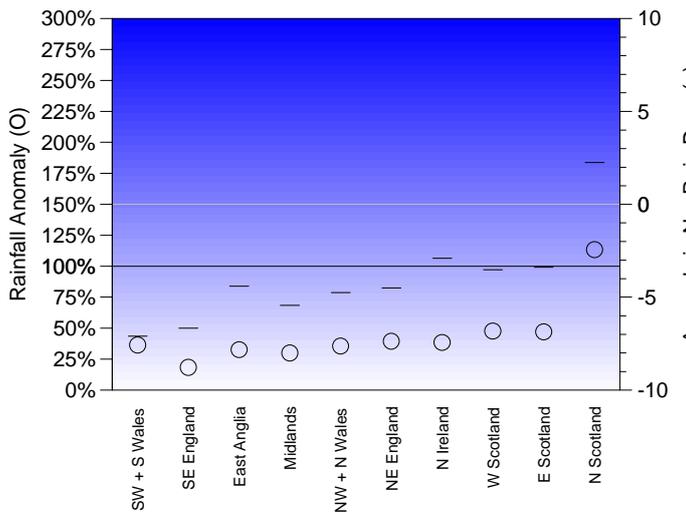


Extremes for April 2017	
Hottest:	25.4°C Heathrow, Greater London, 9th
Coldest:	-5.7°C Tulloch Bridge SAWS, Highland, 18th
Most Rain:	68.4mm Resallach, Highland, 11th
Most Sun:	13.3hrs Morecambe, Lancashire, 22nd
Windiest:	68mph Fair Isle, Shetland, 5th
Warmest:	11.4°C St James Park, Greater London
Coolest:	5.6°C Dalwhinnie No 2, Tayside
Wettest:	223.2mm Cluanie Inn No 3, Ross & Cromarty
Driest:	2.0mm High Beach, Essex
Sunniest:	261.3hrs Jersey Airport, Channel Islands
Dullest:	70.3hrs Thomastown, County Fermanagh



Although it is usually one of the drier months and despite sunshine being as strong as it is in August, April is rarely very warm. Snow, even late in the month and for southern England is not unusual - and fact is, Easter is just as likely to be 'white' as Christmas. That said, Aprils have shown a subtle but distinct warming trend over the last century and sunshine has risen too by ~10%. Interestingly rainfall has shown no clear corresponding upward (or downward) trend. There is some suggestion that dry Aprils tend to be followed by wet summers and nine out of ten of the driest Aprils of the last hundred years were followed by wet or very wet summers...

A weakening area of low pressure brought a showery day on the 1st, but pressure then built steadily from the south and remained in charge virtually uninterrupted until month end. It made for a dry and settled month everywhere except for the extreme north and west of Scotland. The only significant wind occurred on the 5th when westerly gales affected the Northern and Western Isles. Elsewhere, it became steadily warmer and increasingly sunny and the weekend of the 8th/9th was like high summer with unbroken sunshine and temperatures reaching 25°C (77°F) in the south and east (10°C above the seasonal norm!) The 11th was a very wet day in the Highlands with totals exceeding 50mm, but elsewhere it remained dry, although with temperatures returned to normal. Easter Bank Holiday was a little disappointing by comparison to the previous weekend, and it became distinctly chilly soon after that despite the noticeably lengthening days. Northerly winds 24th-27th brought a brief cold snap with some sharp frosts and significant snowfall in Scotland. On the morning of 25th, Cromdale, Morayshire measured 12cm lying snow, some of the highest routes in Grampian were forced to close and an HGV overturned in blizzard conditions on the A9 south of Inverness. Same day there were widespread thundery showers with numerous reports of hail across England. The 26th and 27th were particularly cold across all of the UK. Showers of hail, snow and sleet fell at low levels in Eastern England and in the south there were some severe ground frosts (e.g. Bournemouth Airport, Dorset -8.9°C) and notable air frosts (e.g. Benson, Oxfordshire -4.6°C) both early on the 27th. Temperatures recovered after that, and the last day of the month was wet and windy in the southwest. The heaviest rain was confined to Cornwall and, particularly, Devon, where Dunkeswell recorded 45.2mm.

April's rainfall was well below average everywhere except for the extreme Scottish Highlands, and for the UK as a whole, it was the driest in a decade and the 10th driest since 1910. The UK received just half its normal rainfall and much of southern England and Wales less than one third. Some of the Home Counties and south eastern Scotland experienced a near drought with totals of 5mm or less for the entire month (e.g. St James Park in London, 4.2 mm, Edinburgh, Lothian, 3.2mm). Surprisingly and even for these places, sunshine was only slightly above average and 109% for the UK meant it was not even in the top 5 sunniest since 2007. Bizarrely, in Northern Ireland, the driest April in 20 years was also the dullest! Odd too was the unusually cool second half to the month which tempered the very warm start and left average temperatures just a little above normal nationwide.

In Europe during April, a late cold wave swept across Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Switzerland 19th-20th. Also affected was the Ukraine where heavy snowfall collapsed power lines and cut off electricity to a thousand homes in Kharkiv, the country's second-largest city. Munich, Germany received some very unseasonal late Spring snow on the 26th and damaging frosts also affected French vineyards in Burgundy, Champagne and as far south as the Loire Valley. Across the Atlantic, early April saw violent storms sweep the southern states. On the 1st, 22,000 customers lost power across Texas and at Breau Bridge, Louisiana, a tornado flipped a mobile home, killing a mother and her 3-year-old daughter. Further storms on the 29th in the south and midwest USA were responsible for 13 more deaths and widespread flood damage. Same day in the Chinese capital, Beijing, temperatures soared to 33.1°C (92°F) making it the hottest April day for 19 years. India also saw some very high temperatures towards month end and 43.2°C (110°F) on the 20th was the hottest April day for New Delhi since 2010. However the heat wave was abruptly ended on the 26th as record rainfall fell across parts of northeastern India. Silchar recorded >100mm within 24 hours (the highest daily rainfall in decades), whilst in neighbouring Bangladesh, some places received 250-500 mm over a week which triggered major flooding.

South of the equator, remnants of former Cyclone 'Debbie' caused chaos across New Zealand's North Island on the 5th with floods, landslides and power failures. Kaikoura became cut off, 200 schools were closed after rivers burst their banks and the town of Edgecumbe was engulfed by floodwater 2m deep. One week later, Cyclone 'Cook' further battered central and eastern North Island with 90mph winds and torrential rain that left communities cut off and a state of emergency declared.