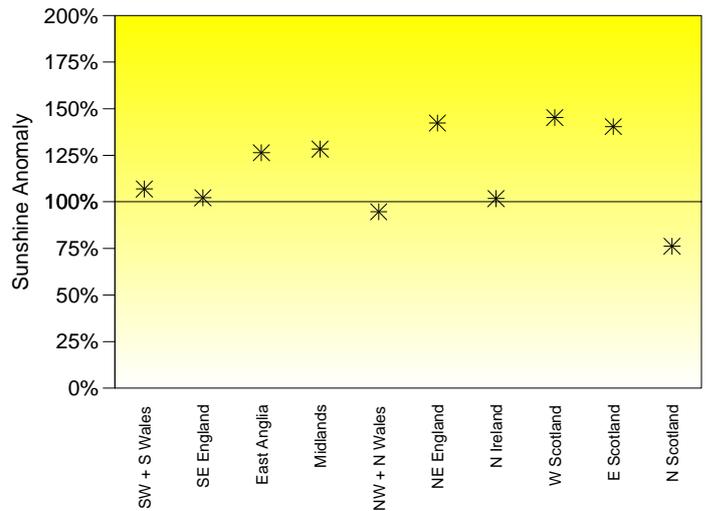
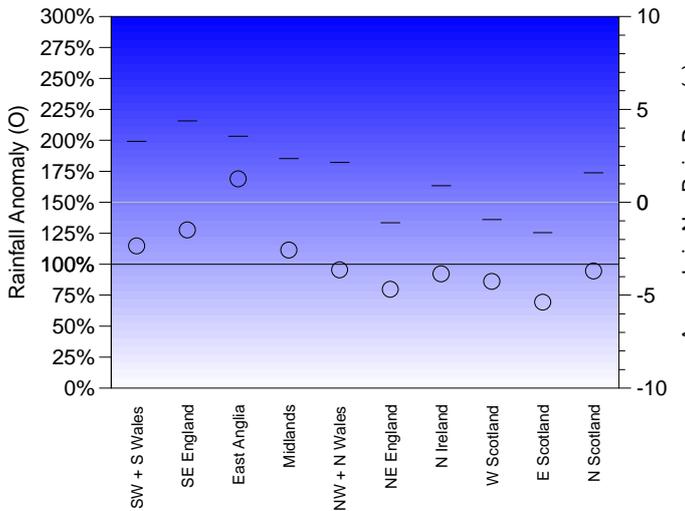


Extremes for December 2017		
Hottest:	14.9°C	Cassley, Sutherland, 19th
Coldest:	-13.0°C	Shawbury, Shropshire, 12th
Most Rain:	79.6mm	Achnagart, Highland, 6th
Most Sun:	7.5hrs	East Malling, Kent, 18th
Windiest:	93mph	Fair Isle, Shetland, 7th
Warmest:	9.3°C	Scilly St. Mary's SAWS, Cornwall
Coolest:	1.7°C	Dalwhinnie No 2, Tayside
Wettest:	387.4mm	Achnagart, Highland
Driest:	33.8mm	Ravensworth, North Yorkshire
Sunniest:	72.6hrs	Leeming, North Yorkshire
Dullest:	5.6hrs	Loch Glascarnoch, Highland



December's have been getting progressively warmer in the UK - for Central England by about 0.6°C over the last century. This may not seem like a lot but it markedly reduces the chances of snow, and in recent decades the month has often felt more like an autumn one than winter. Gales are common and stormy episodes supposedly recur around the 9th and 28th.

December started cold across the UK with northerly winds, but as an anticyclone to the west slipped gradually eastward into the continent by the 6th, they backed north-westerly and then mild south-westerly. This allowed the third named storm of the season, 'Caroline', to move eastward to the north of Scotland on the 6th-7th and associated frontal systems brought heavy rain. Impacts from the storm were limited to Western Scotland and Northern Ireland - the worst of these being power cuts to 49,000 homes. In the wake of 'Caroline', another spell of much colder north-westerly winds spread across the country and these lasted until the 16th. There were some hard overnight frosts and significant snow as far south as the Midlands on the 10th caused serious disruption to road, rail and air travel. It was the most significant snow event for England since March 2013 with many schools left closed and some higher routes impassable. Further disruption from ice and snowfall continued in the following week and caused chaos to travel and numerous accidents. From the 17th winds turned south-westerly flooding the UK with milder air which persisted until Boxing Day. The 18th was remarkably mild and with the help of a foehn wind, places in Sutherland approached 15.6°C (60°F). On cue, the weather became much more cyclonic in the run up to the New Year. Further snowfall over eastern England caused the closure of Luton and Stansted airports on the morning of the 27th. Storm Dylan then crossed the northwest of Ireland and northern Scotland on New Years Eve but did little to disrupt Hogmanay celebrations.

December provided a wide variety of weather types with distinctly warm and cold episodes - and also featured the most significant snowfall event in nearly 5 years. For the UK and month as a whole, it was the coolest December since 2010, yet was still a little warmer than the long-term average. There were lots of days with rain, but monthly totals were close to average for most places - except in the east, where it was dry in the north but notably wet further south (e.g. East Anglia received 171% of normal) Away from the Scottish Highlands, it was generally a sunny month especially so in southern Scotland and northeast England which recorded 141% of average.

Severe flooding affected Albania on the 1st and 2nd rendering many roads impassable, destroying dozens of homes and leaving one person dead. The capital Tirana recorded 121mm of rain within 24 hours and Gjirokastër, in the south, 150mm. On the 11th, heavy snow blanketed northern Europe causing serious air travel disruption (e.g. more than 300 flights were cancelled at Frankfurt airport alone) and chaos to road and rail. In France there were blizzard conditions with fierce gales (gusts to over 100mph at La Rochelle), battering coastal areas and cutting power to 120,000 homes in the Loire Valley. Heavy snow blocked the motorway between Calais and Boulogne and further south, torrential rain on the Riviera brought flooding to Nice.

In North America, wintry weather had an increasingly severe impact as December progressed. On the 8th, Houston, Texas, recorded measurable snow for the first time in eight years. On the 9th-10th, the north eastern United States experienced their first major snowfall of the season with 12cm falling on Central Park, New York. A fortnight later, Erie, Pennsylvania was buried beneath 'Lake Effect' snows on the 25th and 26th. 86cm made it - easily - the snowiest Christmas Day ever - but also the most snowfall of any day in the city's history. A further 49cm on Boxing Day established a new 48 hour record for the entire state of Pennsylvania. In sharp contrast, unseasonably high temperatures in California, led the 'Thomas' wildfire to raze 750 homes and to scorch over a quarter of a million of acres.

On 16th-17th, Tropical Storm Urduja battered the island of Biliran in the eastern Philippines. Landslides caused by torrential rains, strong winds and flash flooding forced 88,000 people to evacuate their homes and left 50 dead. On the 22nd/23rd more than 180 people were reported killed as a new tropical storm swept through the southern Philippines. 'Vinta' brought flash flooding and mudslides to Mindanao island - burying homes beneath boulders, and entirely destroying the remote village of Dalama. Meanwhile in Australia, on the 13th, Sydney, recorded a record hot December day with 43.4°C (109°F) and a destructive thunderstorm at Victoria on the 20th caused widespread damage and left 26,000 homes without power. With the onset of the storm the temperature dropped from 37°C (99°F) to 24°C (75°F) in just 10 minutes!