

Kerrytonlia Point

To date this is the only east coast site on the island of Bute. Four occupied sites were counted in 1986 and three sites noted in 1989. The site is a well-vegetated outcrop and difficult of access. Again there is as yet no proof of breeding.

Summary

Fulmars nest regularly on Inchmarnock, the largest colony, and at Straad on Bute. A further four sites, where breeding has yet to be recorded, have recently been established on Bute. Total population in 1989 was around sixty occupied sites with perhaps fewer than twenty eggs laid.

Acknowledgements

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NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF THE ISLAND OF BUTE, 1980–1990

J.A. Gibson and Ian Hopkins

Introduction

In 1980, along with our late colleague Mr Alex Stephen (Gibson, Hopkins and Stephen, 1980), we published a collected paper on changes in the status of Bute birds since 1927, the year when the Rev. J.M. McWilliam produced his book on the *Birds of the Island of Bute*. During the past ten years further changes have taken place, and in this current paper we attempt to bring the existing records up to date.

Inevitably some selection must be made, but to the best of our knowledge we have included all changes which are more important or more likely to be of interest to other observers, so we trust that the following list, restricted to fifty selected species, will be a useful addition to our knowledge of Bute birds.

As in our previous paper (1980), in the following check-list an asterisk * indicates an additional species not previously recorded for Bute, either in McWilliam's *Birds of the Island of Bute* (1927) or in our own 1980 supplementary list. The following abbreviation is used regularly throughout the text: *TBNHS* — *Transactions of the Buteshire Natural History Society*. The titles of other publications are given in full.

For ready assistance and much useful information we are very grateful, as always, to many members of the Buteshire Natural History Society and to many other colleagues who have visited the island and passed on their observations. Needless to say, we shall always be glad to receive any additional information.

Systematic List

In the following Systematic List the arrangement and nomenclature follow the *List of Recent Holarctic Bird Species* by Professor Karel H. Voous, published by the British Ornithologists' Union (1977).

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

For the past ten years a pair has nested on the artificial island constructed by IH on a loch in the north of Bute, and birds are occasionally seen on other Bute lochs during early summer. On one particular loch a pair has been seen regularly since 1985, and one young bird was seen in 1986, thus proving breeding. It is hoped that regular breeding will take place at this loch, which is in a different area of the island from the established site at the north.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Still nesting at some Bute lochs, although numbers reduced, as with most other parts of Clyde. Fairly regularly seen in small numbers around the coast during winter.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

A pair of Great Crested Grebes nested on Loch Fad in 1985 and successfully reared one young (IH). This would appear to be the first breeding record for the Island of Bute. Birds have been seen on Loch Fad in summer every year since 1985, but to the best of our knowledge no subsequent breeding has been proved. One pair appeared to be breeding on Quien Loch in 1988 and 1989, although proof was not obtained, and two pairs were seen on Quien Loch by IH on 21st April 1990. One was seen on Loch Ascog on 5th November 1989 by Mr Nigel Scriven and a party from Cowal Natural History Society.

McWilliam (1927) could only give two records of the Great Crested Grebe for Bute, both off-shore, and even these he clearly regarded as somewhat unsatisfactory, so the above occurrences probably represent the first published records of the Great Crested Grebe actually on the Island of Bute, and certainly the first successful breeding.

Allowing for the difficulty in obtaining satisfactory evidence where reed-nesting birds are concerned, further proof of breeding will probably come from seeing young birds with adults later in the year. It is very much hoped that the Great Crested Grebe will soon become well established as a Bute breeding bird, and we will certainly be grateful to receive any additional evidence.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

One seen on Quien Loch on 8th December 1984 by JAG. One seen at the north end of Loch Fad on 5th November 1989 by Mr Nigel Scriven, of the Ardentinnay Outdoor Centre, and a party from Cowal Natural History Society.

These would seem to be the first published records from any Bute freshwater loch; the few previous records all appear to have been off-shore.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

A steady increase, as with most parts of Clyde. Now breeding regularly on Inchmarnock and at Straad on Bute, and prospecting at several other sites on Bute. On Inchmarnock, 24 occupied sites were counted in 1986 and 18 sites were counted in 1989; now about a dozen pairs at Straad. Total population on Inchmarnock and Bute very variable, but at present between some 30 and 40 pairs.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

As noted under Storm Petrel, investigations using a tape-recorded lure were also carried out on several nights during May and July 1984, but no shearwaters were attracted.

STORM PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*

As previously indicated (TBNHS 21: 71), investigations using a tape-recorded lure were eventually carried out near Garroch Head by JAG on several nights during May and July 1984. Despite the successes achieved at several other sites throughout Clyde (*Western Naturalist* 7: 63; *Scottish Birds* 11: 51-52), however, we regretfully have to report that no petrels were attracted to the lure.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Breeding apparently still very erratic on Inchmarnock, presumably because of repeated disturbance. Several nests with eggs were examined in 1982, when up to ten pairs appeared to be breeding (JAG), but clearly a sharp decline after this, since no evidence of breeding was noted by IH in 1986 or 1989. As yet, no recorded breeding on Bute itself.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

During the week-end of 3rd-5th November 1989 Mr Nigel Scriven and some members of the Cowal Natural History Society colour-ringed three Mute Swans; the rings are bright orange in colour with black lettering. One swan was ringed on 3rd November in Rothesay Bay — ring A55, and two swans were ringed on 4th November at Rhubodach — rings A53 and A54. The rings are fairly easily seen, and any information on subsequent sightings of these swans will be welcomed.

*SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

One was seen with a flock of Greylags at various locations in mid-Bute during winter 1981-82 (IH). First seen on 20th December 1981 and last seen on 10th February 1982.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

In view of the apparent scarcity of previous records (TBNHS 21: 74), it is worth recording that five or six birds have been seen on the island every year since 1981 (IH). A flock of 26 birds, along with Greylags and White-fronts, was seen at St Ninian's Bay on 4th November 1989 by the party from the Cowal Natural History Society. These records undoubtedly indicate a genuine increase in status.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

The Brent Goose began to return to Bute in small numbers during the early 1970s, when a few small winter flocks were seen (see *TBNHS* 21: 74), but thereafter there were virtually no records at all for some years. Since 1980, however, small numbers, all of the dark-bellied race, have again been recorded during most winters. One pale-bellied bird was seen at Kilchattan Bay on 16th October 1980, and five pale-bellied birds were seen at Kilchattan Bay on 8th October 1989 (IH).

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

In a 1971 paper on the breeding distribution of British ducks (*Wildfowl* 22: 63-70) the Pochard was shown on the relevant distribution map as breeding on the Island of Bute. This surprising claim was immediately investigated by JAG, was shown to be an error, and was then withdrawn by the authors. Since we have subsequently heard of this being referred to as an accurate record, however, we draw attention to it simply to dismiss it.

The Pochard, of course, is a well-known regular winter visitor to the Bute lochs in some numbers, but within recent years there have also been a number of spring and summer records (IH), as follows: one male on Loch Greenan 2nd April 1986; five males and one female on Loch Fad 14th April 1986; one male on Quien Loch 23rd July 1986; one male on Loch Greenan 6th July 1987; twelve males on Loch Greenan 27th July 1988; three males on Loch Ascog 17th June 1989. This represents a real increase in summer status, so the possibility of genuine breeding in future may not be too remote. Although not common, the Pochard does breed locally in other parts of the Clyde area, so a close watch should certainly be kept on Bute lochs during summer. Needless to say, we shall be grateful to receive any additional information.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

A female was seen in Kilchattan Bay on 4th November 1989 by the party from the Cowal Natural History Society. Possibly surprisingly, this appears to be the only record for the island, apart from the old specimen in the Bute Museum, labelled 9th October 1914, quoted by J.M. McWilliam (*Birds of the Island of Bute*, 1927).

SMEW *Mergus albellus*

An adult drake Smew was seen on Quien Loch on 2nd March 1984 (JAG), but there was no sign of it the following morning.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Although the first actual proof of breeding on Bute remains the pair with young on the wing seen by IH in 1969 (*TBNHS* 17: 106), the return of the Hen Harrier as a Bute breeding bird was possibly heralded by the female seen on Bute on 9th July 1966 (*Scottish Birds* 4: 316). For a full report on the return of the Hen Harrier to Bute, see the detailed paper by IH (*TBNHS* 22: 107-109).

Some half-dozen pairs are now breeding regularly and should continue to do so, since fortunately the Hen Harrier is apparently no longer persecuted. Unfortunately, however, steady loss of suitable habitat because of recent afforestation and heather burning could well lead to a decrease in population.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

As a result of steady protection over the years, there are now nearly fifty pairs of Ospreys nesting in Scotland. Sightings are therefore becoming increasingly common, so a record of an Osprey on the Island of Bute is no longer quite the exciting event it once was.

Nevertheless, it is worth recording that an Osprey was seen flying over Loch Fad on 23rd August 1985 (JAG). It swooped low over the loch, but unfortunately did not make its spectacular fishing plunge, and after about ten minutes it flew off further north. Another spent an entire week in the vicinity of Loch Fad, from 30th June until 6th July 1987, during which time it was seen by several observers (IH). We shall be glad to hear of any other records.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

One pair of Peregrines is well established at the traditional site in the north of the island, and more recently a second pair has nested sporadically at a certain site in the south, where Peregrines were actually present in 1963 but did not appear to breed (*Scottish Birds* 2: 435). This second site, where Peregrines apparently first bred successfully in 1981, may possibly represent a territorial extension by the pair which used to breed occasionally on Inchmarnock, from where we have no recent evidence of breeding.

In 1981 and 1982 there were actually three pairs of Peregrines nesting on the Island of Bute, and although this has not been repeated, the improvement in general status compared to a generation ago is most encouraging.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Although long since vanished as a regular breeding species, Quails still occur sporadically in the Clyde area during the summer months. One

was heard calling at Kilchattan Bay on 24th May 1985 and for several days thereafter (JAG), but no bird was seen.

GOLDEN PHEASANT *Chrysolophus pictus*

Although the Golden Pheasant, as an introduced species, was deliberately omitted from our previous paper, it is probably worth drawing attention to the fact that Golden Pheasants, introduced to Bute just after the first world war and artificially reared at Mount Stuart (McWilliam, 1927), did actually survive in the wild state, with some supportive feeding, until the outbreak of the second world war (Bute Estate archives). The remaining population apparently died out in the early 1940s and we have no record of breeding since then.

McWilliam in 1927 also recorded that "Mr. Robert Gordon [Head Gamekeeper] a number of years ago reared several of the finer foreign species of Pheasants at Mount Stuart. These included the Golden and Silver Pheasants, Lady Amherst's Pheasant, Reeves' Pheasant, the Prince of Wales Pheasant, the Mongolian Pheasant and *Phasianus versicolor*", but "The only one of these that still survives is the Golden Pheasant, which is more than holding its own". Fifteen years later, however, these also had died out.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

One bird was seen by JAG on 7th July 1984 at the Plan Loch, where the Water Rail probably still breeds.

In view of the general decrease of this species, it is also worth listing the following additional records: one was heard at Loch Fad on 12th October 1980; one was killed by a cat at Mecknoch Farm on 29th January 1984; one was heard at the Kirk Dam in spring 1987; one was found dead at Loch Fad on 3rd January 1990. Although these are nearly all winter records, it may indicate that a small local breeding population still exists on the island.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*

At least one bird was heard calling at Kilchattan Bay for a few days during early summer in 1985, 1986 and 1988 (JAG). One was heard calling at Croc-an-Raer during summer 1983, one was heard calling at Gartnakeilly Farm during June/July 1987, and one was heard calling at Straad on 9th July 1988 (IH).

Many years ago, when the Corncrake was common, these records of calling birds would have been routinely accepted as evidence of breeding, but the position is very different nowadays. We have no real evidence of genuine breeding, but records of calling birds, after a long absence, are distinctly encouraging and may herald a return in the future.

One does not have to be a naturalist to recognize the well-known country sound of the Corncrake, and we shall be very grateful to anyone who reports any evidence of Corncrakes to us as quickly as possible.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

The steady decrease in population has continued, and to the best of our knowledge the Golden Plover has now virtually ceased to breed anywhere on Bute. Several other neighbouring parts of the Clyde area have also recorded substantial reductions in population.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Although a well-known and regular passage migrant in many parts of the Clyde area, somewhat surprisingly the Sanderling has always been comparatively uncommon on the Island of Bute, but within recent years there has undoubtedly been a significant increase in its Bute status. Since 1984 small groups, of some half-dozen birds, have been seen regularly in late August or early September on the shore at Kilchattan Bay (JAG), and a flock of seventeen was seen there on 2nd September 1989. A party of eight was seen at Ettrick Bay on 25th August 1990 (IH). In view of this marked increase, a careful watch should also be kept at other suitable bays on Bute.

*PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*

One seen at Loch Greenan on 13th September 1979 by A.J. Carter (*Scottish Bird Report* 1979: 26) is apparently the first record for the island.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Within recent years the Dunlin has decreased substantially all over the Clyde area, and to the best of our knowledge no Dunlins at present nest on Bute. We have had no evidence of breeding for some years, so any additional information will be gratefully received.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

There are a few additional Bute records. Two were seen at Kilchattan Bay on 21st August 1982 (JAG). One was seen at Loch Greenan on 4th September 1983 (IH). Two were seen at Kilchattan Bay on 15th September 1984 (JAG) and one was still present on 20th September.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Although the Bar-tailed Godwit is still a regular visitor to the island, there has been some evidence of decrease during the past ten years, so a

flock of 27 birds seen at Kilchattan Bay on 5th November 1989 (Cowal Natural History Society) is probably worth noting.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

On 27th July 1981 JAG saw three Spotted Redshanks at Kilchattan Bay; one was seen again on 29th July. Between two and four birds were again present at Kilchattan Bay during the second week of July 1983, and Dr Gibson has now seen Spotted Redshanks at Kilchattan Bay during July in six out of the past ten years. During over twenty years of regular observations at Kilchattan Bay up to 1980 no Spotted Redshanks were ever seen, so this would appear to be a genuine change of status. One was seen at Ettrick Bay by IH on 20th March 1988.

The Spotted Redshank does occur fairly regularly on autumn passage throughout many parts of the Clyde area, but the only previous record for the Island of Bute was McWilliam's record of a pair at Loch Fad dam on 27th September 1927 (*Scottish Naturalist* 1927: 189).

ARCTIC SKUA and GREAT SKUA

As already noted in the Errata to Volume 21 (*TBNHS* 22: 127), most unfortunately a section of set type was accidentally omitted from our previous paper (*TBNHS* 21: 80) after the proofs had been read, so that two separate paragraphs were incorrectly joined together — the beginning of Arctic Skua and the end of Great Skua. Although the correction has already been printed, it is clearly important that the correct text should be given here, as follows:

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

The Arctic Skua is a fairly frequent spring visitor to Bute. Two seen repeatedly off Garroch Head during the last week of June 1971, however, was a most unusual record, although no evidence of breeding was found.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

On 27th May 1967 one found at Garroch Head had a wing and leg caught in some string, but was otherwise in good condition. It flew off immediately when freed (*Scottish Birds* 4: 514).

*LONG-TAILED SKUA *Stercorarius longicaudus*

A freshly dead young skua was found in a field on Inchmarnock by Mr James R. Middleton during the third week of October 1981. The following week Ian Hopkins took the specimen to the Annual Conference of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club at North Berwick, where it was identified as an immature Long-tailed Skua. This would appear to be the first record for Bute.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

There is now some real indication that numbers of Black-headed Gulls are returning to breed at some of their former colonies throughout the Clyde area, after the vast and unexplained reduction in breeding population during the previous fifteen years. Despite this widespread decrease, the old-established colony at the Plan Loch on Bute managed to remain in more or less continuous existence, with up to 120 pairs nesting in 1980, but breeding success was always extremely variable because of regular egg-collecting. Indeed, around 1985 the Plan Loch colony virtually disappeared, and this remained the position until 1989, when some twenty pairs again nested; about thirty pairs appeared to be breeding successfully in 1990.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Now a very regular autumn passage migrant, with some evidence of recent increase. Parties of around 20 Sandwich Terns are not now uncommon; 52 birds were seen at St Ninian's Bay on 24th July 1985, and 33 birds were seen at Ettrick Bay on 6th August 1986.

Some birds have also been seen on spring passage at Kilchattan Bay virtually every year for the past decade (JAG), with a few birds occasionally lingering into early summer. At present, no known evidence of actual breeding anywhere in the vicinity of Bute, although the Sandwich Tern has now returned to breed regularly in small numbers elsewhere in the Clyde area.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

After the great decline in breeding population throughout the Clyde area during the past fifteen years, there was some evidence of local return, with two pairs of Common Terns breeding on Inchmarnock in 1982 and apparently five or six pairs in 1984 (JAG). By 1986, however, the few breeding terns on Inchmarnock had apparently gone again, and there were no signs of any terns breeding there in 1989 (IH).

Two Common Terns were seen on the shore near the Hermitage on 10th June 1990 (IH), but as yet we have no genuine evidence of any terns actually returning to breed on the Island of Bute itself.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Occasional summer records, but as yet no known evidence of returning to breed on Inchmarnock or Bute.

LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons*

Since 1979 (*TBNHS* 21: 83), Little Terns have been seen repeatedly at Kilchattan Bay during summer; usually one or two birds, although not

seen every year, but in late June 1990 at least five birds were present. The Little Tern does nest elsewhere in the Clyde area, but we know of no breeding anywhere in the vicinity of the Island of Bute. An isolated pair could easily be missed, however, and any additional information will be gratefully received.

BLACK GUILLEMOT *Cephus grylle*

One or two breeding pairs of Black Guillemots are now well established on Inchmarnock (see *TBNHS* 21: 84; *Western Naturalist* 10: 26-27).

For many years Black Guillemots have been seen occasionally in summer elsewhere off Bute shores (e.g. Garroch Head), and potential breeding was anticipated nearly twenty-five years ago (*Scottish Birds* 4: 246), but it is only recently that the Black Guillemot has been proved to nest on Bute itself. From 1978 onwards one pair was apparently breeding at Port Bannatyne, but breeding was only proved in 1982, in a wooden shed which has now been demolished. One pair has been known to be holding territory, and probably breeding, south of Kilchattan for the past five years.

Although one can often be fairly certain that Black Guillemots are breeding, it is frequently very difficult to obtain proof; even seeing young birds on the sea with adults later in the year is sometimes not conclusive evidence, since Black Guillemots do nest elsewhere in the vicinity. The Black Guillemot has certainly been increasing steadily throughout the Clyde area within recent years, however, and there is every likelihood that some now nest at various places around the Island of Bute. Over thirty birds were counted in the course of a boat trip around the island on 13th October 1985 (IH).

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

In our previous paper we reported on the remarkable decrease in the Stock Dove population on Bute. Since then there has been a slight improvement in the position, with a few scattered records from various parts of the island during the past ten years, but to the best of our knowledge not yet proved to be breeding again, and we shall be very glad to receive any additional information.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

A few birds can now be seen fairly regularly during summer on both north and south moors. Young have been seen on the wing, and two or three pairs now probably nest each year.

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

A further decrease, although some birds are still present. Most recent records come from the south of the island, where a few pairs probably still nest, although recent proof is lacking. A bird was heard churring in the vicinity of the Dhu Loch on 13th July 1986 (IH), and one was seen flying at dusk near Ardscaipsie on 3rd July 1988 (JAG).

In the north of Bute, a nest with young was found at a certain site in 1983, and churring was heard in the same vicinity in 1984.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

There are occasional records of single birds seen along the Straad burn. No real proof of breeding since the 1976 record, but no reason to doubt that one or two pairs still nest; the extremely dense vegetation in the area makes observation very difficult.

A Kingfisher was caught in a net and later released at the fish farm on Loch Fad on 15th April 1982.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*

A rare visitor, but there has recently been another authentic record for Bute. A Hoopoe was present in the grounds of Mount Stuart on 24th and 25th April 1985. There were many sightings by several different observers.

*SHORE LARK *Eremophila alpestris*

[A generation ago the Shore Lark, although not uncommonly seen on the east coast of Scotland, was almost never found in the west. More recently, however, occasional birds have been recorded from the West of Scotland, and three birds were reported from St Ninian's Bay on 26th October 1980 by two members of the Buteshire Society. With such a rare bird, however, we feel that additional evidence will be required before the Shore Lark can be fully admitted to the Bute list.]

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

A pair was seen near the Bull Loch on 26th April 1983 (IH). A female carrying food was seen in Glen More on 8th July 1984 (JAG).

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

As a breeding species the Garden Warbler now appears to have completely disappeared from Bute. We have a very few records of single birds, but no evidence of any breeding at all for the past ten years.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

In 1985 a survey of Bute rookeries produced a total of 1017 nests from ten sites (IH).

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

There are some additional breeding records. A family party was seen at Lenihuline on 7th June 1982, and another family party was seen at Kildavanan on 29th June 1985. Now probably breeds locally in small numbers.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

Much reduced in numbers, in common with many parts of the Clyde area, but a few pairs can still be seen most years on the moors at the north end of Bute. Breeding proved in 1987, and probable in 1990 (IH).

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Although a few birds turn up occasionally on Bute during the periodic winter Crossbill invasions to Scotland, it is worth recording a party of at least five birds at Suidhe plantation, west of Kilchattan, on 3rd March 1984 (JAG).

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*

After a period of substantial decrease, the Corn Bunting is now certainly returning to some parts of the Clyde area, and a few birds were seen near Kilchattan Bay during summer from 1986 onwards (JAG); none seen in 1989, although one or two were again present in 1990. This must be a very local return to suitable habitat, since there have apparently been no other reports of Corn Buntings from anywhere else on the island (IH). Any additional information will be gratefully received.

References

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In conclusion, it is well worth repeating what we said at the end of our 1980 paper, that the publication of a local bird list commonly stimulates other observers to look afresh at their own notes. So if anyone can add to the information contained in the above list, we shall be very glad to have the details. Any observations sent to us at the Buteshire Natural History Museum in Rothesay will be gratefully acknowledged.

WEATHER REPORT
1985–1989

Helen MacLeod

Detailed particulars of the daily weather may be obtained from the meteorological records at the library in the museum.

The daily readings in Bute, with the exception of the sunshine, are recorded by Mr J. Morton in the grounds of Rothesay Academy. These records are used by the Society and are also sent to the Meteorological Office in Edinburgh.

The sunshine records are collected by Mr R. Cassidy at the Dhu Loch. Until 1986 all the weather readings were also taken at the Dhu Loch and forwarded to Prestwick as well as to Edinburgh. This practice ceased in 1986 and the Dhu Loch is no longer an auxiliary weather station.

To comply with metrication the rainfall readings are now recorded in millimetres. Totals since 1986 are now marked in millimetres. Conversions to inches are still included.

The average annual rainfall for the period 1985–1989 was 1471mm. This compares unfavourably with the long-term average of 1317mm (1951–1980).

The average annual sunshine recorded for the same period was 1368hrs which compares more favourably with the 1951–1980 average of 1333hrs.

In the period under review 1989 was the outstanding year with only 1285mm rain and 1527hrs sunshine hours.