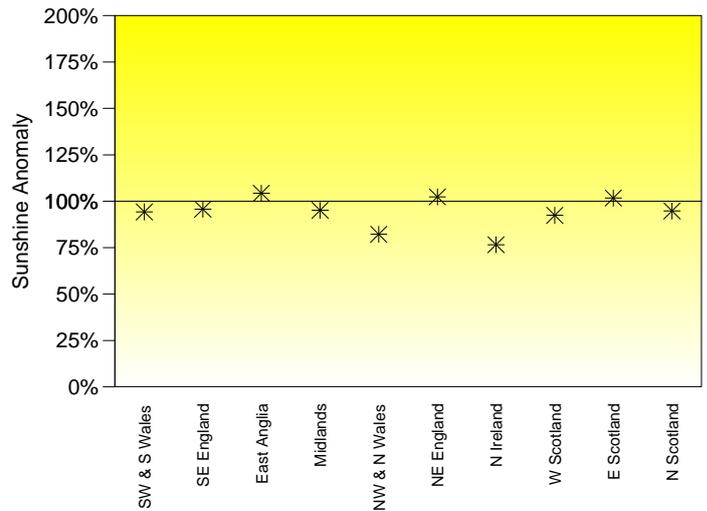
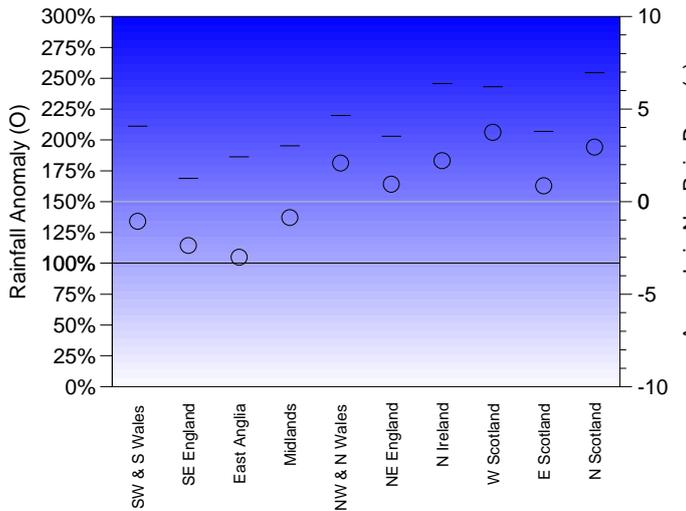


Extremes for May 2015		
Hottest:	22.7°C	St James Park, Greater London, 11th
Coldest:	-5.6°C	Tulloch Bridge SAWS, Highland, 1st
Most Rain:	51.6mm	Tyndrum No 3, Perthshire, 3rd
Most Sun:	14.6hrs	Tiree, Strathclyde, 1st
Windiest:	69mph	Mumbles Head, West Glamorgan, 5th
Warmest:	13.6°C	St James Park, Greater London
Coolest:	6.4°C	Dalwhinnie No 2, Tayside
Wettest:	291.8mm	Tyndrum No 3, Perthshire
Driest:	36.2mm	Kew Gardens, Greater London
Sunniest:	205.9hrs	St. Athan, South Glamorgan
Dullest:	98.4hrs	Bala, Clwyd



'Here we go gathering nuts in May on a cold and frosty morning.' This nursery rhyme from the late 19th century may seem incongruous, but it reflects how May can be a cruelly deceptive month - and snow is by no means uncommon, even at low levels. More so a few hundred years ago when Britain was in the midst of the "Little Ice Age". In 1615, parish records of Youlgreave in Derbyshire state that 'upon May Day, in the morning, instead of fetching in flowers, the youths brought in flakes of snow, which lay above a foot deep upon the moors'

May 2015 was an unsettled month with no prolonged spells of dry or warm weather. It began chilly with a minimum of -5.6°C (22°F) at Tulloch Bridge (Highland) on the 1st. Rain then spread north-east on the 2nd and 3rd - and this was prolonged and heavy in the north, with snow in the Highlands. Parts of Northern Ireland were deluged; Trassey Slievenaman (County Down) received 101.3mm of rain in just 24 hours ending 0900 GMT on the 3rd. A brief brighter interlude on the 4th was followed by more rain sweeping north, then two unusually windy days. Needles Old Battery (Isle of Wight) recorded a gust of 75mph on the 6th. Most enjoyed a fine and settled (if not especially warm) day on the 7th but the 8th was very wet across northern England. Temperatures rose from the 9th and it became quite warm in the south east. Faversham (Kent) reached 23.8°C on the 11th. The fine weather did not last long however. The 12th and 13th were cooler - and the 14th was a miserable cold and wet day over England and Wales with temperatures failing to make double digits in many places. The weekend of 16th/17th was brighter, but in Scotland there was more heavy rain - and in subsequent days, squally showers, hail, thunder and snow over the mountains. Distant high pressure to the south and west, brought more settled conditions 21st-26th, but it remained rather cloudy, and low pressure reasserted over the final four days bringing May to a cool, wet and blustery end.

Mean UK temperatures were below average everywhere, and maxima were at their lowest since May 1996 - a reflection of the dominance of westerly winds combined with a cold Atlantic ocean. Rainfall was well above average everywhere - and especially so in Scotland which saw double its normal rainfall. Sunshine totals were close to, or a little below, average nationwide.

Europe during May saw some significant, if local, storms. On the 5th, the German town of Buetzow was left extensively damaged by a tornado that tore off roofs, overturned cars and ripped up trees. Numerous buildings were left in ruins and several people injured. In southern Germany on the 13th, a severe convective storm in the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg packed gusts of 76mph and hailstones the size of golf balls. Nine people were injured and dozens of homes left damaged. Meanwhile in Catalonia, northeast Spain, temperatures on the 14th rose to record breaking levels. Sant Romà d'Abella in Lleida reached 37°C (98°F), and Barcelona 36°C (97°F) - well above the previous May records set in 1912! On 19-20th severe thunderstorms struck Greece and Turkey. Flooding and hail around Izmir, Turkey, brought travel in the city to a standstill - and swollen rivers carried away cars.

In the USA, a series of tornadoes touched down southwest of Oklahoma City on the 6th, flipping cars, downing power lines, snapping trees - and causing the escape of tigers and other exotic animals from a wildlife park! On the 10th, 100 award-ceremony attendees at a high school in Lake City, Iowa, were forced to evacuate to a basement as a violent multiple severe storm outbreak tore off their school roof from right above their heads! Two people were killed in Van, Texas, after an EF-3 tornado ripped through a trailer park. Record rainfall and flash flooding wreaked havoc across a swath of the US mid west 17-18th. Houston recorded a prodigious 280mm of rain on the 18th. About 350 homes in the town of Wimberley were washed away by floods along the Blanco river - which rose by 8m in just one hour. The Red and Wichita rivers also overflowed. Several tornadoes were ultimately spawned and one on the 25th on the US-Mexico border, killed 13 people and left 300 injured as it tore through homes and flipped cars.

A deadly dust storm developed over the Rajasthan region of north-western India on the 19th. Violent winds damaged homes and knocked down power lines leaving at least 17 dead and 60 injured. Travel was severely disrupted as visibility dropped to near zero for a time. Meanwhile, across northern and central India, temperatures began to soar. New Delhi reached or passed 43°C (109°F) for seven straight days, culminating in 48°C (118°F) on the 29th - when roads began to melt. The heat wave claimed at least 1,400 lives. In Australia a deluge across south-eastern Queensland on the 1st broke rainfall records. Brisbane received 183mm in 24 hours, Caboolture 333mm and nearby Beerburum 149mm - the latter within just three hours! There were 5 fatalities across the state caused by cars being swept away by raging flood waters.