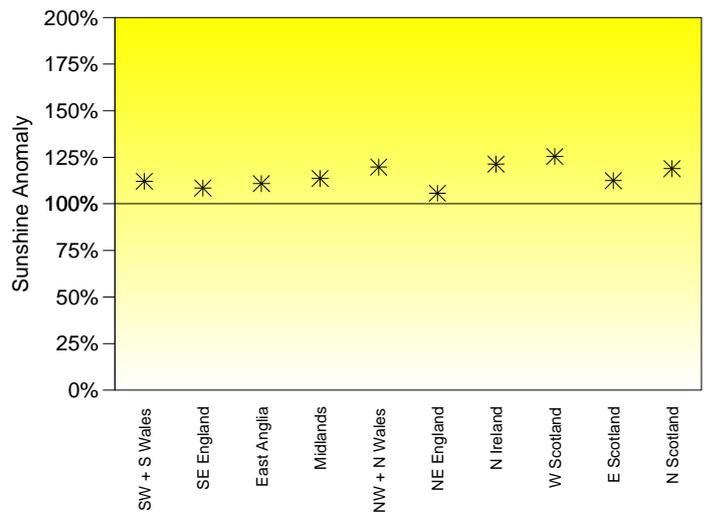
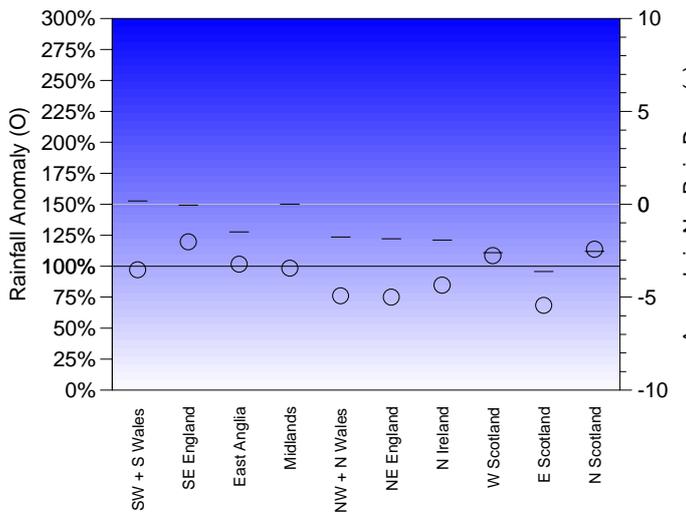


Extremes for May 2016		
Hottest:	27.1°C	Northolt, Greater London, 8th
Coldest:	-5.7°C	Tulloch Bridge SAWS, Highland, 14th
Most Rain:	54.7mm	Wattisham, Suffolk, 31st
Most Sun:	16.0hrs	Leuchars, Fife, 31st
Windiest:	61mph	South Uist Range, Western Isles, 2nd
Warmest:	14.7°C	St James Park, Greater London
Coolest:	8.1°C	Baltasound SAWS, Shetland
Wettest:	174.2mm	Achnagart, Highland
Driest:	15.0mm	Newton Rigg, Cumbria
Sunniest:	266.8hrs	Tiree, Strathclyde
Dullest:	153.1hrs	Eskdalemuir, Dumfries and Galloway



During May, the rain bearing Westerlies are at their weakest, and are most likely to be displaced by high pressure. This fact, and the long days, makes May the sunniest month in many years. It is also typically amongst the driest - although, seasonal warming and moist easterly air from the continent can trigger spectacular thunderstorms. The hottest day of the year falls in May about 1 year in 50 - but frosts and even snow are not uncommon - especially in the north, where they seem to gravitate around the festival of the "Ice Saints" 9-14th.

May began unsettled and windy. 81.2mm of rain fell at Sligachan, Isle of Skye in the 24 hours ending 0900 on the 2nd, and a wind gust of 61mph was recorded at South Uist, Western Isles, the same day. By the 5th high pressure had become established close to the UK - initiating a mild easterly flow that persisted, with the exception of a brief unsettled spell 17th-22nd, until month end. It meant that frosts were rare - and confined to Scotland and to a brief cool interlude mid-month. Tulloch Bridge, Inverness-shire recorded the month's coldest temperature, -5.7°C (22°F) just before dawn on the 14th (St. Mamertus's Day). For the most part, days were fine and balmy, and away from North Sea coasts, bright and sunny. The second week was particularly warm - and the 8th was glorious - with temperatures across England and Wales widely exceeding 24°C (75°F) The heat moved north the following day, when Plockton, Ross & Cromarty recorded 27.7 °C, 82°F - the month's highest.

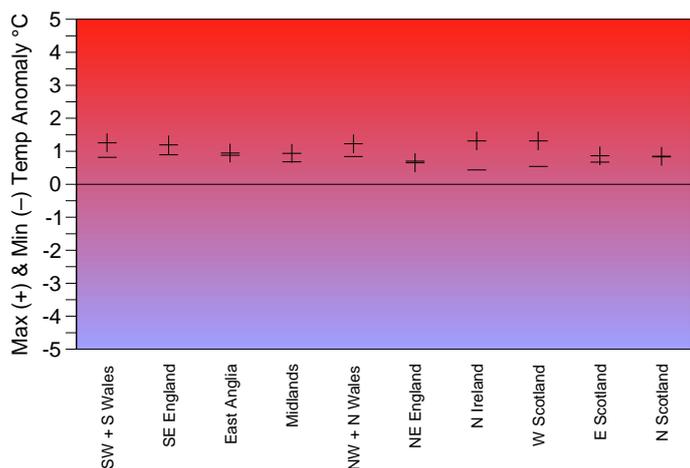
Frontal rain was conspicuously absent all month - fended off by the easterly flow, but for the south especially, it was rarely dry for long. The heat and humidity triggered torrential showers and some fierce thunderstorms. On the 7th, these caused flooding around London - e.g. Harrow, (where 35mm of rain fell within a single hour), Mitcham, Wallington and Croydon - where lightning started several small fires. Dunstable town centre, Bedfordshire, Great Barr in Birmingham and Penicuik, Midlothian, were also inundated - and three people were injured by a lightning strike in Lisburn, County Antrim. On the 11th roads in Lewisham, London, Woking, Surrey and the Welsh capital, Cardiff, were flooded - and the opening day of the Royal Windsor Horse Show in Berkshire was cancelled due to weather for the first time in its history. Southern and western Wales bore the brunt of further severe thunderstorms on the 27th - and these drifted south the following day causing widespread power cuts and flooding numerous roads. A final episode over Essex on the 31st left Southend and Canvey town centres flooded.

It was the warmest May since 2008 with average temperatures nationwide typically 1°C above normal. It was also a bright month everywhere except along those North Sea coasts that were blighted by sea fog. Western Scotland and North Wales were exceptionally sunny, the former receiving 50% more sunshine than usual, making it the sunniest month there in 16 years. Rainfall was a little below average for the UK as a whole thanks to a relative dearth of frontal rain and a near drought over northern England 2nd-18th. Eastern Scotland, received one third less rainfall than normal, although in south east England frequent thunderstorms meant there was 20% more.

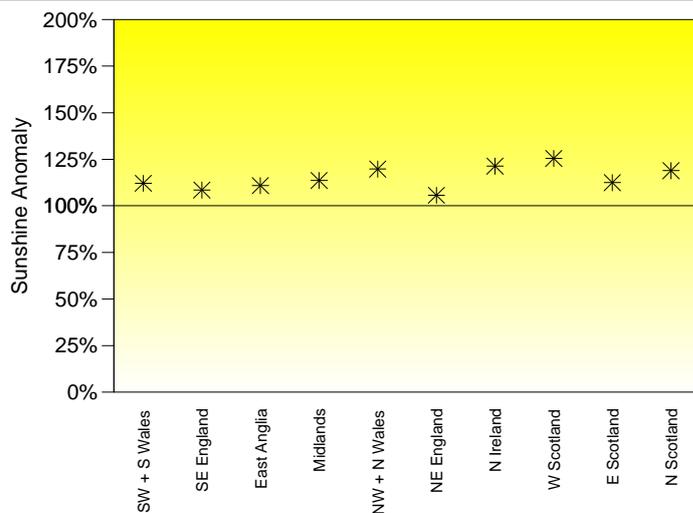
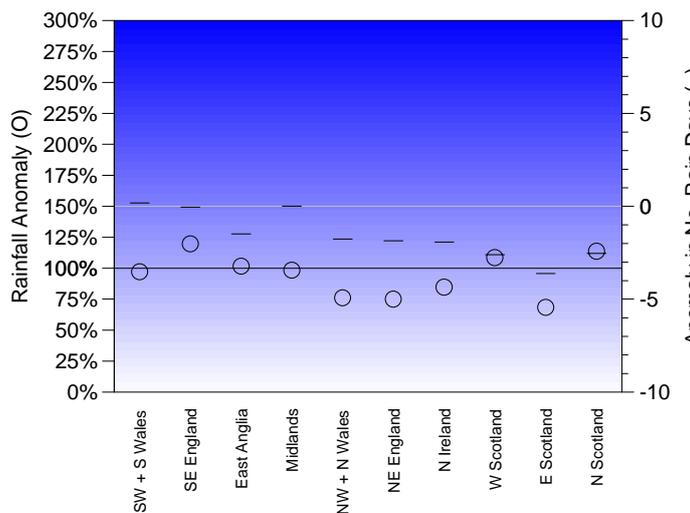
In France, ten children were injured after being struck by lightning during a birthday party at Parc Monceau in central Paris on the 27th. The group had been taking shelter beneath a tree when the electrical storm broke. Accompanying downpours caused the river Seine to burst its banks. On the same day, Poland was also hit by violent storms - and a man was struck by lightning and killed while walking on the Babia Gora mountain. Severe storms battered south west Germany on 30th. In the town of Braunsbach, torrential rain led to flooding that swirled cars and debris through the narrow streets and left 3 people dead.

Across the Atlantic, a destructive tornado tore through Elmore City in Oklahoma on the 9th. Numerous houses were destroyed, barns were flattened, mobile homes were overturned and trees uprooted. In the same storm wave, baseball-sized hail hit Omaha, Nebraska, peppering cars and roofs. Perham in Maine, New England, saw 19cm of snow on the 16th, as cities across the north east saw temperatures plummet to 9°C (15°F) below normal. On the 31st south-eastern Texas experienced major flooding following 500mm of rain over the Memorial Day weekend (28th-30th) Several rivers, including the Brazos at Richmond, rose to record levels, leaving roadways and homes inundated.

In Asia, India experienced its hottest ever day when Phalodi, in Rajasthan state, reached a blistering 51°C (124°F) on the 19th. The new record came amid a remorseless heat wave across the sub-continent which has melted highways and caused hundreds of deaths. Israel also experienced exceptional heat during May. On the 16th the popular resort of Eilat reached 46°C (115°F) and Kibbutz 47°C (117°F). In the southern hemisphere, on the 3rd, Victoria state, Australia, was battered by 75mph winds which damaged homes, uprooted trees, and caused - to the delight of surfers - a huge swell with waves up to 7m high!



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