

Editorial

Once more, we are pleased to be able to deliver an issue of *Wight Studies* which reflects the range of our members' interests and demonstrates how the Society continues to fulfil its objectives.

Since the first issue in 1921, there have been annual summaries of the weather from various parts of the Island, often from the gardens of interested observers. Shanklin Weather Station was established in 1947. Clive Cooper has taken daily records from there, submitting them to the Met. Office for inclusion in national datasets since 1997. He has provided annual reports for publication in the *Proceedings* for 27 years, the longest time series from any meteorological contributor.

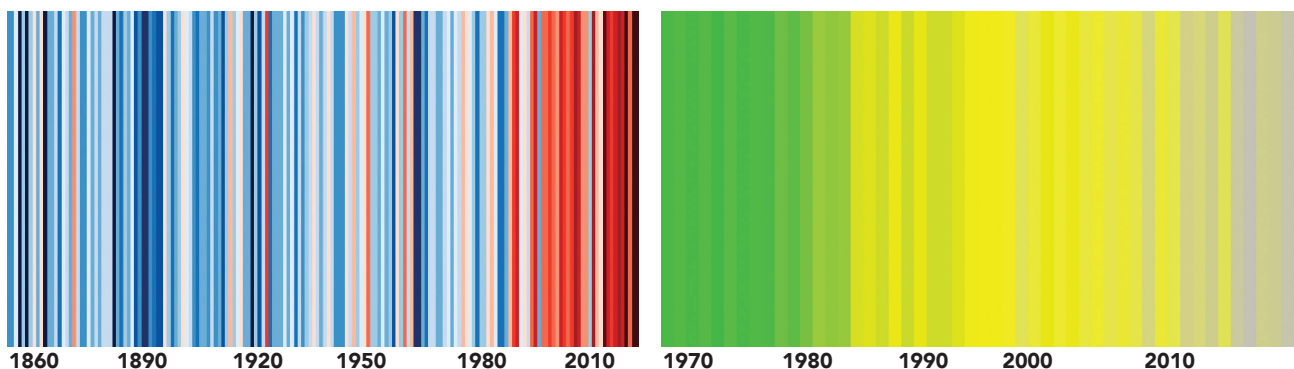
As we well know, the Island, along with the rest of the country, experienced record high temperatures and rainfall in 2023. The effects on the complex geology along the Island's coastline have been severe in some areas and the disruption to people's lives is on-going. Analysis of long-term trends is beginning to be taken more seriously in political circles but still much needs to be done, in terms of policy and behavioural change, to bring about more sustainable actions for investment, infrastructure and lifestyles.

Professor Ed Hawkins of the University of Reading has developed 'Climate Stripes'¹, a highly visual tool to communicate the change in climate which is being observed. Global and local results can be observed. To quote the website,

'No words. No numbers. No graphs. Just a series of vertical coloured bars, showing the progressive heating of our planet in a single, striking image'.

Each stripe represents the average temperature for a single year, relative to the average temperature over the period as a whole. Shades of blue indicate cooler-than-average years, while red shows years that were hotter than average.

Trends in biodiversity are being visualised in a similar way ², using green (higher diversity), yellow, and grey colours.



Left: Temperature change in Portsmouth since 1850s

Right: UK Farmland Birds: 55% decline 1970 - 2019

The underlying data comes from the recording carried out all over the country by individuals and groups such as ours. They inform the annual 'State of Nature' report ³, which notes that, across the UK, the species studied have declined on average by 19% since 1970 and nearly 1 in 6 species are threatened with extinction in Great Britain.

There are ambitious targets set by Governments for progress towards 'net zero', to limit climate warming, and for restoration of nature. How do we both play our part in these processes, and hold Governments to account?

Paul Bingham and Anne Marston
Editors of the Proceedings

¹ <https://www.reading.ac.uk/planet/climate-resources/climate-stripes>

² <https://biodiversitystripes.info/ukfarmlandbirds>

³ <https://stateofnature.org.uk/>