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When did observations begin?

The official history gives a day, a barn, and a naval airfield. The published climate reports give a year. Both wordings are official, and this sheet keeps both.

The about-us page on weather.gov.im says Ronaldsway Met Office has a long history dating back to when the field was HMS Urley. “The first observations were taken from a barn to the SE of the airfield, near to where the fire station is now, on May 7th 1946, with a proper home on the 1st floor of the control tower established a few weeks later.” Observations have been made every hour of every day since, “24/7, including Christmas.”

The Ronaldsway MET. Office Annual Observations Report 2025, on its closing page, says: “All measurements taken at Ronaldsway Met Office. Measurements began in 1947.” The October 2026 climate summary has a footnote: “Most Isle of Man meteorological records date from 1947, when observations began at Ronaldsway.”

A heater, a coat, and one souwester

In the early years there was no heating in the control tower. Electrical thermometers and cloud-base recorders did not come into use until 1972, so observers walked out to the instruments every hour, “in whatever conditions.” In 1959 they were given a paraffin heater, and a duffle coat — “just one for all staff to share.” Two years later came one oilskin, one pair of boots “big enough for anybody’s feet,” and one souwester. Celsius replaced Fahrenheit in 1961. Forecasts went to Manx Radio in June 1964. In 1965 the Isle of Man Airports Board took over, and the staff became IOM Civil Servants.

A short quiz

1. On what date does the about-us page say the first observations were taken, and from where?
2. What year do the 2025 annual report and the October 2026 footnote give for when measurements, or most records, began?
3. What did staff share after the paraffin heater arrived in 1959?

Answers. 1. 7 May 1946, from a barn to the south-east of the airfield. 2. 1947. 3. One duffle coat, for all staff to share.

Wording from the Ronaldsway Met Office about-us page on weather.gov.im, the Annual Observations Report 2025 (published 8 January 2026), and the October 2026 Climate Summary, checked 17 November 2026.

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