

## METEOROLOGICAL REPORT FOR 1986

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The following account and summary of the weather during 1986 has been compiled from Ryde's records. The comparisons and averages now span 69 years since 1st January 1918.

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### **Rainfall**

The 1986 total of 35.48in. (901.2 millimetres) was above the 65-year annual average there of 30.45in. and compared with totals of 31.04in. in 1984 and 26.29in. in 1985.

In the wettest year at Ryde since 1974 monthly totals exceeded their long term averages during January (5.94in.), March (2.65in.), April (2.51in.), May (2.46in.) August (3.67in.), October (3.85in.), November (5.29in.), and December (4.61in.).

Monthly totals were below average in February (0.80in.), June (0.95in.), July (1.36in.) and September (1.39in.).

Four 24-hour periods from 9 am GMT gave rainfall totals in excess of one inch during 1986 – 1.25in. on January 7th, 1.12in. on August 3rd, 1.49in. on August 25th (Bank Holiday Monday) and 1.14in. on November 18th.

On average a fall of one inch or more during this 24 hour period occurs about five times in two years – one inch of rain being the equivalent of 101 tons of water to the acre.

During 1986 Ryde had 173 'rain-days' compared with an annual average of 156 (A 'rain-day' is defined as a 24-hour period from 9 am GMT during which at least 0.01in. of rain is recorded).

The first seven days of 1986 gave 3.64in. of rain at Ryde.

There were 26 days without rain from September 18th to October 13th.

There followed a very wet 11 weeks which added 13.75in. to the year's total by the end of December.

### **Sunshine**

The 1986 sunshine total at Ryde of 1,731.5 hours was near to the 65-year average there of 1,739.1 hours and compared with totals of 1,764.2 hours in 1984 and 1,832.3 hours in 1985.

The monthly 1986 totals – all close to their long term averages, were January (72.1 hours), February (71.3), March (123.9), April (178.3), May (214.8), June (241.9), July (201.0), August (200.8), September (169.2), October (103.8), November (83.8) and December (70.6).

Of the 69 sunless days (annual average 63) 11 occurred during January, ten during November and nine in each of February, October and December.

The six months from April to September inclusive accounted for only 13 sunless days.

Two days provided sunshine durations in excess of 15 hours with 15.1 hours on June 12th and 15.2 hours on July 1st as the year's sunniest days.

## Temperatures

The maximum shade temperature at Ryde Esplanade reached or exceeded 70°F on only 23 days during 1986 compared with an annual average of 39 such instances. Ten of these days came in June and 11 during July – none during May or September and only two in August.

The warmest day of 1986 gave a reading at Ryde of 79.7°F on June 27th.

During 1986 minimum air temperatures fell to 32° or below on 31 days – 23 of these during one of the coldest Februarys on record.

On average there are 23 air frosts annually at Ryde Esplanade with a record number of 69 during the year of the ‘big freeze’ in 1963.

The coldest day of 1986 was on February 21st with a maximum of 30.2°F.

The lowest minimum occurred on the morning following with a reading of 21.2°F – the lowest at Ryde since January 31st, 1972.

The year’s highest daily minimum temperature of 65.3°F occurred on June 29th.

The 1986 mean maximum and mean minimum temperatures at Ryde of 55.4°F and 45.5°F compared with long term annual means of 57°F and 46°F respectively.

One of the coldest calendar years at Ryde since 1963 was the outcome of a severe February and a very cool April, May, August and September. By contrast November and December were mild, and November exceptionally so.

## Snowfall

Precipitation fell as snow on eight days – all between February 5th and March 1st, although the only significant falls were on February 6th and 28th. The prolonged very cold and dry weather with air frosts on 27 consecutive days following the five inches of level snow on the earlier date caused snow cover to remain for four weeks until early March.

## Thunder

Thunder was heard on ten days during 1986, although none of the storms were noted as being particularly severe or prolonged.

## Gales

The year was not without its usual quota of gales – the most notable occurring on January 28th, March 23rd/24th, October 20th and November 18th, all from a south-westerly direction.

## Fog

Fog was widespread and slow to clear on September 22nd and 23rd and again on November 29th and 30th.

This summary relates to Ryde’s official meteorological records and, although some variations have naturally occurred at other Island resorts, the general weather pattern depicted broadly indicates that experienced throughout the Island and adjacent mainland coastal areas of Central Southern England. Differences would be most marked in regard to rainfall intensities during thundery activity even between weather stations only a few miles apart. With regard to temperatures, Ryde’s long term averages and extremes closely accord with those of other Island coastal resorts although inland – around Newport and district – minima on the coldest night can be as much as 6°F lower than those on the coast. Maxima on the hottest days of summer might well exceed by 3 or 4°F the readings taken on Ryde Esplanade.

### Summing Up

The most notable memories of 1986 must include the severely cold February, followed by a cold spring. A cool rainy August preceded a pleasant autumn dry spell to mid October before the prolonged mild and wet weather which lasted until the end of the year.

### Correction

In the paper by Kenneth Hosking entitled 'Prolonged cold spells in the Isle of Wight since 1918' (*Proc. Isle Wight nat. Hist. archaeol. Soc.*, **8** (1): 51–52) the alignment of the dates for significant snowfalls in Table 1 was printed incorrectly. All dates from Jan. 1945 until Feb. 1985 were printed one line **below** the relevant cold spell.

Editor

#### MONTHLY SUMMARY OF WEATHER AT RYDE, ISLE OF WIGHT 1986

Month	Hours of Sunshine	Rain mm	Screen Temperatures			Extremes	
			Mean Max °C	Mean Min °C	Mean Monthly °C	°C From	°C To
January	72.1	150.8	7.9	3.3	5.6	12.0	-2.8
February	71.3	20.3	1.9	-1.3	0.3	4.8	-6.0
March	123.9	67.3	8.8	3.1	5.9	12.0	-2.4
April	178.3	63.6	10.1	4.1	7.1	15.7	0.1
May	214.8	62.5	14.1	8.5	11.3	18.0	3.6
June	241.9	24.2	19.6	12.2	15.9	26.5	6.8
July	201.0	34.5	20.6	14.0	17.3	26.2	11.1
August	200.8	93.2	18.5	12.9	15.7	21.8	8.5
September	169.2	35.4	16.3	9.8	13.0	19.6	6.6
October	103.8	97.9	15.4	10.6	13.0	20.1	5.8
November	83.8	134.5	12.5	7.1	9.8	15.8	2.0
December	70.6	117.0	10.2	5.2	7.7	14.3	1.2
Totals	1731.5	901.2mm (35.48") (25.4mm = 1")	Annual 13.0°C (55.4°F)	Means 7.5°C (45.5°F)	10.2°C (50.5°F)	Highest Max 26.5°C 27th June	Lowest Min -6.0°C 22nd Feb